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2002  
NCAA  
SOFTBALL  
RULES

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NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



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THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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# Contents

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	Page
NCAA Women's Softball Rules Committee .....	4
Major Rules Changes for 2002 .....	6
Index to Editorial Changes .....	8
Code of Conduct.....	10
Official NCAA Softball Rules	
Rule 1—Definitions.....	13
Rule 2—Field of Play .....	28
Softball Field Specifications.....	34
Rule 3—Equipment and Uniforms.....	37
Rule 4—Game Personnel.....	46
Rule 5—Pregame Procedures.....	49
Rule 6—The Game.....	53
Rule 7—Appeals and Protests.....	64
Rule 8—Players and Substitutes.....	71
Rule 9—Blocked Ball, Interference and Obstruction.....	86
Rule 10—Pitching.....	107
Rule 11—Batting.....	117
Rule 12—Base Running .....	138
Rule 13—Misconduct.....	172
Rule 14—Scoring.....	178
Rule 15—Umpires.....	199
Appendix A: Feet and Lines Chart.....	210
Improper Player Chart.....	211
Appendix B: Umpire Signals.....	212
Appendix C: Incident Report.....	214
Appendix D: Protest Form .....	215
Appendix E: Lightning.....	216
Index to Rules.....	218

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# NCAA Women's Softball Rules Committee

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# Major Rules Changes for 2002

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Listed below are references to rules that were significantly altered from last year's edition. Rules changes are identified by a screened background.

<i>Rule-Section</i>		<i>page(s)</i>
1- 38	Effect .....	17
1-77	No pitch .....	22
1-118	Warm-up pitch .....	26
2-11	Field maintenance .....	30
3-2b	Titanium bats .....	38
3-6	Electronic equipment.....	41
3-8	Skull caps.....	42
4-9	On-site administrator .....	47
5-6	Pre-game meeting.....	51
5-7	Pre-game protocol.....	51
7-1a5	Switching baserunners.....	64
Rule 7-1b	Missed tag at home plate.....	64
Rule 8	DEFO replaced by tenth player.....	71
Rule 9-9d	Batter-runner interference .....	93
Rule 10-16	Catcher returning the ball to the pitcher.....	113
Rule 10-18	10 seconds to release pitch .....	114
Rule 11-3b5	Catcher returning the ball to the pitcher .....	120
Rule 11-4g	Base runner interference.....	122
Rule 11-5g	Base runner interference.....	123
Rule 11-5h	Foul ball.....	123
Rules 12-2/12-5	Base awards.....	139, 147
Rule 12-7i	Intentional interference.....	152
Rule 12-8f	Base runner is out after a proper appeal.....	154
Rule 12-25c	Base running after an uncaught foul ball.....	168
Rule 13-6	Use of video equipment.....	176
Rule 14-2f	Caught stealing.....	179
Rule 14-7b3	Defensive indifference.....	184
Rule 14-12	Appeal plays .....	186
Rule 14-15b	Defensive indifference.....	187
Rule 14-21	Assists.....	190

<b>Rule 15-1a</b>	<b>Umpire uniform .....</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Rule 15-6</b>	<b>Pregame meeting.....</b>	<b>203</b>

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# Index to Editorial Changes

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Numerous editorial changes were made in the 2002 edition of the NCAA Softball Rules Book. Only those changes which clarified the previous rule or provided interpretation are listed below. Those which are grammatical in nature are not listed.

## 2002 Editorial Changes

### *Rule-Section*

1-1	Altered bat definition
1-22f	Catch definition
1-32	DEFO definition deleted
1	Designated player definition
1-48	Force out definition
1-103	Starting Player definition
1-110	Tag definition
2-11	Field of play section deleted
2-10	Fences as related to a catch altered
2-13	Plastic foul poles allowed
3-8	Helmets must have embossed NOCSAE seal
3-8	Skull caps will not meet NOCSAE standards
3-11	Uniform rule clarified
3-11d	Nos. 0 and 00 are same; wearing jersey sleeves properly
3-11h	Under shirt style, sleeve length of undershirt may vary
4-3	Base coach is on field of play statement added
5-9	Pregame announcement updated
6-9b	Dead ball situation added
7-1a	Improper player section updated
7-1c	Infielder can make dead ball appeal to a coach or fielder
7-5a6	Player substitutions reported to both scorekeepers/coach
7-5b2/7-5b3	Umpire delay not reason for excess warm-up pitches
9-13a4	Contact by a baserunner with a fielder clarified
9-15b	Team interference reworded
9-18b	Equipment obstruction clarified
13-1	Coaches' misconduct amended
14-2b	Interference an exception from counting as at bat



Rule 14-2g	Error defined as any cause for extra pitches to be thrown
Rule 14-6a	Game-ending hit in extra-base situation specified
Rule 14-21	Error defined as any cause for extra pitches to be thrown
Rule 15-2n	Umpire authority specified
Appendix C	Improper player chart corrected
Appendix E	Added Lighting Policy

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# Code of Conduct

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The NCAA Women's Softball Rules Committee believes that participation in athletics is an integral part of the educational experience for student-athletes. Therefore, it expects the highest standards of sporting behavior and conduct of all individuals associated with the game of softball. In particular, the standards are especially stringent for coaches and umpires, who are at once role models, authority figures and representatives of intercollegiate athletics and the game itself.

## **Coaches**

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

- a. Develop and maintain a sound knowledge of current NCAA softball rules.
- b. Confine discussion with the game officials to the interpretation of the rules and shall not constantly challenge umpire decisions involving judgment.
- c. Comply wholeheartedly with the spirit and intent of the rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible.
- d. Teach their players to respect the dignity of the game, opponents, officials, spectators and the institutions they represent.
- e. Prohibit team personnel from using profanity or making personal or malicious remarks toward opponents, officials and spectators.
- f. Refrain from any personal action that might arouse players or spectators to unsporting behavior.
- g. Be in control of their players at all times in order to prevent any unsporting act toward opponents, officials or spectators.
- h. Seek help from school administrators or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly students and spectators.
- i. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude toward the game and its participants.

## **Umpires**

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

- a. Keep in mind that the game is more important than the wishes of any individual player or coach or the ambitions of any individual umpire.

- b. Honor all assignments and contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial ramifications.
- c. Keep physically and mentally fit. Dress appropriately.
- d. Do not use tobacco products on or in the vicinity of the playing field nor drink any alcoholic beverages before the game, while in uniform or on site.
- e. When in uniform or on site, do not fraternize with players and/or coaches.
- f. Develop and maintain a sound knowledge of current NCAA softball rules and umpire mechanics.
- g. Be fair and unbiased in making decisions, rendering them without regard to the score or the quality of the play on the field.
- h. Cooperate with your partner(s). Do not hesitate to ask for assistance if you are blocked out on a play. The main objective is to arrive at decisions that are ultimately correct and fair.
- i. If a player or coach has a valid point to argue and does so in a legitimate way, listen to him or her for a reasonable time. Do not be confrontational. Avoid sarcastic comments to participants and spectators and do not use provocative gestures in an argument. Do not insist on the last word. If a player or coach is walking away from you, let him or her go. If a situation requires an ejection, handle it in as low-key a manner as possible.
- j. Concentrate at all times. Keep the game moving through energetic work.
- k. Do not give information that might be used by a team's future opponent.
- l. Try to learn something new each game you work. Do an honest self-evaluation after each game. Pay attention to what other officials do that does and does not work well. Try to incorporate the strong features of their performance into your own.
- m. Seek advancement through your own ability and hard work.
- n. Keep personalities out of your work and avoid politics.

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# The Rules

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The NCAA Softball Rules have been designated as either administrative rules or conduct rules. Typically, administrative rules are those dealing with preparation for the contest and conduct rules are those that have to do directly with the playing of the contest. Some administrative rules (as indicated below) may be altered by the mutual consent of the competing institutions. All other rules may not be altered. All NCAA member institutions are required to conduct their intercollegiate contests according to these rules.

In the 2002 Softball Rules, the administrative rules that may be altered by mutual consent of the competing institutions are:

Rule 2: Sections 10, 12, 13, 16, 24, 25

Rule 5: Sections 7, 8.

Rule 6: Sections 15, 17, 21-b.

Rule 15: Sections 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.

The secretary-rules editor is the sole interpreter of the NCAA softball playing rules. For information on or interpretations of the rules, contact:

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# RULE 1

## Definitions

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### **Altered Bat**

SECTION 1. A legal bat that has been intentionally changed in any way. Exception: Marking for identification on the knob and replacing the grip are legal.

### **Appeal**

SECTION 2. A play on which the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player.

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

SECTION 3. The official decision of the NCAA Softball Rules Committee regarding a specific rule or part of a rule. It serves to clarify or illustrate the spirit and application of the rule.

### **Backstop**

SECTION 4. A barrier behind home plate to stop a ball from going too far outside the playing area.

### **Ball**

SECTION 5. The sphere that is pitched, thrown, struck, etc. A ball also refers to a pitch that does not enter the strike zone and is not struck at by the batter.

### **Base**

SECTION 6. One of four points that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run.

### **Base Coaches**

SECTION 7. The two representatives of the team at bat who are stationed in the first or third base coaches' boxes to direct the offense. No more than one representative may be in each box.

### **Base Path**

SECTION 8. The imaginary direct line, and three feet to either side of the line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag. A base runner who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession shall be declared out.

**Base Runner**

SECTION 9. An offensive player who is advancing to, touching or returning to a base.

**Bat**

SECTION 10. The smooth, rounded stick used by the batter to contact the pitch. The bat must meet the bat specifications in Rule 3-2.

**Batted Ball**

SECTION 11. Any pitch that comes in contact with the bat. Contact may result in a fair or foul ball and need not be intentional.

**Batter**

SECTION 12. The offensive player whose turn it is to take a position in either batter's box to receive a pitch.

**Batter's Box**

SECTION 13. The area to which the batter is restricted when batting.

**Batter-Runner**

SECTION 14. The offensive player who started in the batter's box but has left it in an attempt to reach base safely.

**Batting Order**

SECTION 15. The official list of starting offensive players presented in the order in which they are to bat and recorded on a lineup card.

**Batting Out of Order**

SECTION 16. Failing to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.

**Blocked Ball**

SECTION 17. A live batted, pitched or thrown ball that:

- Contacts nongame personnel, game personnel in unauthorized areas, loose equipment or an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area.
- Crosses into dead-ball territory.

**Bullpen**

SECTION 18. The area in foul or dead-ball territory where substitute pitchers, catchers and other players warm up.

**Bunt**

SECTION 19. A legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat.

**Bunt Attempt**

SECTION 20. Any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt

attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn—pulled backward and away from the ball.

### **Called Game**

SECTION 21. A game that is ended by order of the umpire.

### **Catch**

SECTION 22. The act of a fielder who, with her hand(s) and/or glove/mitt, securely gains possession of a batted, pitched or thrown ball. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder must hold the ball long enough to prove she has control of the ball and that her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If the fielder has made the catch but drops the ball either in transferring it to the throwing hand or in making a throw, the ball shall be ruled caught.

For a legal catch:

- a. A fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before stepping, touching or falling into a dead-ball area.
- b. A fielder who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch.

A catch shall not be credited if:

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

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

- f. The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground when she contacts the ball.
- g. The fielder traps the ball. A batted fly ball or line drive is considered trapped if it hits the ground or a fence on a short hop before being caught. A thrown ball is considered trapped if it is caught but the ball is on the ground and the glove/mitt is over, rather than under, it. A pitched

ball is considered trapped if it is a strike but touches the ground on a short hop before being caught by the catcher.

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

### **Catcher**

SECTION 23. The defensive player to whom the pitcher throws when pitching to a batter.

### **Catcher's Box**

SECTION 24. The area to which the catcher is restricted from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch. *Exception:* If the batter is positioned in the front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer without effect.

### **Checked Swing**

SECTION 25. The restraining action taken by a batter to stop an attempted hit/slap/bunt.

### **Coaches' Boxes**

SECTION 26. The area to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted prior to release of the pitch.

### **Conferences**

SECTION 27. A charged offensive conference is a meeting that takes place anytime an offensive team representative(s) delays the game or requests a suspension of play for any reason and delivers a message (by any means) to any offensive player, coach and/or representative.

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

### **Crow Hop (Pitcher)**

SECTION 28. An illegal act in which the pitcher's rear (pivot) foot leaves the pitcher's plate and recontacts the ground before the release of the pitch.

### **Dead Ball**

SECTION 29. A ball that is not in play and does not become live again until the pitcher holds it on the pitcher's plate and the umpire calls/signals "Play/Play ball."

### **Dead-Ball Territory**

SECTION 30. That area beyond any real playing field boundary such as a fence, backstop, rope, chalk line, bleachers, dugouts or any imaginary boundary line as determined in the pregame conference.



**Defense**

SECTION 31. A player or team in the field attempting to prevent the offensive team from scoring runs.

**Delayed Dead Ball**

SECTION 32. A situation in which a violation of a rule occurs and is recognized by the umpire with a delayed dead ball signal.

**Delivery**

SECTION 33. The clockwise portion (seen from the first base side of the infield) of the pitching motion which occurs between the windup and release of the pitch.

**Designated Player (DP)**

SECTION 34. The player who is initially listed on the lineup card in the team's batting order but not in the defensive lineup.

**Dislodged Base**

SECTION 35. A base displaced from its proper position.

**Doubleheader**

SECTION 36. Two regularly scheduled games played in succession.

**Dugout (Bench)**

SECTION 37. The area reserved for team personnel engaged in the game.

**Effect**

SECTION 38. The result or consequence of a rule application.

**Ejection**

SECTION 39. The exercise of an umpire's authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game.

**Extra Inning**

SECTION 40. The continuation of play beyond the regulation seven innings in an attempt to break a tie score.

**Fair Ball**

SECTION 41. A legally batted ball that:

1. Touches or bounds over a base,
2. Settles on or is touched on or over fair territory.

A fair fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with

respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted. (See Rule 11-4.)

**Fair Territory**

SECTION 42. That part of the playing field within and including the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the home run fence and perpendicularly upwards. Home plate, the foul lines and poles are considered part of fair territory.

**Fake Tag**

SECTION 43. When a fielder, who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball, obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag which causes the runner to slow down or stop.

**Field of Play**

SECTION 44. The area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded.

**Fielder**

SECTION 45. One of the nine players on the defensive team who takes a position on the field and attempts to stop the offensive team from scoring. It may be the pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder or right fielder.

**Flagrant**

SECTION 46. An act that involves excessive force with an opponent.

**Fly Ball**

SECTION 47. A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that rises into the air above the top of the batter's head.

**Force Out**

SECTION 48. A putout in which an offensive player, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder (holding the ball) touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance. Whenever the first out of multiple outs is made by the batter, all forces are eliminated.

**Force Play**

SECTION 49. A play in which the base runner loses her right to occupy a base because the batter becomes a batter-runner who has not yet been put out.

**Forfeited Game**

SECTION 50. A game declared ended and awarded to an offended team by the umpire.

**Foul Ball**

SECTION 51. A legally-batted ball that settles on or is touched on or over foul territory. A foul fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted. (See Rule 11-5.)

**Foul Territory**

SECTION 52. That part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines from home plate to the bottom of the home run fence and perpendicularly upwards.

**Foul Tip**

SECTION 53. A batted ball that stays below the top of the batter's head, travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike, and the ball live.

*Note: If the catcher moves to the ball, it is not a foul tip. If caught, it is a legal catch. If not caught, it is a foul ball.*

**Ground Ball**

SECTION 54. A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that bounces along the ground.

**Halted Game**

SECTION 55. A game that is temporarily suspended by the umpire with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. The game shall be resumed from the point of suspension.

**Helmet**

SECTION 56. The protective headwear most commonly worn by an offensive player. Helmets are required while batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle. Catchers are required to wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. Other defensive players may wear a helmet for safety reasons.

**Home Team**

SECTION 57. The team that starts the game on defense (in the field). The home team may be determined in a variety of ways (i.e., coin flip, mutual agreement, conference or tournament assignment, custom).

**Illegal Bat**

SECTION 58. A bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (i.e., particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits) as set forth in Rule 3-2.

**Illegal Pitch**

SECTION 59. Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.

**Illegal Player**

SECTION 60. A player who competes in the game but is not entitled to participate.

**Illegal Reentry**

SECTION 61. A violation of the substitution rules that occurs when an illegal player (one who is not entitled to play) is put back into the game.

**Illegally Batted Ball**

SECTION 62. A pitch contacted by the batter:

- a. With an altered bat.
- b. With an illegal bat.
- c. When any part of either foot is in contact with the plate at the time of bat-ball contact.
- d. When one or both feet are on the ground and entirely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time of bat-ball contact.

**Inaccurate Lineup Card**

SECTION 63. Incorrect listing of eligible starting players and substitutes. Inaccuracies could include incorrect or omitted first name, uniform number or position.

*Note: First name may be omitted from the written lineup as long as they are printed on the card's roster.*

**In Flight**

SECTION 64. Any batted, thrown or pitched ball that has not touched the ground, an object or a person other than a player.

**In Jeopardy**

SECTION 65. The term indicating that the ball is live, and an offensive player may be put out.

**Infield**

SECTION 66. That portion of the field in fair territory that is normally skinned and defended by the pitcher and infielders.

**Infield Fly Rule**

SECTION 67. When declared by the umpire, a fair fly ball (not a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when runners are on first and second or all three bases are occupied and before there are two outs in the inning. Any defensive player positioned in the infield at the time of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule. The ball is live, the batter is out, which removes the force, but runners may advance at their own risk. The runners may tag up and advance as soon as the batted ball is touched by a fielder. If a declared infield fly becomes foul, it is treated as a foul ball, not an infield fly.

**Infielders**

SECTION 68. Fielders (usually four) who defend the skinned portion of the field. They are the first baseman, second baseman, third baseman and shortstop.

**Inning**

SECTION 69. a. That portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three putouts for each team.

b. Half inning. Each team's respective time at bat or in the field. The interval during which one team is on offense and the other is on defense. A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning, the winning run is scored.

c. Extra inning. One that extends the game in an attempt to break a tie score.

**Intentional Base on Balls**

SECTION 70. "Ball four" purposely thrown to a batter.

**Interference, Offensive**

SECTION 71. The act of an offensive player, coach, umpire or spectator that denies the fielder a reasonable opportunity to play the ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional and the ball must have been playable.

**Leap (Pitcher)**

SECTION 72. An illegal act in which the pitcher becomes airborne on her initial movement and push from the pitcher's plate.

**Line Drive**

SECTION 73. A fair or foul batted ball that travels parallel to the ground, neither rising into the air nor dropping to the ground. If caught, it is scored an out.

**Lineup Card**

SECTION 74. The card that contains the first and last names, uniform numbers and positions of all starting players, listed in the order in which they are to bat and the first and last names and uniform numbers of all eligible substitutes. Also see inaccurate lineup card definition.

**No Contest**

SECTION 75. When a team fails to fulfill its contract to play and does not appear (e.g., due to weather conditions, accidents, breakdowns of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes). This is not a forfeit as there can be no forfeit of a contest until the umpire has assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

**No Game**

SECTION 76. When the umpire terminates play before five innings have been completed by each team except in the following situations:

- a. If the team last at bat is at bat in the last half of the fifth inning and equals, before the completion of that inning, the score of the side first at bat, the umpire shall declare the contest legally tied.
- b. If the team last at bat shall have scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the team first at bat has scored in five completed innings, the umpire shall award the game to the team second at bat and it shall count as a legal game.
- c. If the teams have previously agreed to play by the halted-game rule. (See Rule 6-17.)

**No Pitch**

SECTION 77. Declaration by an umpire that halts play and nullifies the pitch.

**Obstruction, Defensive**

SECTION 78. The act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, is fielding a batted ball or is about to receive a thrown ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional.

**Offense**

SECTION 79. Player or team at bat attempting to score runs.

**On-Deck Batter**

SECTION 80. The offensive player who is next in line to bat.

**On-Deck Circle**

SECTION 81. A circular area five feet in diameter in which the next batter may warm up.

**Out**

SECTION 82. A declaration by the umpire indicating an offensive player has been retired. Each team is entitled to three outs per inning.

**Outfield**

SECTION 83. That portion of fair territory that is grass or an artificial grass surface and normally defended by the outfielders.

**Outfielder**

SECTION 84. Fielders (usually three) who defend the grass portion of the field between the skinned infield and home run fence. They are the left fielder, center fielder and right fielder.

**Overslide**

SECTION 85. The act of a base runner who, when sliding, loses contact with a base or passes it.

**Overthrow**

SECTION 86. A thrown ball that goes beyond its intended target. The ball is live unless it enters dead-ball territory or becomes a blocked ball.

**Pinch Hitter**

SECTION 87. A player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of the batter. The pinch hitter will stay in the lineup until she is replaced by the player for whom she batted or another substitute.

**Pinch Runner**

SECTION 88. A player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of a base runner. The pinch runner will stay in the lineup until she is replaced by the player for whom she ran or another substitute.

**Pitch**

SECTION 89. A live ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher with a legal underhand motion.

**Pitcher**

SECTION 90. The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters.

**Pitcher's Drag Foot**

SECTION 91. The pitcher's foot (right foot of a right-handed pitcher and left foot of a left-handed pitcher) that must maintain contact with the pitcher's plate as the stride foot extends forward on the step. It also is referred to as the pivot or rear foot.

**Pitcher's Pivot Foot**

SECTION 92. The pitcher's foot (right foot of a right-handed pitcher and left foot of a left-handed pitcher) that maintains contact with the pitcher's plate, absorbs the body's weight and pushes off against the plate during the initial "step" phase of the pitch. This same foot drags along the ground during the final phase of the pitch and is then referred to as the drag or rear foot.

**Pitcher's Stride Foot**

SECTION 93. The pitcher's foot (left foot of right-handed pitcher and right foot of a left-handed pitcher) that extends forward toward home plate as she steps to deliver the pitch to the batter. It also is referred to as the lead foot.

**“Play” or “Play Ball”**

SECTION 94. The directive given by the umpire to begin the game or to resume play. It also is the instruction given by the umpire to indicate that the defensive players are in position, the batter is ready to bat and the pitcher may now deliver the pitch.

**Protest**

SECTION 95. The formal inquiry into the decision of an umpire.

**Quick Pitch**

SECTION 96. A pitch delivered with the obvious intention of catching the batter off balance or otherwise unprepared to bat.

**Regulation Game**

SECTION 97. Seven innings constitutes a regulation game unless:

- a. The home team scores more runs than the visiting team in six-and-one-half innings and/or before the third out in the bottom of the seventh inning or the eight-run rule applies.
- b. The game is tied at the end of seven innings. Such a game shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the home team has scored more runs in the bottom half of the inning and before the third out is made.
- c. The game is shortened (called). Forfeited, halted, protested, or tied games or games decided by the eight-run rule may or may not be regulation depending upon the circumstances. See Rule 6-16 for the criteria that must be met in order for a called game to be considered regulation.

**Run**

SECTION 98. The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.

**Runner**

SECTION 99. See Base runner.

**Rundown**

SECTION 100. The act of the defense attempting to put out a base runner who is caught off base between two or more defensive players and who may either attempt to advance or return to the previous base.

**Safe**

SECTION 101. A declaration by the umpire indicating that a runner has successfully taken possession of a base and is no longer in jeopardy.



**Slap Hit**

SECTION 102. A batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. The two most common types of slap hits are:

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

**Starter**

SECTION 103. The first nine or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to reenter one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order.

*Note: For statistical purposes, the starting pitcher is the player who throws the first pitch of the game. If not a starter, she does not have re-entry rights.*

**Strike**

SECTION 104. Any pitch that either enters the strike zone without first touching the ground or is swung at by the batter and missed. A strike also may be called by the umpire for the batter's failure to enter the batter's box when so directed.

**Strike Zone**

SECTION 105. The area above home plate between the top of the batter's forward arm pit and the top of her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. When the top of the ball is on or within the horizontal plane or the sides of the ball are on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone, a strike is called unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate.

*Note--Home plate is the white rubber plate and does not include a black border. (See diagram at the end of rule 11.)*

**Substitute**

SECTION 106. A player not listed on the lineup as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first nine or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. A substitute who is replaced may not reenter the game at any time for any reason.

**Suspension**

SECTION 107. The exercise of an umpire's authority to remove a coach or player from participation in subsequent games.

**Tag**

SECTION 108. The act of a defensive player in

1. Touching a base with any part of the body while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or gloved hand; or
2. Touching a runner with the ball while securely held in the hand or gloved hand.

**Team Representative**

SECTION 109. The head coach and his/her designee.

**Tenth Player**

SECTION 110. The player who is initially listed in the tenth spot on the lineup card.

**“Time” or “Timeout”**

SECTION 111. A term used by the umpire to temporarily suspend play. The ball is dead, until the umpire indicates a resumption of play.

**Timing Play**

SECTION 112. A defensive play in which the results are based on the time of the action. Tag plays and appeals may be timing plays, however, force plays may not.

**Turn at Bat**

SECTION 113. The act of entering the batter’s box until being put out, becoming a batter-runner or being substituted for while at bat.

**Umpires**

SECTION 114. The persons hired to rule on the plays in the game. They are a plate umpire and one, two or three base umpires.

**Unreported Player**

SECTION 115. A player who has a legal right to enter or re-enter the game but has not been reported to the umpire prior to her participation.

**Visiting Team**

SECTION 116. The team that starts the game on offense (at bat).

**Warm-Up Pitch**

SECTION 117. Any pitch delivered to the plate during a suspension of play.

**Windup**

SECTION 118. The preliminary motion of a pitcher which occurs between the toeing of the pitcher's plate and the delivery of the pitch.

**Without Liability to be Put Out**

SECTION 119. The player cannot be put out as a result of defender's action. However, the player can be declared out for violation of baserunning rules (such as missing a base, passing a runner, etc.).

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# RULE 2

## Field of Play

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The following information regarding the playing facility and field specifications applies to all NCAA competition. In some cases, specifications applicable to hosting NCAA Divisions I, II and III championships play may follow the most strict interpretation of a rule. Note that additional criteria may be required as well. Institutions interested in submitting a bid to host championship play should consult the current NCAA Softball Championships handbook and contact the championships group at the NCAA national office.

### **Backstop**

SECTION 1. A backstop is required. It should be a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum distance of 30 feet from home plate (see diagram). It is recommended that the backstop be vertical and not extend over the playing field. If the backstop is cement or brick, it is recommended that it be padded.

### **Base Distance**

SECTION 2. The official diamond shall have base lines of 60 feet (see diagram).

### **Baseline**

SECTION 3. The direct line between any two consecutive bases.

### **Bases—First, Second and Third**

SECTION 4. First, second and third bases shall be white canvas bags or suitable rubberized material securely fastened to the ground. Each bag shall be 15 inches square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 1½ to 3½ inches. Bases may have tapered edges. A release-type base may be used. The double first base may not be used.

### **Batter's Boxes**

SECTION 5. The batter's boxes, one on each side of home plate, shall be six inches from home plate and shall measure three feet by seven feet. The front line of each box shall be four feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate. The four lines must be drawn (see diagram).

## **Bullpen**

**SECTION 6.** It is highly recommended that all college softball facilities have at least one regulation bullpen. It is recommended that there be separate bullpens for each team, however, if only one bullpen is available, it should be large enough to accommodate two pitchers at the same time (one pitcher from each team). In either case, the warm-up areas for the pitchers of the home team and the visiting team must be comparable. The bullpen(s) shall be equipped with regular-size home plates and pitcher's plates placed at regulation distance apart. The pitching plates shall be set in dirt, and the home plates shall have a backstop if outside the field of play. It is recommended that bullpens be set up so that pitchers will be throwing in the same direction in practice as when they throw in the game.

A bullpen must be in satisfactory condition for pregame warm-up for the visiting team. If the visiting bullpen is not comparable to the home team's bullpen, the visiting team's pitcher(s) shall be allowed to warm up in the home team's bullpen for up to 20 of the final 30 minutes before game time.

## **Catcher's Box**

**SECTION 7.** The catcher's box shall be seven feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batters' boxes and shall be eight feet, five inches wide (see diagram). The lines must be drawn.

## **Coaches' Boxes**

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

## **Dugouts**

**SECTION 9.** During a game, no one except players, coaches, managers, trainers, scorekeepers and bat persons shall occupy a team's dugout. All personnel must be in appropriate attire and must be in their team's bench area or bullpen and remain there until the ball has been declared dead or the side has been retired. This excludes the batter, the on-deck batter, base runner(s), base coaches and the nine defensive players.

It is recommended that all college softball facilities have dugouts that are enclosed at each end and at the rear. Each dugout must be large enough to accommodate all players and team personnel (approximately 25 people). It is recommended that each dugout be covered and contain a bat rack, a helmet rack, a water cooler, an electrical outlet and a phone jack.

It is recommended that each dugout be located on the sideline boundary

at a point of equal distance from home plate and first base and home plate and third base, respectively.

## Fences

SECTION 10. a. It is highly recommended that the playing field be enclosed completely by permanent home run and sideline fences at least 4 feet high. If a temporary-home run fence is used, it must be secured so as not to collapse on and displace the foul pole. For an unfenced field, an out-of-bounds line shall be used to define dead ball areas. The distance to the home run fence should be a minimum of 190 feet in left and right fields and a minimum of 200 feet in center field. The distance to the home run fence should be a maximum of 225 feet in all fields.

b. A fielder who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch. A catch shall not be credited if:

- 1) Immediately following a catch, the fielder collides with another player, umpire or fence or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball; or
- 2) The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground when she contacts the ball.

## Fitness of the Field

SECTION 11. When on-site within one hour before game time, the coaches of both teams and/or a host team administrative staff member shall decide whether a game shall not be started because of unsatisfactory conditions of weather or playing field, except for the second game of a doubleheader. Should bad weather or unfit conditions exist during a game, the plate umpire shall be the sole judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play. The plate umpire of the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of the second game of a doubleheader.

Maintenance of the pitcher's circle and batters' boxes before and during games shall be the responsibility of the home management. In-game field maintenance shall be at the direction of the umpire. It is recommended that the home management provide a tarp for the entire infield.

## Foul Pole

SECTION 12. The foul pole must be a metal, plastic or wooden pole that extends vertically upward from the foul line at the point it intersects the home run fence. The pole should extend at least 10 feet from the ground. It is recommended that screening be attached to the fair side of the pole to enhance the visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the pole. The

screening width should be at least six inches and should extend from the top of the fence to the top of the pole.

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

### **Ground Rules**

SECTION 13. A local ground rule may be adopted where special facility conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. If teams do not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the plate umpire.

### **Home Plate**

SECTION 14. Home plate must be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable material. The sides shall be 8½ inches long and the edge facing the pitcher shall be 17-inches wide and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12-inches long (see diagram).

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

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

*Note: The black edge is not part of home plate in reference to the strike zone nor whether a runner is out or safe.*

### **Infield**

SECTION 15. The infield shall be level, but to allow for natural surface drainage, it is recommended that the entire playing area be graded one percent from the edge of the pitcher's plate to the sideline boundaries of the field.

*Note: The center of second base is one corner of the 60-foot square and the measurement to first base and third base is to the back edge of each base. All measurements are to be made from the apex or back point of home plate (see diagram).*

It is highly recommended that a skinned infield be used. The skinned area should be determined by measuring a 60-foot arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate (see diagram).

### **Layout**

SECTION 16. For the layout of the playing field, refer to the drawing showing official dimensions. This section serves as an example for laying out an infield with 60-foot bases and a 43-foot pitching distance.

All new fields should be oriented with consideration to the following factors: protection of players, comfort of spectators, season of use (February-

June), latitude (north to south), east-west geographical location within time zone, prevailing winds, daylight savings time, background and obstacles or barriers.

When constructing a softball diamond, first designate a point for the rear tip of home plate. Secondly, with the aid of the above guidelines, locate the desired direction of second base. Measure 84 feet, 10  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches in this direction. This is the center of second base. With the tape still in this position, locate the pitcher's plate 43 feet from home plate toward second base. With the tape still fastened to the rear point of home plate, measure 60 feet toward first base and scribe a short arc. Also measure 60 feet toward third base and scribe a short arc. Now fasten the tape at the center of second base and measure 60 feet toward first and third base, respectively. Scribe a short arc each time. The back edges of first and third bases are located where the respective arcs intersect. The skinned area should be determined by measuring a 60-foot arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate.

### Lines (Markings)

SECTION 17a. All lines on the playing field shall be marked with chalk or nonburning material that is not injurious to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited. All lines must be two to four inches in width. The outside edge of the first and third base lines and their extensions should correspond with the outside edge of first and third base.

*Note 1: Lines shall be redrawn at the discretion of the umpire. Every attempt should be made to avoid significantly delaying the game; however, if the lines can be redrawn between innings, the umpire may direct the grounds crew to do so.*

*Note 2: A batter may not be intentionally walked by erasing lines.*

b. A player shall not intentionally remove any lines in the batter's box or on the field.

**EFFECT—A strike shall be called on the batter if the offense intentionally removes the line and a ball shall be called on the batter if the defense intentionally erases a line.**

### Nonregulation Field

SECTION 18. The umpires have the responsibility to check the playing field to be sure all is legal. Every effort should be made by the umpires to obtain the correct dimensions. Any game started on a nonregulation field shall not be protested for this reason.

*Note: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the pitching distance or base distances are incorrect, the error shall be corrected at the start of the next full inning, with no penalty, and the game shall*



*continue from that point.*

**On-Deck Circle**

SECTION 19. The on-deck circle shall be a circular area five feet in diameter in which the next batter may warm up. It is located to the side and away from home plate (see diagram).

**Pitcher's Circle**

SECTION 20. The pitcher's circle shall be a circular area with an eight-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate (see diagram).

**Pitcher's Plate**

SECTION 21. The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber or other suitable material, 24 inches long and six inches wide (see diagram). It shall be fixed in the ground, and the top of the plate shall be level with the ground surface. The nearer edge of the pitcher's plate shall be 43 feet from the back point of home plate (see diagram).

**Runner's Lane**

SECTION 22. The runner's lane is bounded by a 30-foot line drawn in foul territory parallel to and three feet from the first-base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and the back edge of first base (see diagram). The runner's lane should be skinned.

**Scoreboard**

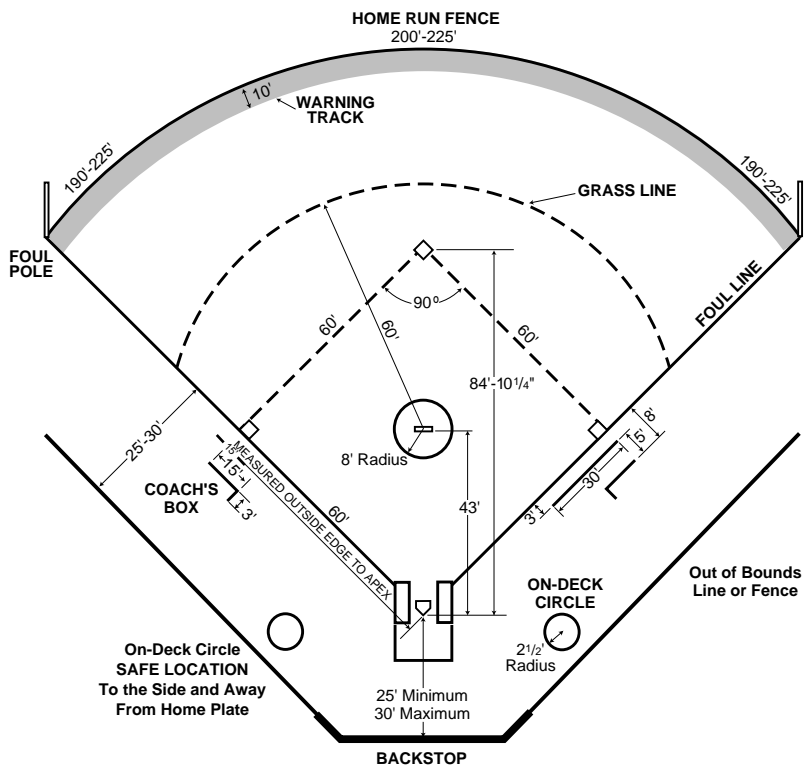
SECTION 23. A visible display of the score is required. It is recommended that an electronic scoreboard that shows balls, strikes, outs and the line score be located in such a position on the field that it can be seen easily by both teams and spectators. Scoreboards should not be placed directly in the batter's field of vision.

**Sideline Territory**

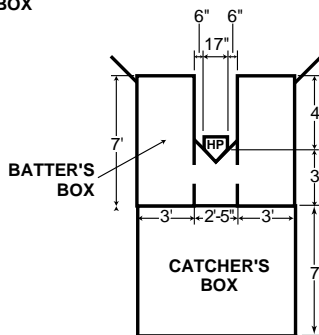
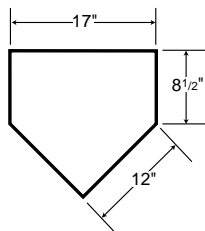
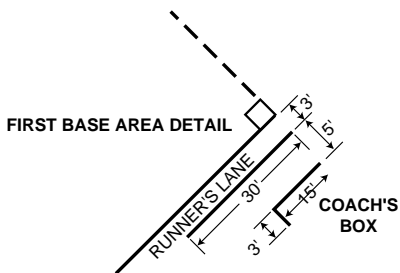
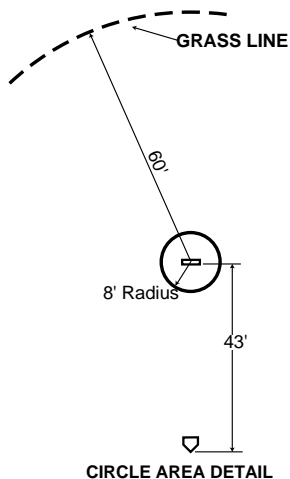
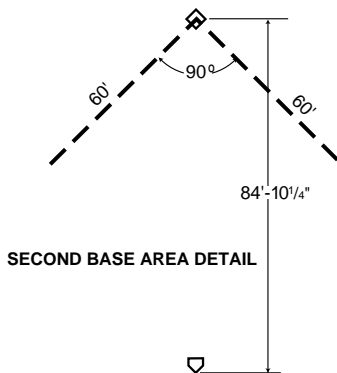
SECTION 24. It is recommended that the unobstructed area between home plate and the backstop, and from the base line to the sideline boundary, be a minimum distance of 25 feet or a maximum of 30 feet extended to a point down the line as deep as the home run fence (see diagram).

**Warning Track**

SECTION 25. It is recommended that a warning track be constructed in front of the home run fence and/or sideline fence. The warning track should be at least 10 feet in width.



**Field marking lines must be drawn.**



Field marking lines must be drawn.

## Dimension Table

Area	Dimensions
Backstop	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from home plate
Bases	15 inches square and 1.5 to 3.5 inches thick
a. home plate to first/third	a. 60 feet from back point of home plate to the back of the base
b. home plate to second	b. 84 feet 10¼ inches from back point of home plate to the middle of the base
Batter's boxes	6 inches from home plate; 3 feet wide by 7 feet long; front lines 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate
Catcher's box	7 feet in length from rear outside corners of the batters' boxes; 8 feet, 5 inches wide
Coaches' boxes	Marked by two lines. The first is a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first and third base lines extended from the back edge of the bases toward home plate; the second is a line 3 feet long drawn perpendicular to the end of the 15 foot line closest to home plate (see diagram)
Fences*	190-225 feet* from home plate down the left- and right-field line; 200-225 feet* from home plate to centerfield; minimum of 4 feet high*
Foul pole*	Extend a minimum of 10 feet* above the ground; screening* attached to fair side at least 6 inches wide*
Home plate	Front edge 17 inches wide; sides are parallel to the inside lines of batter's boxes and are 8½ inches long; sides of the point facing the catcher are 12 inches long
Infield	Center of second base is one corner of 60-foot square and the measurement to first and third bases is to the back edge of each base; all measurements made from the apex or back point of home plate
Skinned portion*	60-foot* arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate
Lines (markings)	2 to 4 inches wide
On-deck circle	5 feet in diameter
Pitcher's circle	8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate
Pitcher's plate	24 inches long by 6 inches wide; 43 feet from the back point of home plate
Runner's lane	30-foot line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3 feet from the first base line, starting halfway between home plate and the back edge of first base
Sideline territory	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from the foul lines extended to a point down the line as deep as the home run fence
Warning track*	A minimum of 10 feet wide*
*Recommended	

*Note 1: The umpire should make every effort to obtain the correct playing-field dimensions.*

*Note 2: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the pitching distance or base distances are incorrect, the error shall be corrected at the start of the next full inning, with no penalty, and the game shall continue from that point.*

*Note 3: It is recommended that a steel tape or other reliable form of measurement be used to measure distances.*

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# RULE 3

## Equipment and Uniforms

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The NCAA Women's Softball Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport. The committee is not responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in intercollegiate softball.

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

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

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

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

**Ball**

SECTION 1. The ball shall be an optic yellow sphere with raised red thread seams. It shall have a center core of polyurethane mixture, No. 1 quality long fiber kapok, or a mixture of cork and rubber. The cover shall be smooth and made of chrome tanned, top grain horsehide or cowhide. It shall be affixed to the core by cement and sewn with waxed cotton or linen thread by the two-needle method with not fewer than 88 stitches per cover. The ball shall meet the following specifications:

- Minimum circumference: 11 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches; maximum circumference: 12 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches
- Minimum weight: 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  ounces; maximum weight: 7 ounces
- Maximum COR (coefficient of restitution): .50
- Maximum compression: 350  $\pm$ 50.

The home team shall be responsible for providing a minimum of five game softballs. Each game shall begin with two new game balls (one rubbed by each team, so the manufacturer's gloss is removed) and three additional (new or game quality) balls. The balls should be stored at room temperature and humidity levels (72 degrees and 50 percent, respectively) to achieve performance similar to those in laboratory testing.

*Note: The official game ball for the NCAA Divisions I, II and III Women's Softball Championships is the Wilson A9010-SST.*

**Bats—Game**

SECTION 2. The official bat shall meet the following standards:

- a. Shall be made of one piece of hardwood, or formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive in such a way that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat.
- b. Shall be metal, plastic, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic, titanium or any other composite material approved by the ASA. Any new composite construction bat must be reviewed and approved by the ASA.
- c. May be laminated but must contain only wood or adhesive and have a clear finish (if finished).
- d. Shall be round and smooth. If the barrel end has a knurled finish, the maximum surface roughness shall not be more than 250 if measured by a profilometer or 4/1000 if measured by a spectrograph.
- e. Shall not be more than 34 inches (87.0 cm) long nor exceed 38 ounces (1100.0 g) in weight.
- f. Shall not be more than 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches (6.0 cm) in diameter at its largest part.

A tolerance of 1/32 inch (0.90 mm) is permitted to allow for expansion on the round bat. *Note: If the bat ring goes over the bat, it should be considered a legal bat in terms of diameter.*

- g. There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the large end.
- h. Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of burrs and cracks.
- i. If metal, shall not have a wooden handle.
- j. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The safety grip shall not be less than 10 inches (25.0 cm) long and shall not extend more than 15 inches (40.0 cm) from the small end of the bat. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the safety grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral. It does not have to be a solid layer of tape. It may not exceed two layers. Taping of a bat less than the required length is considered illegal.
- k. If metal and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other approved material insert firmly secured at the large end of the bat.
- l. Shall have a safety knob of a minimum of ¼ inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A “flare” or “cone” grip attached to the bat will be considered altered. The knob may be taped as long as there is no violation of this section.
- m. Shall be marked OFFICIALSOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIALSOFTBALL cannot be read due to wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.
- n. Shall not have dents or flat spots that prevent a bat ring from passing over the length of the bat. In determining whether a bat is legal, the ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.
- o. Bats shall bear the permanent ASA 2000 certification seal or be listed on the approved bat list of the ASA Web site ([www.softball.org/select](http://www.softball.org/select) site map; select certified equipment; select bats to see the approved list) indicating compliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.

**EFFECT**—If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat (one that does not meet the required specifications), the bat shall be removed from the game (i.e. not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters the batter's box with an altered bat (one that has been structurally changed), the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed in addition to the batter being ejected from the game.

### **Bats—Warm-Up**

SECTION 3. The warm-up bat must weigh no less than 39 ounces and have a minimum barrel diameter of two inches. The bat shall be of one-piece construction and shall have a safety grip 10-15 inches from the knob and securely affixed. Attachments to a bat (such as sleeves, donuts and fans) are not allowed in the on-deck circle.

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

### **Casts/Braces/Splints/Prostheses**

SECTION 4. Casts, braces, splints and prostheses may be worn by players as long as the equipment is well-padded to protect not only the affected player but also her opponents. Casts, braces, splints and prostheses on a pitcher's nonpitching arm shall not be distracting to the batter.

Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard must be properly padded. In addition, any such device must be neutral in color so as not to distract the batter and must function in such a way that it does not alter the natural motion of the pitching arm.

### **Catcher's Equipment**

SECTION 5. Body protectors and baseball/softball shin guards that offer protection to at least the foot-to-knee area must be worn by the catcher. The catcher must wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. In addition, the catcher must wear a protective face mask with a built-in or attachable throat guard. A built-in throat guard must extend far enough to adequately protect the throat. An attachable throat guard shall be commercially manufactured, unaltered and securely attached to the mask.



Beginning January 2003, the catchers' headgear must meet NOCSAE standards.

Catchers and other uniformed team members who receive warm-up pitches on the field of play must wear a mask with a throat protector and a protective helmet.

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

*Note: It is strongly recommended that anyone who receives warm-up pitches off the field of play (bullpen area, dead-ball area) should wear a mask with a throat protector and protective helmet.*

### **Electronic Equipment**

SECTION 6. Nonuniformed team personnel may sit in the stands for the purpose of videotaping a contest, recording pitch speeds, or charting pitches. Scouting information obtained from outside the dugout involving current opponents shall not be relayed or given to the playing field or to team personnel during the contest. A team may film or videotape only contests in which it is playing but may record (from video truck, satellite feed or air-waves, not video camera) any game which is or will be televised.

*Note: Statistical information may be entered into electronic equipment but may not be accessed or retrieved during the game.*

**EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected.**

### **Gloves/Mitts**

SECTION 7. All players except the catcher and first baseman must use a leather fielder's glove that meets the following maximum specifications:

Palm width: 8 inches; top opening of web: 5 inches; web top to bottom: 7 ¼ inches; thumb top to bottom edge: 9 ¼ inches; highest finger top to bottom edge: 14 inches.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Helmets**

**SECTION 8. a. Offense.** While batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle, each offensive player is required to wear a double-earflap protective helmet approved by the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE). All helmets must be the same color and the embossed NOCSAE stamp and exterior warning label must be visible.

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

Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or intentionally removing the helmet while actively running the bases shall result in the player being declared out but shall not remove a force play. The ball remains live but the umpire shall signal delayed dead ball.

**Exception:** If the ball is dead or no apparent play is obvious, no one shall be called out.

**b. Catcher.** The catcher is required to wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. Beginning in January 2003, the helmet must bear the embossed NOCSAE seal.

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

- c. **Defense.** A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets must be the same color. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a nonglossy finish.
- d. **Attachable face mask.** Any player may wear a helmet with a commercially manufactured protective face mask attached. The face mask must be attached by the manufacturer or attached by a procedure approved by the manufacturer.

### **Jewelry**

SECTION 9. Players shall not wear jewelry.

#### **Exceptions:**

- a. Necklaces shall be allowed as long as they are taped to secure their position and tucked in.
- b. Medical alert bracelets may be worn but must be taped to the body.
- c. Hair barrettes are allowed since they are not considered jewelry.

**EFFECT—If an umpire observes a player wearing jewelry other than what is allowed, the umpire shall direct the player to remove it. Failure to remove the jewelry when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection.**

### **Shoes**

SECTION 10. Shoes are considered equipment and are therefore not subject to the uniform logo rule (see Rule 3-11-f). All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal spikes. Spikes must not extend in excess of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch from the sole and may not be round. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

### **Uniforms**

SECTION 11. All eligible players shall be attired with uniforms (jersey, pants, shorts and socks) of the same style, color and trim. Uniform accessories (i.e., foul weather wear, head gear, knee/shin pads, undershirts and undershorts) are optional parts of the uniform and may be mixed. Uniforms, all accessories and protective equipment must be worn properly. **Exception:** A uniform part that must be changed because of saturation of blood shall not cause the player to be penalized.

- a. **Coaches' uniform.** Coaches must be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.
- b. **Foul-weather wear.** Sweatshirts, sweat pants, nylon windbreakers and jackets may be worn. Foul-weather garments worn by multiple players

should be of the same style, color and trim but must not be distracting, interfere with the game or pose a safety risk to the player(s) or her opponents.

- c. **Headgear.** Visors, headbands and caps are uniform accessories and may be mixed. All headgear must be of the same predominant color and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Plastic visors, bandannas and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear even if covered or worn under a cap or helmet. **Exception:** The catcher's headgear may be of different color than other defender's headgear.
- d. **Jersey.** All uniform jerseys must have a whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back. The number(s) or its outline shall be of contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. It is recommended that new jerseys have 3- to 4-inch high numbers of contrasting color on the front of the jersey. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number

*Note-0 and 00 are considered the same number.*

If duplicate numbers exist, only one player may be in the game at a time or one of the players must change her number or jersey.

*Note: Securing sleeves to simulate a sleeveless jersey is considered wearing the uniform improperly.*

- e. **Knee/shin pads.** Knee or shin pads, if worn, must all be the same color.
- f. **Logos.** A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the playing field, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:
1. Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, softball bats, gloves, batting gloves) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public.
  2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including socks, warm-ups) and all other uniform accessories (e.g., headbands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo.
- g. **Pants/shorts.** The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, but all players on the same team must be attired the same way.

**h. Undershirts/undershorts (sliders).** It is not required that players wear undershirts or undershorts, but if more than one player wears one, the apparel must be the same in color. Shirt style and sleeve length may vary. Visible undergarments must be in solid colors and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn or slit).

**EFFECT (a)-(h)—The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not complying with the uniform rule. Any player not correcting the uniform violation shall be ejected.**

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# RULE 4

## Game Personnel

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### **Assistant Coach**

SECTION 1. An assistant coach is responsible for aiding the head coach. An assistant coach assumes responsibility for the team in the event the head coach is unavailable to perform the duties of the head coach.

### **Authorized Personnel on the Field**

SECTION 2. Only the following personnel involved in the game shall be allowed on the playing field: players, coaches, umpires, medical personnel, team managers, bat handlers, authorized media personnel (at the discretion of the home team) and authorized grounds crew personnel.

### **Bands**

SECTION 3. Bands, or any component thereof, shall not play while the ball is live. Play may occur immediately prior to the team's offensive half inning and/or for about 10 seconds immediately following a score.

### **Base Coach**

SECTION 4. A base coach may be the head coach, an assistant coach, a team manager or an eligible, uniformed team member who occupies the coach's box at first base or third base to direct the offense. Base coaches are restricted to the coaches' boxes (only one base coach per box) prior to release of the pitch.

*Note: Unlike most other sports, the base coach is in the field of play and, therefore, must be reasonably mobile.*

### **Head Coach**

SECTION 5. The head coach is the person employed or appointed by an institution to be responsible for the softball team. The head coach is accountable for:

- a. The team's conduct;
- b. Observance of the official rules;
- c. Ensuring that all players are properly, legally and safely equipped; and
- d. All communication with the umpire whether initiated by assistants or other team personnel. If the head coach leaves the field, he or she should inform the umpire of his or her temporary replacement.

**Media**

SECTION 6. Media authorized by the home team may be in designated areas at the discretion of the host institution. See Rule 9-11 (interference).

**Medical Personnel**

SECTION 7. If, during a game, an athlete, coach or umpire is injured and requires medical attention, on-site medical personnel shall be responsible for treating the injured party appropriately. If he/she can be treated without undue delay, play shall be suspended until the injured party has received appropriate medical care. If the injury to an athlete requires extensive treatment and the injured athlete can be safely removed from the playing field, an eligible substitute shall replace the injured player and play shall be resumed. In the event of either a serious injury or an injury of unknown severity, the injured party should remain on the field until medical personnel can arrange for transportation that will not compromise the injury.

Aggressive treatment of open wounds or skin lesions should be followed. In particular, whenever a participant suffers a laceration or wound where oozing or bleeding occurs, the practice or game should be stopped at the earliest possible time, and the participant should leave the field of play and be given appropriate medical treatment. An injured athlete should not return to the field of play without the approval of medical personnel.

**Official Scorer**

SECTION 8. The host team or games management director of a tournament shall designate an official scorer before each game. It is recommended that the official scorer be seated in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout) whenever possible. The official scorer shall rule on all scoring within the game and ensure that the home team's and visitor's scorebooks concur. For a complete listing of the official scorer's duties, see Rule 14-1.

**On-Site Administrator**

SECTION 9. Host administration shall designate an on-site administrator whose responsibilities include:

1. Determine, within one hour of game time and with the assistance of participating coaches, the fitness of the field in the event of unsatisfactory weather or facility conditions;

2. Ensure the existence of proper sporting conditions and behavior of spectators throughout competition;
3. Make him/herself known to umpires and opposing coaches prior to the contest but no later than the pregame meeting.

### **Public-Address Announcer**

SECTION 10. The public-address announcer is considered part of the games management staff and should introduce the teams and announce the game in a professional manner. He or she should set the stage for positive response from the spectators and shall refrain from baiting or taunting the teams or commenting on the umpire's calls.

The public-address facilities shall not be available to or used by spectators, student yell leaders or any nongame administrative personnel.

### **Team Manager**

SECTION 11. Team managers are responsible for duties assigned by the head and/or assistant coaches. They are considered team personnel and are entitled to occupy space in the dugout, on the field or in the press box as requested by the head coach. Managers shall be held accountable for their actions as representatives of their institution.

### **Umpires**

SECTION 12. Game officials shall be the plate umpire and one, two or three base umpires. A minimum of two officials must be contracted for each game. However, a game may be played with one official due to unforeseen circumstances if the opposing coaches agree. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team representative to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties. Each umpire is an approved official of the institution, league or conference and is authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpire(s) shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sporting behavior. For a complete listing of the umpires' duties, see Rule 15.



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# RULE 5

## Pregame Procedures

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### **Fitness of the Field**

- SECTION 1. a. When on-site within one hour before game time, the coaches of both teams and/or the on-site administrator shall decide whether a game shall not be started because of unsatisfactory conditions of weather or playing field, except for the second game of a doubleheader.
- b. Should bad weather or unfit conditions exist during a game, the plate umpire shall be the sole judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play.
- c. The plate umpire of the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of a second game of a doubleheader.

### **Game Balls**

SECTION 2. Game balls must be available a minimum of 60 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the game.

### **Pregame Practice**

- SECTION 3. a. **Batting.** If batting practice is desired and conditions allow, the visiting team must be allowed a minimum of 30 minutes of batting practice beginning no less than 60 minutes and no more than 90 minutes prior to the game as scheduled by the host team. Whether the game field or alternate facilities are used, the visiting team shall be given equal access to these areas (e.g., batting cages, field space) along with the use of such pitching machine(s) and machine balls, screens and tees as are available to the home team.
- b. **Fielding.** If conditions allow, each team will be permitted a maximum of eight minutes of defensive warm up on the game field. The host team shall determine which team will take pregame infield/outfield first.

*Note: The opposing team shall not be on the field of play during the pregame infield/outfield. **Exception:** The opposing team may have a pitcher and catcher warm up together with two additional teammates posted near them for protection purposes. All four members of the opposing team must be posi-*

*tioned in foul territory.*

- c. **Pitching.** Each bullpen must be in satisfactory condition for pregame warm-up for the home and visiting teams. If the visiting bullpen is not comparable to the home team's bullpen, the visiting team's pitcher(s) shall be allowed to warm up in the home team's bullpen for up to 20 of the final 30 minutes before game time.

*Note: The visiting team's head coach must first appeal to the home team's head coach for a correction of the condition of the practice bullpen. If this does not resolve the problem, the visiting head coach is entitled to time (not to exceed 20 minutes) to prepare his or her starting pitcher for the game in the home team's bullpen. This warm-up time in the home team's bullpen shall be within the final 30 minutes before game time.*

### **Umpires' Duties**

**SECTION 4.** The umpires should report to the field and notify the home-team coaches of their arrival at least 30 minutes before the start of the game.

- a. Prior to each game, the umpires shall for legality and safety, inspect equipment, particularly the bats and helmets. Umpires should make certain that dented, bent or illegal bats, or broken helmets, are not available for use during the game (i.e., not allowed in the dugout). To determine whether a bat with dent(s) or a flat spot is legal, a bat ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.

**EFFECT—If, after a warning, a player continues to use illegal equipment, the individual shall be ejected from the game.**

- b. Check the condition of the field, inspect all playing lines and markers for proper location and adequate visibility, and direct the host institution to correct problems, if possible, or be prepared to make a ground rule to address the situation.

**EFFECT—If the field dimensions, equipment and facilities are illegal, the game is subject to being declared "no contest," if conditions are not corrected in a reasonable length of time.**

### **Lineup Exchange**

**SECTION 5.** Each team must submit a complete lineup card to the official scorer and opponent 20 minutes before game time and to the plate umpire at the pregame meeting. The following information shall be recorded on the lineup card: first and last name, uniform number and position of the starting players listed in the order in which they are to bat; and the first and last name and uniform number of all eligible substitutes. *Note: First names may be omitted from the written lineup as long as they are printed on the*

*card's roster.* **Exception:** A team playing consecutive games on the same day shall deliver a lineup card for the succeeding game to the opposing coach and umpire no later than the pregame meeting.

### **Pregame Meeting**

**SECTION 6.** Prior to the scheduled starting time, the plate umpire shall conduct the pregame meeting with a member of each coaching staff. During this meeting, warm-ups shall be suspended and the plate umpire shall:

- a. Receive from the home team and visiting team their respective batting orders on a lineup card. The umpire shall review each team's lineup with its coach to be sure it is complete and shall provide one last opportunity for changes without the changes being charged as substitutions. Once returned to the umpire, each team's lineup is official. In the event of a subsequent change, the plate umpire shall report the substitution(s) to the opposing team, official scorer and public-address announcer.

**EFFECT—If either the name, number or position of a player is incorrect, it is handled as an appeal play (see Rule 7-1a).**

*Notes:*

1. *Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*
  2. *All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*
- b. Review ground rules with both teams.
  - c. Review special game rules (e.g., tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules).
  - d. Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.
  - e. Collect a minimum of five game softballs, one new ball rubbed up by each team and three additional balls from the home team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications and are of suitable quality for play.

### **Ground Rules**

**SECTION 7.** A local ground rule may be adopted where special facility conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. Should teams not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the umpires.

### **Pregame Suggested Protocol**

**SECTION 8.** It is recommended the following protocol be followed: 1) team infields and/or shuttle balls; 2) pregame meeting; 3) introductions; 4) national anthem (if applicable); 5) play.

**Pregame Announcement**

SECTION 9. The public-address announcer shall instruct the spectators that the visiting players, coaches and game officials are guests of the home institution and should be treated as such. The announcer shall read the following crowd-control statement between the national anthem and the first pitch:

“The NCAA promotes proper sporting behavior by student-athletes, coaches and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner.

Spectators are reminded that they are prohibited from entering the playing area. Profanity, racial or sexist comments or other intimidating actions directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the site of competition. Artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers shall not be permitted, and such instruments shall be removed from the spectator areas.

Please be alert for batted or thrown balls which may cause injury or damage to personal property to not only participants but also to spectators. The NCAA, (home school name) and (visiting school name) thank you for your cooperation.”

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# RULE 6

## The Game

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Softball is a game made up of two teams of nine to 10 players each. In college softball, the two teams represent their respective institutions and play the game in conformity with the NCAA playing rules.

The team at bat is known as the offensive team, and its objective is to have its batters become base runners and its runners to advance legally, touching all bases without being put out. Each time this is done, a run is scored.

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

### Scoring of Runs

SECTION 1. a. The object of each team is to score more runs than its opponent. The winner of the game shall be the team that has scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.

- b. One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches first, second and third bases and home plate before the third out of an inning.
- c. No run shall be scored during a turn at bat if the third out of an inning is the result of:
  1. A batter-runner being called out before reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
  2. A runner being put out by a tag or live-ball appeal play before the lead runner touches home plate.
  3. A preceding runner being declared out on an appeal play.

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

### Game Winner

SECTION 2. The winner of the game shall be the team that scores more runs in a regulation game.

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

### **Starting the Game**

SECTION 3. The game begins when the plate umpire calls or signals, "Play/Play ball." The game shall start on time unless the home team gives previous notice that the game has been postponed or will be delayed in starting.

### **Positions of the Offensive Team**

SECTION 4. The offensive team:

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

**EFFECT (d)-(e)—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately move away, the individual shall be ejected from the game.**

### **Positions of the Defensive Team**

SECTION 5. At the start of or during a game, all players of the defensive team except the catcher must be in fair territory when the ball is put in play.

- a. **Pitcher.** The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when with her hands apart, she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's

plate and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without being in possession of the ball, and she may not simulate the pitching position, with or without the ball, when near the pitcher's plate.

- b. **Catcher.** The catcher must be in the catcher's box from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. No part of the catcher's feet may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released. **Exception:** If the batter is positioned in the front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer to the plate without effect. At all times, the catcher must avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter legally has the right to the entire batter's box.
- c. **Infielders/Outfielders.** All infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. If a fielder's feet are touching the line or are in fair territory, she is considered in the field of play.

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

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

- d. All personnel except the nine defensive players on the field must remain in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is in play.
- e. Between innings, warm ups shall be limited to:
1. Pitching from the pitcher's circle to home plate;
  2. Throwing and catching with one ball among the infielders currently in the game;
  3. Throwing and catching among any number of players in the outfield; and
  4. Warm-up running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

*Note: Fungo hitting is not permitted on the playing field once the game has begun.*

#### **Team First in Field**

SECTION 6. The members of the designated home team shall take their positions in the field at the start of the game and shall bat last in the inning.

#### **Live Ball**

SECTION 7. When the umpire calls "Play/Play ball," the ball is live and in play. The ball remains live and in play until, for legal cause, or at the umpire's call of "Time/Timeout" suspending play, the ball becomes dead.

**Delayed Dead Ball**

SECTION 8. A delayed dead ball is called under the following circumstances:

- a. An illegal pitch (Rule 10-8).
- b. Catcher obstruction (Rule 9-18).
- c. Fielder obstruction (Rule 9-18).
- d. Plate umpire interference (Rule 9-16).
- e. Detached equipment interference with a batted, pitched or thrown ball (Rule 9).

**Dead Ball**

SECTION 9. a. A dead ball is a ball that is out of play. It may have become blocked or ruled dead.

- b. While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of: 1) acts that occurred while the ball was live (such as, but not limited to, an illegal pitch, interference, obstruction, an overthrow, a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field) or 2) as a result of a dead ball appeal.
- c. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is dead need not touch intervening bases.

**Suspension and Resumption of Play**

SECTION 10. a. "Time/Timeout" shall be called and signaled for the purpose of suspending play (see Rule 15-10). The umpire holds up a hand instructing the pitcher not to pitch until the batter, catcher and umpire are ready. The ball is dead and no other play shall be allowed until the umpire lowers his/her hand signifying "Play/Play ball."

1. Umpires must not permit the calling of "Time/Timeout" by players and coaches when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.
  2. The umpire shall not call "Time/Timeout" until a play has been completed.
  3. After a base on balls, the umpire shall not call "Time/Timeout" until the batter-runner has stopped at first base and each other runner forced to advance has stopped at her next base.
- b. "No pitch" shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire is holding play.
  - c. A runner, who is touching a base when time is called, may not advance during the suspension of play.



d. After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher takes her place on the pitcher's plate with the ball in her possession and the umpire calls/signals "Play/Play ball." The umpire shall not put the ball in play until all runners have reoccupied the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.

1. The pitcher must allow sufficient time for the runner to return to her base.

**EFFECT**—When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, she will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. "No pitch" shall be declared by the umpire.

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

**EFFECT**—After allowing sufficient time for the runner to reoccupy her base at the end of playing action, the umpire shall declare the runner out.

## Conferences

### SECTION 11. a. Charged defensive conference.

1. There may be only one charged defensive conference per inning.  
**Exception:** One additional conference, is permitted for each pitching change provided the new pitcher has not yet pitched in the inning.

*Note: Conferences are not cumulative, and a team shall never have more than one available at any one time.*

The plate umpire shall notify the head coach or acting head coach when a defensive conference has been charged. The plate umpire shall make a note of it on the team's lineup card and shall record the inning in which it occurred. A charged defensive conference ends when the team representative(s) crosses the foul line.

**EFFECT**—The umpire shall not permit more than one defensive conference per inning. The team representative(s), who defies an umpire by attempting to hold another charged conference, shall be immediately ejected.

2. The following are not charged defensive conferences:
  - (a) Shouting instructions from the dugout area to the defense without requesting a suspension of play.
  - (b) Requesting a suspension of play in order to remove the pitcher from the pitching position (provided the umpire is informed of the change before the representative steps over the foul line) or to make a defensive substitution.

- (c) Conferring with the defense during a charged offensive conference or during a suspension of play caused by injury and ending the meeting when the umpire calls, "Let's play ball."

*Note: The defensive team may be charged with a defensive conference if not ready to play following the umpire's declaration.*

- (d) Requesting a suspension of play for an obviously incapacitated player.
- (e) Requesting a suspension of play in order to attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
- (f) Requesting a suspension of play for a defensive player to make an equipment change.

**b. Charged offensive conference.**

1. There may be only one charged offensive conference per inning. The plate umpire shall notify the head coach or acting head coach when an offensive conference has been charged. The plate umpire shall make a note of it on the team's lineup card and shall record the inning in which it occurred.

**EFFECT—The umpire shall not permit more than one offensive conference per inning. The team representative(s) who defies an umpire by attempting to hold another charged conference, shall be immediately ejected.**

2. The following are not charged offensive conferences:
  - (a) Shouting instructions to the offense without requesting a suspension of play.
  - (b) Requesting a suspension of play in order to make an offensive lineup change.
  - (c) Conferring with the offense during a charged defensive conference or during a suspension of play caused by injury and ending the meeting when the umpire calls, "Let's play ball."  
*Note: The offensive team may be charged with an offensive conference if not ready to play following the umpire's declaration.*
  - (d) Requesting a suspension of play for an obviously incapacitated player.
  - (e) Requesting a suspension of play in order to attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.

- (f) Requesting a suspension of play for a batter or runner to make an equipment change.
- (g) Requesting a suspension of play for a runner to put on a jacket/sweatshirt.

### Regulation Game

SECTION 12. a. A regulation game shall be seven innings unless:

1. The game is extended because of a tied score (see Rule 6-14).
2. The game is shortened because: (a) the home team needs none or only part of its half of the seventh inning to score more runs than the visiting team; (b) the umpire calls the game (see Rule 6-16); or (c) the eight-run rule is invoked (see Rule 6-13).

*Note: Weather or darkness may shorten the second game of a doubleheader but not the first, if both games are played.*

- b. It is a regulation game when the umpire terminates play by calling, "Game." If a team wishes to lodge an appeal or protest on the final play of the game, it must immediately inform the plate umpire of that intent.
- c. Speed-up, free substitution, time limits or any other optional rules may not be used for official NCAA contests.

### Eight-Run-Rule Game (Regulation)

SECTION 13. A regulation eight-run-rule game shall be declared by the plate umpire if one team is ahead by eight or more runs after five or more equal innings. Complete innings must be played unless the home team reaches the eight-run leadwhile at bat. Any hit that results in an eight-run lead by the home team (after 4½ innings) is treated as a game-ending hit (see rule 14-6). Whenever the visiting team reaches the limit in the fifth or sixth inning, the home team must have its opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

*Note: The eight-run rule may not be set aside by competing teams, league, conference or tournament rule. **Exception:** For NCAA tournament play only, the respective NCAA divisional softball committees may elect to remove the eight-run rule for the championship game, provided it is formally declared before the start of the tournament.*

### Tie Game (Regulation)

SECTION 14. A regulation tie game shall be declared by the plate umpire if the score is tied when the game must be called after five or more equal innings or if the home team is at bat when the game is terminated and has

scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs as the visiting team.

*Notes:*

1. *All individual and team averages from a tie game shall be incorporated into the official playing record.*
2. *If the competing teams, league, conference or tournament committee wish not to be bound by the tie-game rule and wish to complete a regulation tie game from the point at which the game was terminated, they may do so by formally opting to use the halted-game rule. Otherwise, a game stopped after five or more innings with the score tied is considered a regulation tie game, not a halted game, and may not be resumed. Intent to use the halted-game rule must be declared before the game.*

### **Tiebreaker Rule**

SECTION 15. If, after the completion of at least seven innings of play, the score is tied, the following tiebreaker may be played to determine a winning team:

- a. Starting with the top of the predetermined inning (it is recommended for use beginning in the 10th inning) and each half-inning to follow, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the No. 5 batter is the lead-off batter, the No. 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). A substitute may be inserted for the runner. For scoring, see Rule 14-29.
- b. Whether or not the tiebreaker procedure will be used, and when it shall be invoked, must be determined at the pregame meeting. Use of the tiebreaker also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.

### **Called Game**

SECTION 16. a. A regulation called game shall be declared by the plate umpire if, after five or more innings have been completed, he or she terminates play (for reasons such as lightning, darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger). The score shall be that of the last equal inning played, except that in the following circumstances the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:

1. If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in their five offensive half-innings.
2. If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.

3. If the home team is at bat when the game is called and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs or more runs than the visiting team.
  4. If a team is ahead by eight or more runs after five innings, or if the home team is at least eight runs ahead after four and one-half innings.
- b. After consultation with the host institution representative, the game may be called at any time due to facility problems, crowd behavior or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger.

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

### **Halted Game**

- SECTION 17. a. A halted game shall be declared by the plate umpire if play must be temporarily suspended with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. When play resumes after having been temporarily suspended, it must start at exactly the point of being halted. The lineups and batting orders of both teams must be exactly the same as they were, subject to the rules of substitution, and any player who played or was announced as a substitute before the game was halted must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- b. Whether or not the halted game rule will be used must be determined at the pregame meeting. Use of the halted game rule also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.
- c. During the regular season, if a game is both halted and regulation, regulation will take precedence assuming the reasonable efforts made to complete the game have failed.

*Note 1: If the halted game rule is not utilized, a game stopped with the score tied is considered a regulation tie game, not a halted game, and may not be resumed.*

*Note 2: See Appendix E for Lightning Safety Standards.*

### **No Game**

SECTION 18. "No game" shall be declared by the umpire if he or she terminates play before five innings have been completed by each team.

#### **Exceptions:**

1. If the home team scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning, or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the visiting team has scored in their five offensive half-innings, the umpire shall award the

game to the home team, and it shall count as a regulation game.

2. Teams previously have agreed to resume a halted game.

*Note: Individual and team averages from a “no game” shall not be incorporated into the official playing record.*

### **Forfeited Game**

SECTION 19. a. A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpires in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

1. If a team is on site but refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within five minutes after the umpire has called “Play/Play ball,” unless such delay in appearing or in commencing the game is unavoidable.
2. If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play.
3. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume play within two minutes after the umpire has called “Play/Play ball.”
4. If a team employs tactics obviously designed to delay or shorten the game.
5. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully and persistently violated.
6. If the order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel is not obeyed in a timely manner and a final 60-second forfeit warning has been issued and has elapsed.
7. If, because of the removal of players from the game by the umpire or for any cause, there are fewer than nine players on either team.
8. If, after consultation with host institution representatives, the umpire believes student-athletes, game officials, spectators or any umpire is in danger due to crowd or team behavior.
9. If an ejected person is discovered to be participating again.

b. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.  
Notes:

1. *All game umpires must concur in order to declare a game forfeited.*
2. *If the umpires declare the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (Appendix C), in writing, to the NCAA soft-ball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours following the game.*

3. *Neither the outcome nor the statistics in any completed contest are reversible by a forfeit due to postgame administrative actions, except as provided by actions of the Committee on Infractions. The actual results of the game and the statistics shall be entered as such in both teams' all-time records, as well as the coaches' records and in individual statistics. Games later forfeited shall be denoted by an asterisk and a footnote. If a forfeit is declared while a game is in progress, all statistics (other than won-lost records and coaches' records) are voided unless the game has progressed to a "reasonable point of conclusion" (five innings), in which case all statistics shall count and shall be reflected in all records. The team's won-lost record shall include the forfeit, but if the statistics are voided, all averages in future rankings shall be computed without inclusion of the forfeited game.*

### **No Contest**

- SECTION 20. a. When a team does not appear (e.g., because of weather conditions, accidents, breakdown of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes), a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered as "no contest."
- b. There shall be no forfeit of a contest until the umpires or other appropriate contest official(s) have assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

### **Doubleheaders**

- SECTION 21. a. The first game of a doubleheader must be completed before the second game may start.
- b. The second game should start 20 minutes after completion of the first game, unless otherwise determined by mutual consent.





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# RULE 7

## Appeals and Protests

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### Appeals

SECTION 1. a. An appeal is a play on which the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player. The following may be appealed:

1. Participation by an improper player. (Effect see 8-4 and Appendix A)
2. Missing a base. (Effect see 12-19 and 12-25b)
3. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (Effect see 12-8c and 12-25)
4. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base (Effect see 12-6a).

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5. Switching baserunners on occupied bases. (Effect see 12-8f)

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b. A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.

1. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire should make no call or signal. If a proper appeal play is made, the umpire should then make a decision on this appeal play.
2. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

c. Appeals may be made when the ball is live (in play) or dead (out of play).

1. A **live-ball appeal** is made by touching the base the runner missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided she is still on the playing field. Runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play. Each runner may leave

her base when (a) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (b) the pitcher makes a play on any runner.

2. A **dead-ball appeal** is made verbally. Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called, a coach or any fielder, with or without the ball, may ask the umpire to make a decision on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire whose responsibility it was to observe the base and runner steps forward and makes the safe or out call. If the appeal is directed toward the wrong umpire, that umpire should refer the question to the responsible umpire. The responsible umpire should then step forward and make the call. If timeout is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant it. No runner may leave her base during this period as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.

*Notes:*

1. *If the ball goes out of play, the dead-ball appeal cannot be made until the umpire places a new ball into the game.*
2. *If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitching plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.*
3. *If "Play/Play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call "Time/Timeout" and allow the appeal process.*

d. An appeal must be made:

1. Before the next pitch, whether legal or illegal.
2. Before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
3. Before the umpires leave the field of play (on the last play of the game). If any situation arises that could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should wait until all defensive infielders have crossed the foul line.

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

- e. More than one appeal play may be made, but guessing games should not be allowed.

**EXAMPLE:** The runner misses second base by a step but just touches the corner of third base. Even though an appeal is made at third (the umpire called the runner safe), an appeal may be made at second on the same runner.

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

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

- g. With regard to the scoring of runs:

1. If there are two outs before the appeal on a runner, the appeal becoming the third out, no runners following the appealed out shall score, and if the appeal is a force out, no runners preceding or following the appealed out shall score.

*Notes:*

- (a) *If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.*
  - (b) *There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner or runner.*
2. If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a timing play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.
3. An appeal may be made after the third out in order to nullify a run as long as it is made properly.

**EXAMPLE:** With one out and runners on first and third, the batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each runner leaves her base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defensive team then makes an appeal at third base before the infielders leave the infield. The runner on third will then be declared out also, and the run will not count.

**Protests****SECTION 2. a. Protests shall be allowed in the following cases:**

1. Participation by an ineligible player or coach who either fails to meet NCAA, conference or institutional eligibility rules or who is temporarily ineligible due to suspension.
  2. Failure to apply the correct rule to a situation (e.g., a batted ball hits the foul pole in flight and is declared a foul ball).
  3. Failure to impose the correct effect for a given violation (e.g., a base runner is awarded one base for a fielder's throw that enters dead-ball territory).
  4. Misapplication of a playing rule (e.g., the umpire ejects a base runner for failure to slide at the plate even though the catcher had not yet received the ball).
- b. Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment of an umpire. Examples of protests that will not be considered are:
1. Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
  2. Whether a runner was safe or out.
  3. Whether a pitched ball was a ball or strike.
  4. Whether a pitch was legal or illegal.
  5. Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.
  6. Whether a runner did or did not leave her base too soon on a caught fly ball.
  7. Whether a fly was or was not caught legally.
  8. Whether a fly was or was not an infield fly.
  9. Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.
  10. Whether the field was or was not fit to continue or resume play.
  11. Whether there was or was not sufficient light to continue play.
  12. Whether a player or live ball did or did not enter a dead-ball area or touch some object or person in dead-ball territory.
  13. Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.
  14. Whether a batted ball was or was not touched by a fielder before clearing the fence in flight.
- c. Protests may involve both a matter of judgment and the misinterpretation of a rule.

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

- d. Any game started on a nonregulation field shall not be protested for that reason.
- e. During regular-season play, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:
  1. Following input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rule book.
  2. The protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and submit a written protest to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.
  3. If the protesting coach decides to continue the game under protest:
    - (a) The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game will be resumed under protest.
    - (b) The plate umpire and the protesting coach must note and record the relevant information including:
      - (1) The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
      - (2) The names and phone numbers or addresses of the umpires and official scorer.
      - (3) The rule and section of the official rules or a copy of the ground rule under which the protest is made.
      - (4) The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.
    - (c) Within 72 hours, the plate umpire and the protesting coach must each complete an official protest form (see Appendix D) and send it to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The opposing coach may also choose to complete and send the official protest form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

- (d) The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:
  - (1) The protest is considered to be invalid, and the game score stands as played.
  - (2) The protest is considered valid, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.

*Notes:*

- (a) *It is the responsibility of each conference to determine if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
    - (b) *For nonconference games, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to determine if the games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
  - (3) The protest for participation by an ineligible player is determined to be valid, and the offending team shall forfeit the game(s) played.
- (e) When a protest is upheld and a game is rescheduled:
  - (1) The same lineup card must be used when the game is resumed, and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.
  - (2) If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because she was legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew a suspension.

f. During play that determines an NCAA qualifier (automatic or play in) and during NCAA championship play itself, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:

1. Following input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a

- timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rule book.
2. The protesting coach has the right to submit a written protest to a protest committee comprised of the “off” umpire, the umpire in chief (if not involved with the call) and an additional member (chair) who is:
    - (a) Predetermined by the conference for a conference championship;
    - (b) The tournament director for an NCAA play in;
    - (c) The NCAA representative for regional play; or
    - (d) A designated member of the women’s softball championship committee for the NCAA championship series.
  3. If the protesting coach proceeds with the protest:
    - (a) The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game is being suspended pending the results of the protest.
    - (b) The protesting coach must complete the appropriate protest form (provided in Appendix D of the NCAA rule book or in the championship handbook) and state the rule in question at the time of the action or incident which caused the protest.
    - (c) All protests must be ruled upon immediately by the protest committee. The committee shall confer with the umpires (and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, if available) before making its decision, and the chair shall make a written report to the chair of the respective women’s softball committee and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

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# RULE 8

## Players and Substitutes

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### Players on a Team

SECTION 1. a. Each team shall have at least nine eligible players in the game at all times. The players and the numbers by which they are identified are as follows:

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

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

2. With a designated player—10 positions: pitcher (1), catcher (2), first baseman (3), second baseman (4), third baseman (5), shortstop (6), left fielder (7), center fielder (8), right fielder (9), designated player (DP).
- b. A defensive player is entitled to change to a different defensive position at any time. The plate umpire shall report the change to the official scorer and to the opposing coach before the next pitch.

### Designated Player/Tenth Player

SECTION 2. The following regulations govern the use of a designated player (DP) and a tenth player.

#### DP (Designated Player)

##### a. Lineup Card

1. One player in the starting lineup may be batted for by a designated player (DP), provided the DP is declared on the lineup card before the game.
2. The DP's name, uniform number and position must be placed

#### Tenth Player

##### a. Lineup Card

1. The player for whom the DP bats is called a tenth player. There cannot be a DP without a tenth player. The tenth player must be declared on the lineup card before the game.
2. The tenth player's name, uni



**DP (Designated Player)**

in one of the first nine batting positions in the lineup.

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

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

**b. Primary Role**

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

**c. Uncharged Substitution**

The DP may go in and out of the game for any player (including the tenth player), at any defensive position, any time and any number of times without it counting as a substitution for anyone except the tenth player.

**Tenth player**

form number and position number must be placed in the 10th (non-batting) position in the lineup, immediately after the batting order.

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

3. The tenth player may remain in the 10th position for the entire game, or may assume the DP's position in the batting order and bat/run for herself—no one else.

**b. Primary Role**

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

**c. Uncharged Substitution**

The tenth player may go in and out of the DP's position in the batting order any time and any number of times. This action counts as a substitution for the DP.

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

**DP (Designated Player)****d. Charged Substitution**

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

**e. Reentry**

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

**Tenth player****d. Charged Substitution**

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

**e. Reentry**

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

**DP (Designated Player)**

and defense for another batter in the order, or (c) leave the game and let a player come off the bench to become a substitute DP. If the tenth player reenters to play offense and defense, the DP must leave the game.

3. A substitute DP may not reenter once removed from the game offensively.

**f. Options**

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

**Tenth Player**

occupied by the DP or a substitute tenth player, and play both offense and defense.

3. A substitute tenth player may not reenter once removed from the game defensively.

**f. Options**

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

**DP (Designated Player)**

and is not considered to have left the game because she remains in the batting order.

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

**g. Limitations**

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

**Tenth Player****g. Limitations**

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

**Ejected Player/Coach/Personnel**

SECTION 3. a. Umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for just cause. See also Rule 13, Misconduct.

- b. The order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel must be obeyed in a timely manner.

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

- c. An ejected player may remain in the dugout but may not communicate with opponents or umpires.

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

- d. Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field and dugout. They may occupy space near or behind the home run fence, but they may not go behind the backstop, near the dugout or bullpen. They may not communicate (visually or verbally) further with the teams or umpires. The umpire should notify the offender that failure to comply will result in a forfeit. *Exception:* An ejected coach may participate in a limited capacity during a game only to attend to an injured or ill player or to ensure the safety of players when their safety is in question.

**EFFECT—A forfeit is declared by the umpires in favor of the team not at fault.**

### **Improper Player**

**SECTION 4. a. Batting Out of Order.** A player is batting out of order when she fails to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.

1. Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
2. The penalty for batting out of order varies depending upon when the infraction is reported to the plate umpire.

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

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

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

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

*Notes:*

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

**b. Inaccurate lineup card.** (See also Appendix A)

- EFFECT—(a)** If reported by the offensive team, or if the defensive team is in violation but the player has not made a play or after the offending player has made a play on defense but after a pitch (legal or illegal) has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory, the coach may correct the error without penalty by reporting the correct name, position, or number to the umpire.
- (b)** If reported by the offensive team immediately after the offending player makes a play on defense, and before the next pitch, the lineup card shall be corrected, and the offensive coach shall have the option to:
- (1)** Nullify the play. The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the infraction was reported and continues her turn at bat. Each runner returns to the last base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
  - (2)** Take the results of the play and disregard the violation.
- (c)** If reported by the defensive team during the offending player's turn at bat:
- (1)** The error may be corrected without penalty.
  - (2)** All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
  - (3)** The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (d)** If reported by the defensive team while the offending player is on offense, after she has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:
- (1)** The offending player shall be called out.
  - (2)** Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the offending batter or because of the

improper batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, walk, dropped third strike or a base hit shall be nullified.

- (3) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the offending player.
  - (4) The lineup card shall be corrected.
  - (e) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense, after she has completed her turn at bat and a pitch has been delivered to the following batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:
    - (1) The turn at bat is legal.
    - (2) All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
    - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
  - (f) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense as a pinch runner or the tie breaker runner, and it follows a pitch in which the runner has advanced one or more bases and before the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown.
    - (1) The offending player shall be called out.
    - (2) Any advance by other runners is nullified.
    - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
  - (g) In all other cases regarding runners who have not batted but are base runners, the error is correctable without penalty.
- c. **Unreported substitutions.** (See also Appendix A) The following regulations govern unreported substitutions:
1. If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, there is no penalty regardless of the length of time the unreported player was in the game. The unreported player shall be declared officially in the game.
  2. If an unreported player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is made (legal or illegal); there is no penalty. The unreported player shall be declared officially in the game.



3. If the unreported player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:

(a) A pitch has been thrown, but the unreported player still is at bat.

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

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

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

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

**EFFECT—The unreported player is declared officially in the game. In addition, the unreported player, if on base, is declared out. Any advance by base runners while the unreported player was at bat or due to her becoming a batter-runner is legal.**

4. If the unreported player is the baserunner placed on second base in the tie breaker or pinch runner and a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown and:

(a) The unreported player is on her original base when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

**EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The unreported player shall be called out and declared officially in the game.**

(b) The unreported player advances at least one base and before a pitch (legal or illegal) is thrown following the advance when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

**EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The unreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. Any advance by other base runners is nullified.**

- (c) The unreported player advances at least one base and a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown following the advance when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

**EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The unreported player is declared officially in the game. In addition, the unreported player, if on base, is declared out. Any advance of other base runners stands.**

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

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

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

**EFFECT (b)-(c)—The unreported player is declared officially in the game, and all play will stand.**

*Notes:*

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

- d. **Illegal Player(s).** (See also Appendix A) 1. Players who compete in the game but are not entitled to play include:

- (a) A starter who has reentered the game a second time.
- (b) A nonstarter who has entered the game a second time.
- (c) A player who is not listed on the lineup card.
- (d) An ejected player entering or reentering the game.
- (e) In the tiebreaker, a runner other than the player scheduled to bat ninth in the inning or her substitute (reported or unreported) who is placed on second base.

2. The following regulations govern illegal players:

- (a) If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, all play stands, regardless of the length of time the illegal player was in the game. The illegal player is ejected.
- (b) If the illegal player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is thrown (legal or illegal), the illegal player is ejected.
- (c) If the illegal player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:
  - (1) A pitch has been thrown, but the illegal player is still at bat.
  - (2) The illegal player has completed her turn at bat, but a pitch (legal or illegal) has not been thrown to the next batter, or the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.

**EFFECT (1)-(2) —The illegal player is called out and ejected.**

**Any advance by the batter-runner or base runners on the pitch (legal or illegal) immediately prior to the report shall be nullified. Any advance on previous pitches shall be legal.**

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

**EFFECT—The player is called out if on base and ejected.**

**Any advance by base runners while the illegal player was at bat or due to her becoming a batter-runner is legal.**

(4) The illegal player is the base runner placed on second base in the tiebreaker or a pinch runner and a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown and:

(a) The illegal player is on her original base when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

**EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The illegal player is out and ejected.**

(b) The illegal player advances at least one base and before a pitch (legal or illegal) is thrown following the advance when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

**EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The illegal player is out and ejected. Any advance by other base runners is nullified.**

(c) The illegal player advances at least one base and a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown following the advance when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

**EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The illegal player is ejected. In addition, the illegal player, if on base, is declared out. Any advance of other base runners stands.**

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

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

**EFFECT—The player is ejected. 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 she had before the report of the illegal player and each runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.**

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

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

**EFFECT (2)-(3)—The player is ejected, and all play will stand.**

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

**Starting Player**

SECTION 5. a. Once the lineup card has been reviewed and submitted to the umpire, it becomes official.

- b. Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to reenter the game one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order.  
**Exception:** The tenth player may reenter either in the designated player's position in the batting order or in her original (10th, nonbatting) position in the lineup.

**Substitute Player**

SECTION 6. a. **Player substitutions.** Player substitutions shall be governed by the following:

1. Any player may be substituted for at any time when the ball is dead.
2. The coach of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game. Projected reentries are not allowed.
3. Substitutes shall be considered officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
4. The substitute must take the place of the replaced player on the team's lineup card.
5. The plate umpire shall record any substitutions on the lineup card and announce immediately, or cause to be announced, any such substitutions.
6. The plate umpire shall report the change to both scorekeepers and the opposing coach before the next pitch.
7. If two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game simultaneously, the coach shall immediately designate to the plate umpire the position of each in the team's batting order.
8. The batter may be removed before having received a pitch, whether or not she has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.

- b. **Pitcher substitutions.** Pitching substitutions shall be governed by the following:

1. The pitcher may be removed from the pitching position before having delivered a pitch, whether or not the first batter facing her has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
2. Following a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw no more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.

**EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch in excess of five. *Exception:* This penalty does not apply if the pitching change is necessitated by an injury to the pitcher.**

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

**EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch.**

c. **Injured player substitutions.** The following regulations govern substitutions for an injured player:

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

### **Reentry**

**SECTION 7.** Any of the starting players, including a designated player and tenth player, may be substituted and reentered once, providing players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the order. The starting player and her substitute(s) may not be in the lineup at the same time. A substitute who is withdrawn may not reenter.

**EFFECT—A player who illegally reentered the game shall be ejected and subject to illegal player penalties.**

*Notes:*

1. *Violation of the reentry rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*
2. *If a substitution violates both the reentry and the player substitution rules, the illegal/unreported player shall be ejected and subject to illegal player penalties.*

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# RULE 9

## Blocked Ball, Interference and Obstruction

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### Blocked Ball

A blocked ball is a live batted, pitched or thrown ball that contacts:

- a. nongame personnel;
- b. game personnel in unauthorized areas;
- c. loose equipment;
- d. an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area; or
- e. dead-ball territory.

### Equipment Blocked Ball

**SECTION 1.** a. No loose equipment (i.e., gloves/mitts, hats, helmets, jackets, balls, on-deck batter's bats), miscellaneous items, or detached parts of a player's uniform, other than that being legally used in the game at the time, should be within playable territory as it could cause a blocked ball. Official equipment which may be within playable territory with no effect includes the batter's bat, the catcher's mask or helmet, umpire paraphernalia, and any helmet which has inadvertently fallen off the head of an offensive or defensive player during the course of play.

- b. If a ball becomes lodged in the clothing or attached equipment of an umpire or offensive player.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead; the batter and each base runner are awarded the bases they would have reached had the ball not become lodged.**

- c. If a ball becomes lodged in the clothing or attached equipment of a defensive player.

**EFFECT—The ball is live.**

- d. No base runner may intentionally remove her helmet or other personal equipment to deliberately interfere with a batted or thrown ball.

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

*Notes:*

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

### **Foul Batted Blocked Ball**

SECTION 2. A foul batted ball becomes blocked when it contacts game or nongame personnel or loose equipment belonging to either team.

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

### **Fair Batted Blocked Ball**

SECTION 3. A fair batted ball becomes blocked:

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

**EFFECT—The ball is dead.**

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

**If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, interference is ruled. The runner closest to home at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and other runners must return to the last base legally touched before the batted ball hit the loose equipment.**

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



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

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

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

### **Live Thrown Blocked Ball**

**SECTION 4.** A live thrown ball becomes blocked:

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

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

#### *Notes:*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Pitched Blocked Ball**

**SECTION 5.** A pitched ball becomes blocked when it lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.

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

#### **Catch and Carry Blocked Ball**

**SECTION 6.** A live batted or thrown ball becomes blocked when it is caught by a fielder and carried into dead-ball territory. This is commonly referred to as a "catch and carry" (see Rule 12-11).

#### **Game Personnel in Unauthorized Areas**

**SECTION 7.** A fair batted or thrown ball becomes blocked when it contacts game personnel in unauthorized areas (e.g., outside the dugout but in the field of play).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Interference (Offensive)

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

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

#### **Batter Interference**

**SECTION 8.** Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before she completes her turn at bat.

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

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

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

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

***Exceptions:***

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

*Note 1: The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at the plate.*

*Note 2: If the catcher or her throw to a base hits the batter or her bat while she is in the batter's box, the ball is live and there is no interference unless the contact is intentional and initiated by the batter.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Batter-Runner Interference**

SECTION 9. a. The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory. For example:

1. The batter may not contact the ball a second time if she is out of the batter's box (i.e., an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box), and the bat is still in her hand(s).

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

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

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

#### ***Exceptions:***

1. If the bat is out of the batter's hands (on the ground), the ball rolls against the bat, and in the umpire's judgment there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live, no one is out for interference, and base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.
  - (a) If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, it remains live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball.
  - (b) If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
2. If the batter, after hitting/slapping/bunting a fair ball, is still holding the bat in her hand(s) and is still on or within the batter's box when she contacts the ball a second time in fair territory, a foul ball is ruled; the ball is dead; and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

*Notes:*

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

1. the batter-runner may not slide into first base to interfere with the play or another runner, and

2. the batter-runner may not run outside the runner's lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. **Exception:** The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

*Note: The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is completely outside either line and in contact with the ground.*

- e. The batter-runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Coach Interference**

SECTION 10. a. A coach may not interfere with a fielder who has a reasonable opportunity to make a play on a foul fly ball.

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

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

*Note: The coach's box is not a sanctuary for the coach when a play is being made in the vicinity of the coach's box.*

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

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

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

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

### **Nongame Authorized Personnel Interference**

SECTION 11. If a live batted or thrown ball accidentally hits nongame personnel (e.g., media, field attendants), the ball remains live. It is not interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming. No nongame personnel may intentionally interfere with a live batted or thrown ball (i.e., kick or push the ball).

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

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

### **On-Deck Batter Interference**

SECTION 12. The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's reasonable opportunity to make a play.

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

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

### **Runner Interference**

SECTION 13. a. The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. For example:

1. The base runner may not contact a fair batted ball, while off base, before it touches a fielder or before it passes an infielder (other than the pitcher) who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
2. The base runner may not contact an untouched, fair batted ball after it passes an infielder if another fielder has a chance to make a play.
3. The base runner may not intentionally kick a ball that an infielder has missed.



4. Physical contact by the base runner with a fielder attempting to field a fair batted ball, whether intentional or unintentional, shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

*Note: If both the fielder and base runner are within their legal rights, no interference shall be called.*

- (a) If the defensive player, while watching the flight of a ball, bumps a runner who is standing on a base and fails to make a catch on a catchable ball, the runner shall not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional. A runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. This is an exception to the rule that defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field without being hindered.
- (b) Merely running in front of the fielder or jumping over the ball while proceeding to the next base is not interference, even though it may be distracting to the fielder or screen her view of the ball. The runner may not at any time unnecessarily wave her arms or verbally distract the fielder.
- (c) It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to make a play, and the runner contacts the fielder. **Exception:** If the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact.
- (d) If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball, and that fielder only is entitled to protection.
- (e) Interference occurs when the ball ricochets off one defensive player, and another player still has the opportunity to make a play, but the runner interferes with the second fielder.

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

**Exceptions:**

1. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner also shall be called out.
  2. If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fly ball, the batter is also out.
- 
5. Physical contact by the base runner with a fielder attempting to field a foul-batted ball, whether intentional or unintentional, shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead, a strike is charged to the batter and the offending runner is out. Each runner must return to the base touched at the time of the pitch.**

- b. The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.
- c. The base runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**A.R.** Runners are on first and third bases with one out. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop who throws to second base for the second out. During the attempt to throw out the batter-runner, the runner who started on first base interferes with the throw. Meanwhile, the runner on third base has crossed home plate (before the interference). On the interference, the runner closest to home is called out (the batter-runner). Since the batter-runner is the third out, the run does not score.

- f. A base runner may not remain on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crash into a defensive player (holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag). (See Collisions, Rule 12-12.)

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

**Exceptions:**

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

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

**Notes:**

1. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (within three feet), or return to the previous base touched.
2. Should an act of interference (offensive) occur following any obstruction (defensive), enforcement of the interference penalty would take precedence

*provided both violations involve the same base runner. For example, if an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out for offensive interference.*

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

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

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

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

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

**The ball is dead if the closest defensive player is behind the base. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. If forced, each runner**

**advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

### **Spectator Interference**

**SECTION 14.** No spectator(s) shall reach out of the stands or enter the field and interfere with a play. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator. **Exception:** It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence.

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

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

### **Team (Offensive) Interference**

**SECTION 15. a.** No offensive team personnel (players not at bat, on-deck or on base; coaches not in the coaches' boxes; managers; trainers; scorekeepers; and bat persons) shall stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing; confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

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

b. Offensive team personnel shall not reach out of the dugout or enter the field and interfere with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball. The field belongs to the fielder, and the dugout belongs to the offensive team.

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

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

**EFFECT—For a first offense in a game, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending team. For a second offense, the ball is dead, and the batter is out and credited with the last base legally**

**touched at the time of the interference. Each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

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

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

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

### **Umpire Interference**

SECTION 16. Umpire interference occurs:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Obstruction (Defensive)

### Obstruction

**SECTION 17. a.** Obstruction is the act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball or about to receive a thrown ball.

*Notes:*

- 1. The defensive player must be in the process of catching the ball and not merely positioning, waiting for a throw to arrive.*
- 2. The act may be intentional or unintentional.*

**EFFECT**—Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner or not, the umpire will declare obstruction and signal a delayed dead ball.

1. If the obstructed runner is safe or put out at a base beyond the one she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the ball remains live until the conclusion of the play. The umpire will then notify the offensive coach of his/her options, if any.
2. If the obstructed runner is apparently put out prior to reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she/they would have reached had there not been obstruction.

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

- b. 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.
- c. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed unless properly appealed for missing a base,

leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched, for an act of interference or when another violation is being played upon (i.e., a runner leaving second base too soon on a fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second base and third base. If the runner would not have made it back to second base prior to the throw arriving, she would remain out.).

- d. If an obstructed runner is awarded a base she would have made had there been no obstruction and a preceding runner is on that base, the obstructed runner will be awarded that base, and the preceding runner shall be entitled to the next base without liability to be put out.
- e. If the obstructed runner attempts to advance past the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction or past the base she would have been awarded for the obstruction, she is running with liability to be put out. The ball remains live.
- f. Should an act of interference (offensive) occur following any obstruction (defensive), enforcement of the interference effect takes precedence provided both violations involve the same base runners.

### **Types of Obstruction**

SECTION 18. Obstruction includes:

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

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The appropriate obstruction effect is applied, and in addition, the offender shall be ejected without warning.**

- b. **Catcher Obstruction.** The catcher shall not obstruct, hinder or prevent the batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.**

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

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



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

*Notes:*

1. *If a batter, during preliminary loosening-up swings, hits the catcher or the catcher's glove/mitt during the back swing, the umpire should immediately call "Time/Timeout" and not obstruction. Catcher's obstruction on a batter should be called only on the batter's attempt to make contact with the pitch. The pitch or swing should not be allowed since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected.*
  2. If an umpire requests a catcher to move further away from the batter to avoid injury or obstruction, the catcher must comply.
- c. **Fielder or Catcher Obstruction.**
1. A fielder who is not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, shall not impede the batter, batter-runner or runner.
  2. A fielder shall not fake a tag (a tag without the ball) on a runner advancing or returning to a base.  
**EFFECT(1)-(2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the batter, batter-runner or runner is obstructed, the obstructed player shall be awarded the base she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance. Also see Collision.**
  3. A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner rounding or returning to a base. A fielder who is waiting to receive a throw

may not impede the progress or return of a runner if there is no immediate play or the throw is not made.

4. A fielder shall not position herself in the runner's line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit her from seeing the release of the pitch.

**EFFECT (3)-(4)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a one base award to the obstructed runner and each other runner forced to advance.**

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

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.**

1. If the obstructed runner is safe or put out at a base beyond the one she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the ball remains live until the conclusion of the play. The umpire will then notify the offensive coach of his/her options, if any.
  2. If the obstructed runner is apparently put out prior to reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she/they would have reached had there not been obstruction.
6. A fielder shall not position herself in the batter's line of vision or act in a manner to distract the batter.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, all action as a result of the batted ball stands. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached that base, whether missing the base or not.**

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

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

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

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.**

If equipment interferes with a fair batted ball or with a batted foul ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, might become fair, the batter-runner and each other runner is awarded three bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

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

If equipment interferes with a thrown ball, the batter-runner and each other runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out. *Exception:* If no play is apparent, there is no effect.

If equipment interferes with a pitched ball, the base runner(s) is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out. *Exception:* If no play is apparent, there is no effect.

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# RULE 10

## Pitching

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### Defensive Positioning Required for a Legal Pitch

- SECTION 1. a. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when with her hands apart, she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's plate, and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- b. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without being in possession of the ball, and she may not simulate the pitching position with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.
- c. The catcher must be in the catcher's box from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. No part of the catcher's feet may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released. **Exception:** If the batter is positioned in the front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer to the plate without effect. At all times, the catcher must avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter legally has the right to the entire batter's box.
- d. All infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. If a fielder's feet are touching the line or are in fair territory, she is considered in the field of play. No fielder may take a position in the batter's line of vision or with deliberate unsporting intent, act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.

**EFFECT (a)-(d): Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

### Pitching Procedure

#### Taking the Signal from the Catcher

SECTION 2. a. Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following:

1. Both feet must be on the ground in contact with the pitcher's plate and at least half of the pivot foot must be on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
2. Shoulders must be in line with first and third base.

3. Hands must be separated.
  4. The ball must be held and remain in one hand, either bare or gloved.  
*Note: Rolling (not tossing) the ball is legal as long as contact is maintained with the hand including the wrist.*
  5. The ball may be held in front of, at the side of or behind the body.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher must take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.
  - c. After receiving the catcher's signal, the pitcher's hands must come together in view of the plate umpire for no more than 10 seconds.

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

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

**Start of the Pitch**

SECTION 3. The pitch officially begins when, with the batter in the box, the pitcher has taken (or simulated taking) a signal from the catcher, both hands have touched in view of the plate umpire, and the hands have separated.

## Pitching

The pitching motion consists of the step/stride, the windup and the delivery. (See page 116.)

**Step/Stride**

SECTION 4. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must push off with the pivot/drag foot from the pitcher's plate and take one step/stride forward toward the batter, within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

- a. The rear, pivot/drag foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times before the forward step.
- b. It is not a step if the pitcher turns her pivot/drag foot to push off or slides her foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact with the plate is maintained. No rocking or lifting movement that pulls the foot off the pitcher's plate is allowed.
- c. Having pushed off from the pitcher's plate, the rear, pivot/drag foot must stay in contact with the ground without creating a second push-off point before the stride foot lands.
  1. No leaping is allowed. The pitcher may not become airborne on the

initial drive from the pitcher's plate. The rear foot must slide/drag on the ground.

2. No crow hopping is allowed. The pitcher may not replant, gain a second starting point and push off her pivot/drag foot. Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the drag foot may trail on the ground but may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.

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

**The Windup**

SECTION 5. The pitcher may use any windup desired providing she does not, after having taken the signal and brought her hands together:

- a. Make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. Separate her hands and then return the ball to both hands.
- c. Stop and change direction more than twice.
- d. Allow the pitching arm (including the hands) to pass the vertical plane established by a perpendicular line from the ground, through the ear and extended upward. Whether the windup begins with the pitching arm going forward or backward, the pitching arm (including the hands) may not pass the vertical plane of the ear above the head.

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

**Delivery**

SECTION 6. In delivering the ball to the batter, the pitcher must comply with the following:

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

- e. The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.

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

## The Pitch

### Dropped During Pitch

SECTION 7. a. If the ball accidentally slips from the pitcher's hand during the act of delivering the pitch, the following effect will be invoked:

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

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

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

### Illegal Pitch

SECTION 8. When an illegal pitch occurs, it shall be called immediately by the plate or base umpire.

- a. The plate umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for the catcher and batter to hear. The base umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for nearby players to hear. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.
- b. Simultaneously, the umpire gives the delayed dead ball signal and waits to call "Time/Timeout" until the pitch has reached the plate, or the play on a batted ball has been completed.
1. If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner advances at least one base on the batted ball, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled.
  2. If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any runner fails to advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team may choose the result of the play or the standard effect for an illegal pitch, which is that a ball is awarded to the batter, and each runner advances one base.
  3. If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
  4. If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
- c. The umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to both the pitcher and her coach.

**Quick Pitch**

SECTION 9. A quick pitch, intended to catch the batter by surprise, shall be ruled by the plate umpire to be “No pitch.”

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

**No Pitch**

SECTION 10. “No pitch” shall be declared when:

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

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

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

**EFFECT—No pitch and warning. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the violator(s) being ejected from the game.**

## Regulations Governing Pitching Situations

**Aborting a Pitch/Stepping Off the Pitcher’s Plate**

SECTION 11. a. The pitcher is considered to be in pitching position when with hands apart, she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher’s plate, and the catcher is in position to receive a pitch. The pitcher may legally remove herself from the pitching position by stepping backward (not forward or sideways) off the pitcher’s plate.

- b. The pitch officially begins and cannot be legally aborted when the pitcher has taken (or simulated taking) a signal from the catcher, both hands have touched in view of the plate umpire, and the hands have separated.

**EFFECT (a)-(b)—Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

**Ball Rotation**

SECTION 12. a. To start the game, the plate umpire shall have a minimum of two new game balls (one rubbed up by each team, so the manufacturer’s



gloss is removed) and three additional (new or game quality) balls. Once the game has started, additional balls must be furnished (as needed) by a home team or tournament representative. All game balls must meet the specifications of Rule 3-1.

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

#### **Foreign Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher**

SECTION 13. a. The pitcher shall not at any time be allowed to use any moisture or foreign substance on the ball, the pitching hand or fingers nor do anything to deface the ball. Neither shall any other player or team personnel apply moisture or a foreign substance to the ball nor do anything to deface the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used on the hands to dry them.

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

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

- b. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or thighs that an umpire considers distracting. This includes a batting glove, sweatband and loose lacing on a glove or ball colored logs. **Exception:** The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.

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

- d. Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard must be properly padded. In addition, any such device must be neutral in color so as not to distract the batter and must function in a way that does not alter the natural motion of the pitching arm.

### **Intentionally Pitching at a Batter**

**SECTION 14.** The pitcher shall not intentionally attempt to hit the batter with a pitch.

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

### **Intentional Base on Balls**

**SECTION 15.** If the pitcher intentionally walks a batter, the ball is live, and all pitches (including a pitchout) must be legally pitched to the catcher.

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

### **Returning a Pitched Ball to the Pitcher**

**SECTION 16.** The catcher must return the ball directly to the pitcher after a foul tip and each pitch not contacted.

#### ***Exceptions:***

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

5. When a checked swing is appealed on a third strike.

6. When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.

7. An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. A ball shall be awarded to the batter.**

### **Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher's Plate**

SECTION 17. The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while her foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after she has taken the pitching position. If the throw from the pitcher's plate occurs during a live-ball appeal play, the appeal is canceled.

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

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

### **Time Allowed Between Pitches**

SECTION 18. The pitcher must release the next pitch within 10 seconds after receiving the ball or after the umpire calls, "Play/Play ball."

**EFFECT—If 10 seconds have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, an additional ball shall be awarded to the batter. If two minutes have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpires in favor of the team at bat.**

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

### **Warm-Up Pitches Allowed**

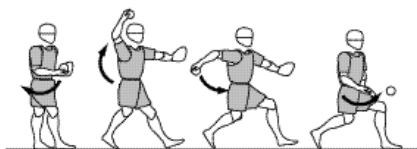
SECTION 19. a. At the beginning of each half-inning, the pitcher may throw no more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.

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

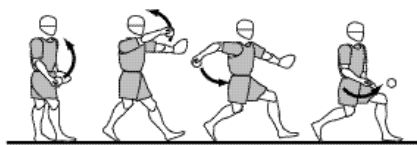
shall not be allowed warm-up pitches if returning to pitch in the same half-inning.

**EFFECT (a)-(b)—A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each excessive warm-up pitch.**

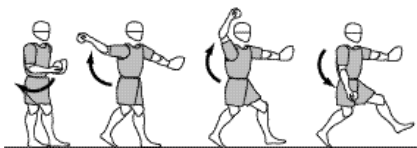
- c. After injury to a pitcher, the plate umpire must allow the relief pitcher adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.
- d. The plate umpire must give the pitcher adequate time to warm up after any substantial delay caused by to inclement weather or injury.

**Legal Pitching Motions**

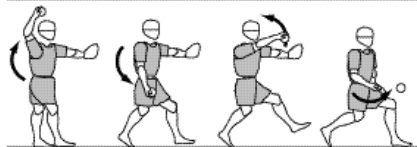
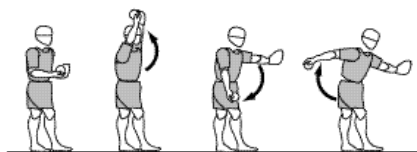
Straight Backswing



Straight Upswing



Rocker Windmill



Pendulum Windmill

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# RULE 11

## Batting

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### Batter

Between innings, warm-up swings on the field of play shall be limited to the batter (provided she is outside the batter's box) and the on-deck batter (provided she is in the on-deck circle).

#### **On-Deck Batter**

SECTION 1. a. The on-deck batter is restricted to the on-deck circle nearest her dugout for warm-up swings.

- b. The on-deck batter may have no more than two bats in the on-deck circle. The on-deck batter may loosen up with: one or two official softball bats; one approved warm-up bat; or one official softball bat and one approved warm-up bat.
- c. The warm-up bat used by the on-deck batter must meet the specifications of Rule 3-3.
- d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle to take her turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

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

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

## Batting

### Legal Position in the Batter's Box

SECTION 2. a. The batter must take her position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed by the plate umpire.

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

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

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

c. The batter shall not intentionally remove any lines in the batter's box.

**EFFECT—A strike shall be called on the batter.**

*Note 1: Lines shall be redrawn at the discretion of the umpire. Every attempt should be made to avoid significantly delaying the game; however, if the lines can be redrawn between innings, the umpire may direct the grounds crew to do so.*

*Note 2: A batter may not be intentionally walked by erasing lines.*

d. Once the pitcher has taken (or simulated taking) a signal from the catcher, both hands have touched in view of the plate umpire and the hands have separated, she must deliver the pitch, and the batter shall not leave her position in the batter's box.

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

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

If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, "No

**pitch” is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.**

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

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

*Notes:*

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

### **Balls and Strikes**

**SECTION 3. a. Strike zone.** The area above home plate between the top of the batter’s forward armpit and the top of her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. The top of the ball must be on or within the horizontal plane and the sides of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate. (See diagram at the end of this chapter.)

1. The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher.
2. The plate umpire shall determine if the pitch is a strike or a ball in relation to the batter’s natural position as the pitch crosses home plate.

**b. Called ball.** A ball is awarded to the batter:

1. When a legal pitch that is not struck at by the batter does not enter the strike zone on the fly, touches the ground before reaching home plate or touches home plate.

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



**EFFECT—The ball is live, and runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

2. When a batter does not swing at an illegally pitched ball.

**EFFECT—See Rule 10-8 (Illegal Pitch).**

3. When the pitcher fails to deliver the ball to the batter within 10 seconds after receiving the ball or after the plate umpire indicates “Play/Play ball.”

**EFFECT—See Rule 10-18.**

4. For each excessive warm-up pitch.

**EFFECT—See Rule 10-19.**

5. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher after a foul tip and each pitch not contacted.

**Exceptions:**

- (a) When there is a runner(s) on base.
- (b) When the batter becomes a runner.
- (c) Following a strikeout.
- (d) Following a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.
- (e) When a checked swing is appealed on a third strike.

- (f) When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.
- (g) An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

**EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter, the ball is dead, and the runner(s) may not advance. On the first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending player. On the second offense, the offender shall be ejected from the game. *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter.**

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

1. For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground. The top of the ball must be on and within the horizontal plane and the sides of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike.

2. For each legally pitched ball that is swung at by the batter and missed.  
**EFFECT (1)-(2)—The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**
3. For each foul tip.  
**EFFECT—The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.**
4. For each foul ball when the batter has fewer than two strikes.  
**EFFECT—The ball is dead, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**
5. When the batter bunts foul after the second strike.  
**EFFECT—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**
6. For each pitched ball that touches any part of the batter's person as she swings and misses.
7. For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter's person or clothing when she is in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.
8. For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.  
**EFFECT (6)-(8)—The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. Each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**
9. When the batter fails to take her position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed to by the plate umpire.  
**EFFECT—The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown. A strike is called. Each runner must remain on the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

### **Fair Ball**

**SECTION 4.** A fair batted ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted. A legally batted ball shall be judged fair if:

- a. The ball settles or is touched on or over fair territory (including home plate) between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base.

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

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

- g. A runner, while in fair territory, interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.

### **Foul Ball**

SECTION 5. A foul fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted. A legally batted ball shall be judged foul if:

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

- g. A runner, while in foul territory, interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.
- h. The ball goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than her hand or gloved hand.

### Foul Tip

**SECTION 6. a.** A batted ball that stays below the top of the batter's head, travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher.

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

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

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

### Hits, Bunts, Slaps

**SECTION 7. a. Hit.** A hit is a legally batted fair ball.

1. No intent to bat the ball is necessary.
  2. The batter becomes a batter-runner as soon as she legally hits a fair ball.
  3. The ball is live.
  4. The batter is liable to be put out.
  5. Base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.
  6. If a fair-hit ball should touch a runner or umpire while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.
- b. **Bunt.** A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat.
    1. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn—pulled backward away from the ball.

2. On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third strike rule applies.
  3. If, with less than two strikes, the batter's attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike, and the ball is dead. With two strikes the batter is declared out, and the ball is dead.
  4. A bunt that is caught in the air remains live and in play regardless of the number of strikes on the batter and whether it is fair or foul.
- c. **Slap.** A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

## Regulations Governing Batting

### Bat

**SECTION 8. a. Altered bat.** A batter shall not take an altered bat into the batter's box. Any bat that has been altered shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout). Inserting material into the bat, replacing its handle or knob, or applying padding or excessive (more than two) layers of tape constitute altering a bat. Replacing a legal grip with another legal grip does not render the bat altered.

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

b. **Broken bat.** If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder, the ball remains live. It is not interference. If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

c. **Illegal bat.** A batter shall not take an illegal bat into the batter's box. An illegal bat is a bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (i.e., particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits) set forth in Rule 3-2.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).**

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

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

### **Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing**

**SECTION 9.** When a batted ball hits the batter or hits the dirt or home plate and then hits the batter, the ball is dead immediately.

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

If the batter is out of the batter's box and the ball is considered fair, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

### **Batting Order**

**SECTION 10.** The batting order that is delivered to the plate umpire must be followed throughout the game except that a starting player may be replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the starting player in the batting order. In addition, the tenth player may bat for the designated player. The first batter listed on each team's lineup card shall lead off her respective team's half of the first inning. After the first inning, the first (lead-off) batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed her full term at bat in the preceding inning. If the third out in an inning is made before a batter completes her turn at bat, she shall be the first batter in the next inning, and she shall start with a 0-0 count.

### **Batting Out of Order** (See also Appendix A)

**SECTION 11. a.** A player is batting out of order when she fails to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.

**b.** Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting

out of order when one legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

- c. The effect for batting out of order varies depending upon when the infraction is reported to the plate umpire.

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

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

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

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

**Notes:**

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

**Batting Practice**

SECTION 12. See Rule 5-3 (Pregame Practice) for specifications on batting practice.

**Checked Swing**

SECTION 13. a. A pitched ball should be called a strike if it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.

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

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

**Dropped Third Strike Rule**

SECTION 14. a. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter is automatically out if there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied. The ball is live, and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- b. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter is not out if there are two outs, or there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied. The ball is live, the batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out, and base runners



advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

### Hitting Ball a Second Time

**SECTION 15. a.** The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

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

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

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

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

#### Hitting the Ball a Second Time

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Hit Batter (by Pitch)**

**SECTION 16. a.** A batter is awarded first base when a pitched ball neither swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. If the pitch is "ball four," the batter shall be awarded a base on balls. Runners may not advance unless forced.**

#### *Notes:*

- 1. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.*
  - 2. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.*
  - 3. If a player swings and the ball hits her hands which sends it into fair territory, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter.*
- b. The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:
1. The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch or obviously tried to get hit by the pitch.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Illegally Batted Ball**

**SECTION 17.** An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter hits/bunts/slaps the ball fair or foul and:

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

**EFFECT (a)-(b)—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out immediately, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul. Each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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

c. An altered bat is used.

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

d. An illegal bat is used.

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

### **Infield Fly Rule**

**SECTION 18.** The infield fly rule is in effect when declared by the umpire because the batter hits a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second base or all three bases are occupied, and there are less than two outs.

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

#### *Notes:*

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

### **Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball**

**SECTION 19. a.** An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legal and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball. A ball that is trapped shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

- b. An infielder may not intentionally drop a fair fly ball, a line drive or a bunt when there are less than two outs and runners are on first; first and second; first and third; or first, second and third.

**EFFECT (a)-(b)**—The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule (Rule 11-18) applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

### Stepping Out of the Box

**SECTION 20. a.** The batter shall not step from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the pitching position.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Exceptions:*

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

**Batter is Out**

SECTION 21. The batter is out when:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- i. The batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory (Rule 11-15).

**EFFECT**—If the batter is out of the batter's box and the bat is still in the batter's hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hand(s), a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.

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

*Note: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out, and the ball is live and in play.*

- j. The batter swings and misses a pitched ball and then intentionally hits it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

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

- k. The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

**EFFECT**—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. Runners may tag and advance with liability to be put out.

If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- l. The batter's third strike is a foul tip.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live. Runners may advance without tagging but with liability to be put out.

- m. A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- n. The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is occupied.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- o. A pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person, including her hands, as she swings and misses for a third strike.



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

- p. The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

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

- q. The batter hinders the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box or intentionally hinders the catcher (e.g., on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

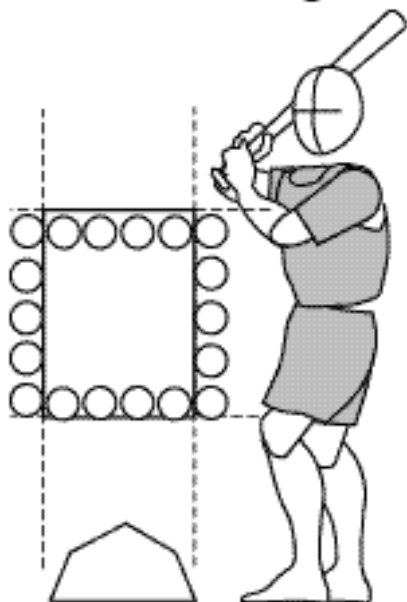
**EFFECT—The ball is dead, and each runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference.**

***Exceptions:***

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.
  2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.
- r. The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

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

### Strike Zone Diagram



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# RULE 12

## Base Running

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### Batter-Runner

#### **Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner**

SECTION 1. The batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out:

- a. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied. This is called the dropped third strike rule (Rule 11-14).

*Note: If the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out; the ball is live; and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.*

- b. After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- c. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).  
*Note: If said ball touches the runner/umpire while still in flight it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.*
- d. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (a)-(d)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

#### **Base Awards**

In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for baserunning violations.

**SECTION 2. a. First base.** The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

1. After “ball four.”

**EFFECT—**The ball is live unless blocked. The batter may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

2. After catcher obstruction.

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

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

- a) The batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base on the error.
- b) If forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If not forced, each other base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* If the catcher steps on or in front of home plate or touches the batter or her bat while a pitched ball is on the way to the plate and there is a runner on third attempting to score on a squeeze play, each base runner advances one base without liability to be put out whether forced or not.

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

3. When a pitched ball, not swung at or called a strike, touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box. It doesn't matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered a part of the bat. **Exception:** If the batter makes no attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch, or obviously tries to get hit by the pitch, a "Ball" or "Strike" is called (depending upon the ball's location). The batter stays at bat unless the pitch was a third strike (the batter is declared out), or the pitch was ball four (the batter is awarded first base). The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.
4. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher), who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
5. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (3)-(5)—The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. Each base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

6. When a runner intentionally kicks the ball that an infielder has missed.

**EFFECT (6)—The ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and the runner is out. Each other runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

7. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher) who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
8. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (7)-(8)—The batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.**

If off base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is out, and each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base she legally touched at the time of the interference. If forced, each other runner advances one base without liability to be put out. The ball is dead.

If on base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is not out. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. If the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If forced, each runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

b. **Second base.** The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:

1. When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.
2. When a fair batted ball bounces over, wedges under or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field, or becomes blocked.
3. When a fair batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.
4. When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory (excluding a ball deflected over the home run fence in fair territory;) or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (1)-(5)—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and is credited with a two-base hit (double). Each other base runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

c. **Third base.** The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:

1. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

2. When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that in the opinion of the umpire might become fair.

**EFFECT (1)-(2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter is awarded third base and credited with a three-base hit (triple) but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner is awarded home plate.**

- d. **Home plate.** The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:

1. When a fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.
2. An illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence in flight.

*Note: The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.*

**EFFECT (1)-(2)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.**

- e. **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate when a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes her.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18-c).**

- f. **Two bases.** When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out.**

### **Batter-Runner Is Out**

SECTION 3. The batter-runner is out:

- a. When she hits a fair ball and is legally put out before reaching first base.

**EFFECT—The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

- b. When she hits a fair or foul ball, other than a foul tip, and it is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

- c. When she is legally put out before reaching first base when the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.

*Note: If the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out.*

**EFFECT (b)-(c)—The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- d. When she does not proceed to first base after a fair batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

**EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- e. When she does not proceed to first base after:

1. A base on balls.

**EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

2. Being hit by a pitch.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary**



medical treatment.) Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

3. Catcher obstruction (see Rule 9-18-b).

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.**

f. When, after reaching a base safely, a batter-runner or runner(s) abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout (e.g., believing she was put out), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

**EFFECT—The ball is live, the batter-runner or runner(s) is out, and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

g. When she hits an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect. (See infield fly rule, Rule 11-18.)

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

h. When either of her feet is completely outside the runner's lane, in contact with the ground, and, in the judgment of the umpire, she interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. **Exception:** She may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

i. When, with less than two out and first, first and second, first and third, or first, second and third bases occupied, an infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive which could have been caught with ordinary effort.

*Note: An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped. A ball that has been guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball.*

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it takes precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

- j. When she runs the bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

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

- k. When she steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

- l. When she interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out.

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

- m. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box, makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base or interferes with a dropped third strike.

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate also shall be called out.

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

- n. When the immediate preceding runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play.

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

- o. When, after hitting a home run, providing her team previously was warned for a first offense, the individual is touched by any member of the offensive team other than the base coaches, before touching home plate.

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

- p. When a spectator enters the field of play or reaches onto the field from the stands and clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead at the moment of the interference. The umpire shall award appropriate compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc.**

*Note: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence, and a spectator interferes with a possible catch. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator.*

## Base Runner(s)

### Base Runner May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out

SECTION 4. A runner may advance with liability to be put out:

- a. When a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- b. Following a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- c. Following a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).
- d. Following a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.
- e. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- f. When a pitched or thrown ball hits an umpire.
- g. When a pitched or thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.
- h. When a foul tip is legally caught.

*Note: No tag-up is necessary.*

- i. When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.

**EFFECT (a)-(j)—The ball is live.**

## Base Runner Awards

In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for baserunning violations.

**SECTION 5.** In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

a. **One base.** A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:

1. If forced to vacate a base because of a one-base award to the batter.

**EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances one base if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

2. When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, provided the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is awarded a ball. If the pitch is “Ball four” or the batter is hit by the illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base.**

3. When a pitched ball is blocked (i.e., lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop).

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball. Each runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

4. When a live ball is carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory (“catch and carry”).

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.**

5. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead-ball area or becomes blocked.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked.**

b. **Two bases.** A base runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

1. If forced to vacate a base because of a two-base award to the batter.

**EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances two bases if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

2. When a fair ball deflects off a defensive player and enters dead-ball territory.
3. When a fair ball deflects off a runner or umpire and enters dead-ball territory after having passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), provided no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (2)-(3)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner and each other runner are awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

4. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.**

***Exceptions:***

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

***Note: If a runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.***

2. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead, and each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, the runner being played on is called out. (If this player has scored before the blocked ball was ruled, the runner closest to home is called out.)

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

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.**

- c. **Home plate.** A base runner is entitled to advance to home plate with no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three- or four-base award to the batter.
- d. **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:
  1. When a fielder not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball fakes a tag without the ball or impedes her.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violations by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player, and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18-c).**

*Notes:*

1. *Base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.*
2. *An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed unless properly appealed for missing a base, leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched or for an act of interference.*
2. When a spectator reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The umpire shall award appropriate compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc.**

*Note: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence, and a spectator interferes with a possible catch. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator.*

### **Base Runner Forfeits Exemption From Liability to Be Put Out**

**SECTION 6.** A base runner forfeits exemption from liability to be out:

- a. If, after overrunning first base, the batter-runner feints or attempts to continue to second base.
- b. If, after dislodging a base, the runner attempts to reach the next base.
- c. If, while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if she is standing on a base beyond the base she missed or left too soon.

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

- d. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching an awarded base, attempts to advance farther.
- e. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching base safely, abandons her base (e.g., obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another batter/runner was put out to end the inning).

### **Base Runner Is Out**

SECTION 7. The base runner is out:

- a. When, on a force play, a fielder (1) contacts the base while holding the ball, (2) touches the ball to the base or (3) tags the runner before she reaches the base.
- b. If the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

#### **Exceptions:**

1. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Other runners may advance with liability to be put out.
  2. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides may immediately return without liability to be put out, provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second.
- c. When she physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.

*Note: If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding runner would count.*

**A.R.** With fewer than two outs, if a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding runner, the batter is out, but all preceding runners score. With two outs, only those preceding runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. This is a timing play, not an appeal play.

- d. When anyone, other than another runner, physically assists her while the ball is in play.
- e. When, after play has resumed, she fails to return to touch the base she previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.

**EFFECT (a)-(e)—The ball is live. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- f. When she is running to any base in regular or reverse order, and she attempts to avoid or delay a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder who has the ball in her possession.

**EFFECT—The ball is live. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**Exception:** It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the runner's proper path, and the runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

- g. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner shall also be called out.**

**Notes:**

1. *If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make a play, the runner will be ruled out if she interferes with the second fielder.*
2. *If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play, and only that fielder is protected from*



*interference by the runner. The runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.*

- h. When she is struck with a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out. If the runner is off a base and hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when hit by an infield fly, she is not out.**

- i. When the umpire rules intentional interference (with the ball or fielder making the play) as she is struck by a batted ball while in contact with a base.
- j. When she intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

**EFFECT (i, j)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- k. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.
- l. When a coach, while in the coach's box, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

*Note: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live and in play.*

- m. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and draws a throw to home plate.

**EFFECT (k)-(m)—The ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- n. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on her feet

and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player.

*Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall also be ejected.*

- o. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing; confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

*Note: Members of a team include all persons authorized to be in the team's dugout.*

**EFFECT (n)-(o)—The ball is dead. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- p. When she leaves the base she is occupying before the pitch is released.
- q. When a runner is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, she fails to immediately return to her base or attempt to advance to the next base.
- r. When, once she returns to a base for any reason, she leaves the base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

**EFFECT (p)-(r)—The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- s. When, after reaching a base safely, she abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another batter runner was put out to end the inning.
- t. When a runner uses a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

**EFFECT (s)-(t)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

### **Base Runner Is Out After a Proper Appeal**

SECTION 8. The base runner is out after a proper appeal:

- a. When she fails to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the runner or the missed base may be tagged.

*Note: No runner may return to touch a missed base after a trailing runner has scored or after leaving the field of play.*

- b. When she fails to retouch her base before a fielder tags her or the base, after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.
- c. When she leaves her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball first touches the fielder. Either the runner or the base may be tagged.

*Notes:*

1. *Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.*
  2. *No runner may return to touch a base which she left too soon if she has left the field of play or if a trailing runner has scored.*
- d. When she legally overruns first base, but attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
  - e. When she is running or sliding for home plate, fails to touch it and makes no attempt to return to it, and a fielder (while touching the plate) properly appeals to the umpire for the decision.

f. When, following a conference, base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied. Each runner on the improper base shall be declared out and ejected. In addition, the head coach shall be ejected for unsporting behavior.

### **Base Runner Is Not Out**

SECTION 9. The base runner is not out:

- a. When she is hit with a fair batted ball over foul territory, and, in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When she is hit with a fair, batted ball that has passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- c. When she is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.
- d. When she is hit by a batted ball while touching her base, unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- e. When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- f. When she fails to return to base at the end of playing action because she is not given sufficient time. She will not be called out for being off base before

- the pitcher releases the ball. “No pitch” will be called by the umpire.
- g. When she keeps contact with her base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
  - h. When she has legally started to advance. She may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, nor by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.
  - i. When she does not run in a direct line to a base, provided a fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
  - j. When she runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
  - k. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.
  - l. When she slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
  - m. When she is touched while off a base:
    - 1. With a ball not securely held by a fielder.
    - 2. With a hand or glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player’s other hand.
  - n. When the defensive team does not request the umpire’s decision on an appeal play until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
  - o. When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove/mitt.

## Regulations Governing Base Running

### **Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases**

**SECTION 10.** No batter-runner or runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

- a. Not proceeding to first base after a fair batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

**EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she**

reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

b. Not proceeding to first base after a base on balls.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

c. Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary treatment.) Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

d. Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction (see Rule 9-18-b).

**EFFECT**—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the coach elects to take the result of the play, the batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.

e. After reaching a base safely, obviously heading toward her position or the dugout (e.g., believing she was put out), or leaving the field of play for any reason.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live. The batter-runner or runner(s) is out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

### **Catch and Carry**

**SECTION 11.** A fielder may not catch or field a live ball and carry it into dead-ball territory. This is commonly referred to as a “catch and carry.”

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded one base, without liability to be put out, from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory. *Exception:* If the ball is a legally caught fly ball, the batter is out.

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally kicks, pushes, pitches or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory, the ball is dead, and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the

**time the ball entered dead-ball territory.**

*Notes: If a line is used to determine dead-ball (out-of-play) territory, the line is considered in play.*

- 1. If a fielder's foot is touching the line or is in live ball territory, she is considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball with no effect.*
- 2. If a player's entire foot is beyond the line and touching dead-ball territory at the time she catches, fields or throws the ball, she has entered dead-ball territory, no play is allowed, and the effect is applied.*
- 3. If a player has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, she legally may catch, field or throw the ball until and unless her entire foot contacts the ground in dead-ball territory, at which time the ball becomes dead, no play is allowed, and the effect is applied.*
- 4. If a player contacts dead-ball territory with any part of the body except the foot, she is considered out of play. No play is allowed, and the effect is applied.*

**Collisions**

SECTION 12. The rules committee is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions with the catcher at home plate and with infielders at all bases. The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions whenever possible.

a. A defensive player shall not block the base, plate or baseline without possession of the ball or not in the immediate act of catching the ball.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Obstruction is called and the runner is declared safe. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. Exception: If the base runner collides flagrantly, the ball is dead and although the runner is declared safe on the obstruction call, the player is ejected.**

b. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if she remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the runner's lane, the runner would be called out) or return to the previous base touched.

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead. The runner is called out for deliberately crashing into a fielder even if the ball is dislodged. If the runner deliberately crashed into a fielder holding the ball before she was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate trailing runner will also be declared out. If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out. If an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out.

*Note 1: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected.*

*Note 2: The umpire shall judge (1) whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (could the runner have reached the base without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the base was blocked) or (2) whether the runner actually was attempting to reach the base or plate or whether she was attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.*

- c. Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

*Note: If both the fielder and base runner are within their legal rights, no interference shall be called.*

**EXAMPLES:**

**A.R. 1** Approved Ruling. The right-handed batter who lays down a bunt in front of home plate is on a collision course with the catcher if she runs in a direct line to first base. Each player at this point is within legal rights—the batter taking a path in a direct line to first base, and the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball. The questions that have to be answered are: (1) Did the batter alter direction in any way and draw contact in an attempt to receive an obstruction call? (2) Did the catcher alter her attempt to field the ball in any way so as to draw an interference call? and (3) Could the catcher actually make an out on the play?

**A.R. 2** Approved Ruling. The batter-runner collides with the first baseman who is attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line (towards home plate). The runner has a right to the base line in this case, and the first baseman has the right to field an errant thrown ball. This is the result of the “normal” flow of the game, and the play should be ruled incidental contact with no effect.

### **Dislodged Base**

**SECTION 13. a.** When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther

**with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- b. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs.
- c. At the conclusion of play, “Time/Timeout” shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

### **Fake Tag**

**SECTION 14.** A fake tag occurs when a fielder who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag which causes the runner to slow down or stop. A fielder may not fake a tag on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The umpire shall award the obstructed player the base or bases she would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance.**

### **Hit by a Batted Ball**

**SECTION 15.** An umpire or base runner is considered hit by a batted ball if the ball contacts his/her person, attached equipment or clothing:

- a. When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is struck by a fair batted ball after it has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is unavoidably struck by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by a fielder (including the pitcher), and no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (a)-(b)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

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

- c. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, she is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or the fielder making a play. The ball is live or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.



**EFFECT**—If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the closest defensive player is behind the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, credited with a base hit, and each other runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the runner are out. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

- d. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and (1) before the ball touches an infielder, including the pitcher, (2) before the ball passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play (3) after passing an infielder, including the pitcher, and another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT**—Runner interference.

The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out.

If the runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when struck by an infield fly, she is not out.

- e. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

- f. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball over foul territory and, in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT**—The ball is live and in play. The runner who was struck and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

**Illegal Glove/Mitt Used to Make a Play on Batter, Batter-Runner or Runner**  
SECTION 16. A fielder shall not make a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove or mitt.

**EFFECT**—The coach of the offended team shall have the option to:

- a. Nullify the entire play.
  1. The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the pitch and continues her turn at bat.
  2. Each runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
- b. Take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.
- c. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair batted fly ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence, the batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate. The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

*Note: If the illegal glove/mitt does not meet specifications (Rule 3-7), it shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).*

### **Leading Off Base**

SECTION 17. Once a runner returns to a base for any reason, she may not leave the base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with her base at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. **Exception:** If the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a runner to return to a base, the runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

**EFFECT**—The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

### **Look-Back Rule**

SECTION 18. a. The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base, there are one or more runners, the pitcher has possession (that is, holds the ball in her hand or gloved hand) and con-

trol of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both her feet are on or within the lines.

b. When a runner is legally off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and she is in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner may continue moving forward in the direction she is going without stopping; or she may immediately and directly go back in the other direction. If the runner is stopped as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner must immediately and directly go forward or back. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a base hit as long as the batter-runner continues past first base.

c. Once the runner has determined a direction, she may not reverse direction unless the pitcher:

1. Throws the ball from within the pitcher's circle.
2. Carries the ball outside the pitcher's circle.
3. Has one foot completely outside the pitcher's circle, on the ground, and is in possession of the ball.
4. Sets the ball on the ground or no longer has the ball in her hand or gloved hand.
5. Loses possession of the ball, including handing it to another player.
6. Makes a play on the runner or another runner.

*Note: If the pitcher's circle is not visible, good judgment must be used by the umpire.*

d. The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

1. She fakes a throw.

*Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher's arm moves forward.*

2. She makes any aggressive body movement toward the base runner (e.g., steps toward the runner, head and body fakes toward the runner).

e. There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the runner to comply with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the runner.

f. When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:

1. A runner standing off her base must immediately return to the base she last occupied or advance to the next base.

2. A runner who starts back to the base she last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.
3. The batter-runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.
4. The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.
5. The batter-runner, after over running first base, must immediately return non-stop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, she must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the runner is heading back toward first within the basepath extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended basepath in foul territory commits the runner to first base while stepping beyond the basepath toward the second base side commits the runner to second base.

**EFFECT (1)-(5)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two runners are off base and the umpires call different runners out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first as it is not possible to obtain more than one out under the look-back rule. The ball is dead when the first runner is called out, and the other runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.**

**Missing a Base** (Missing a base is an appeal play. See Rule 7, Section 1a.)

- SECTION 19.** a. A runner must touch each base in order when she is advancing or returning to a base and the ball is in play. Missing a base is an appeal play. The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.
- b. A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
1. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly to allow the players to finish the play. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is made (i.e., by tagging either the runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.
  2. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

- c. An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.
- d. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- e. A runner may not return to touch a missed base if:
  - (1) She has left the field of play;
  - (2) A trailing runner has scored;
  - (3) She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed, and “Time/Timeout” has been called by the umpire; or
  - (4) The ball becomes dead.

*Note: If the runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, she can continue.*
- f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch a base (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order.
- g. Any runner, who misses the first base to which she is advancing and who is later called out, shall be considered as having advanced one base.

### Occupying Bases

- SECTION 20. a. A runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner.
- b. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball or glove/mitt holding the ball.

*Note: If a runner is being run down between bases and the trailing runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner, however, returns safely to the base she left and both runners then are occupying the same base, the second runner is out if touched with the ball.*
  - c. A runner, who is touching a base when “Time/Timeout” is called, may not advance during the suspension of play.

### **Overrunning or Oversliding Bases**

**SECTION 21.** a. When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the batter-runner, after over running first base, must immediately return non-stop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, she must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the runner is heading back toward first within the basepath extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended basepath in foul territory commits the runner to first base while stepping beyond the basepath toward the second base side commits the runner to second base. If the runner feints or makes an attempt to advance to second, she may be tagged out (while she is off base) by a defensive player with the ball. This is an appeal play.

- b. A batter-runner or runner may round a base and go directly to the next base without stopping. If, however, she stops after rounding a base, and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle, she must comply with the look-back rule.

*Note: A batter, who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike, is treated the same as if she batted the ball.*

- c. A runner may legally touch home plate and then overrun or overslide without liability to be put out.

### **Pick-Off Attempt**

**SECTION 22.** On a decision regarding a pick-off attempt, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with the plate umpire.

### **Running Out of the Base Line or Out of the Runner's Lane**

**SECTION 23.** a. The traditional path traveled by a runner, who is attempting to advance to the next base, is defined by a direct line between the bases and three feet on either side of that line, unless a fielder has the ball in her possession, and she is within three feet of the runner and prepared to apply a tag. A base runner, who is running to any base in regular or reverse order and who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession, shall be declared out.

**EFFECT—The ball is live. The offending runner is out, but each other runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out.**

**Exceptions:**

1. A runner is not out when she runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base line in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
  2. The runner is not out when she fails to run in a direct line to a base provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
- b. The batter-runner shall not run outside the runner's lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. This is an interference violation.

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

**Exceptions:**

1. The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
2. The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to touch the base on the last stride.
3. The infraction is ignored if the act does not interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

**Notes:**

1. *The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is in contact with the ground and is completely outside either line.*
2. *A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

**Tag and Force Plays**

SECTION 24. a. A batter-runner or runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand(s) or glove/mitt holding the ball.

**Exceptions:**

1. A batter-runner, who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides it, may immediately return without liability to be put out provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second.
2. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

3. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.
- b. A batter-runner is out when she legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
- c. A batter-runner or runner is considered forced out if she must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another base runner, but:
  1. She is tagged [legally touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder] before she reaches the forced base.
  2. The fielder, while holding the ball, contacts the base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.
  3. The fielder touches the ball to the forced base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.
- d. The runner is out if she is off base when a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught, and she fails to retouch the base (occupied at the time of the pitch) before a fielder tags her or the base.
- e. If an appeal is upheld at a base to which a runner was forced to advance and the out is a force out, no runs would score if it was the third out. If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.

*Note: There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner.*
- f. The batter-runner or runner is not out:
  1. When touched while off a base with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

*Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.*
  2. When touched while off a base with a fielder's hand or glove/mitt when the ball is in the fielder's other hand.
  3. When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt.
  4. When an improper live-ball appeal is made. (See Appeals, Rule 7-1.)



**Tagging Up after a Caught Fly Ball**

- SECTION 25. a. The initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch. A base runner is out if she leaves her base too soon. Either the runner or the base (left too soon) may be tagged. This is an appeal play.
- b. An appeal must be upheld even if the base left too soon was before or after an award. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.
- c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order.

**Exception:** A runner, who must return a base after an uncaught foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.

- d. A runner may not return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball if: (1) she has left the field of play; (2) a trailing runner has scored; (3) she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon, and “Time/Timeout” has been called by the umpire; or (4) the ball becomes dead.

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

- e. The failure of a preceding runner to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.
- f. If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a time play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.
- g. A runner may not use a running start from a position behind and not in contact with a base.

**EFFECT—The ball is live and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.**

### Touching the Bases

**SECTION 26. a.** An advancing runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home). All awarded bases must also be touched, and in legal order.

*Note: Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in legal order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.*

**b.** Bases missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing. However, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one she has left too soon on a caught fly ball: (1) once she has left the field of play, (2) once a trailing runner has scored, (3) when she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon and “Time/Timeout” has been called by the umpire or (4) when the ball becomes dead.

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

**c.** A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.

**EFFECT (a)-(c)—**For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the runner is out if, before she reaches each untouched base, she is touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. If the base is one to which the runner is forced, she is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base she failed to touch (including home plate).

#### Notes:

- 1. If a runner does not touch home plate and does not make an attempt to touch it, the fielder may touch either the runner or home plate. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should make no call or signal. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If a proper appeal play is made, the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.*
- 2. When a runner is legally returning to tag up after a caught fly ball, the runner can be put out by being tagged, or by the defense touching the base the runner occupied at the time of the pitch. Each other runner may advance or return with liability to be put out.*

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

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

- e. The batter-runner may not step back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

- f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch or retouch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

- g. When a runner has legally started to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's plate or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.

- h. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**EFFECT—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, "Time/Timeout" shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.**

- i. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, she is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

**EFFECT—The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of the fielder. For example, if a runner is being run down between bases and the trailing runner occu-**

**pies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner returns safely to the base she left and both runners are then occupying the same base, the second runner is out, if touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.**

- j. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the runner to return to her base, and the base runner is obligated to return to her base without undue delay.

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

**When the ball is dead, the umpire shall not put the ball in play until each runner has retouched her base. However, after allowing sufficient time for each runner to retouch at the end of playing action, the umpire shall declare the runner out.**

- k. Should “Time/Timeout” be called while a runner is touching a base, she may not advance during a suspension of play.

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# RULE 13

## Misconduct

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The highest standards of sporting behavior and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Code of Conduct. (See page 8)

### Ejection/Suspension

#### Coaches

SECTION 1. Any act of unprofessional behavior that discredits intercollegiate athletics or softball will not be tolerated. Serious misconduct which requires intervention by athletics administration includes:

- a. Removal of his/her team from the field. **Exception:** The coach may remove his or her team from the field if the safety of players is in jeopardy.
- b. Refusal to continue to play because of a dispute with the game officials.
- c. Physical abuse of game officials (e.g., any threat of physical intimidation or harm to include pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact).
- d. Physical abuse of opponents (e.g., any physical abuse of opposing players and coaches, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment in a combative manner).

**EFFECT (a)-(d)—**The coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring). The plate umpire and the offending head coach are each responsible for submitting an incident report (Appendix C or downloaded from the [www.ncaa.org/champadmin/softball](http://www.ncaa.org/champadmin/softball)), in writing, to the institution's director of athletics, the conference commissioner (if applicable) and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours following the incident.

*Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension.*

**Exceptions:**

1. A coach involved in a fight who was defending himself/herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
2. If a coach makes physical contact with an opponent in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, he/she shall not be ejected or suspended.

**Players**

SECTION 2. The NCAA Softball Rules Committee believes there is no place in college softball for physical abuse of officials or fighting among opponents.

- a. Physical abuse of game officials is any threat of physical intimidation or harm to include pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact.
- b. Fighting is any physical abuse of an opposing player, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment in a combative manner.

**EFFECT (a)-(b)**—Participants who fight or who physically abuse an official shall be ejected from the game and serve a suspension. For a first offense, the individual shall serve a one-game suspension. For a second offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall serve a four-game suspension. For a third offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition.

**Exceptions:**

1. A player involved in a fight who was defending herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
2. If a player makes physical contact with another player in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, she shall not be ejected or suspended.

**Notes:**

1. The plate umpire and the head coach of the offending team(s) are each responsible for submitting an incident report (Appendix C or downloaded from [www.ncaa.org/champadmin/softball](http://www.ncaa.org/champadmin/softball)), in writing, to the institutions' directors of athletics, the conference commissioner (if applicable) and the NCAA softball sec-

*retary-rules editor as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours following the incident.*

2. *Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension.*
- c. While coaches are responsible for the actions of their players, cooperation is needed from players, coaches, administrators and game officials to prevent incidents.

## Warning/Ejection

### Unsporting Behavior

SECTION 3. No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere:

- a. Incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators.
- b. Use profanity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.
- c. Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials.

**EFFECT (a)-(c)—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection. If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning.**

*Note: An ejected coach may participate in a limited capacity during a game only to attend to an injured or ill player or to ensure the safety of players when their safety is in question.*

- d. Call "Time/Timeout" or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher throw an illegal pitch. If an illegal pitch is thrown, it shall be declared "No pitch."

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

- e. Take a position in the batter's line of vision or act in any manner to distract the batter.

**EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, all action as a result of the**

batted ball stands. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached that base, whether missing the base or not.

If the batter does not reach first base safely or if one of the other runners does not advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or awarding a ball to the batter and advancing each other runner one base. If the pitch is “Ball four” or hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner is awarded one base.

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

- f. No fielder shall position herself in the runner’s line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit her from seeing the release of the pitch.

**EFFECT**—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a one-base award to the obstructed runner and each other runner forced to advance.

### **Equipment Abuse**

**SECTION 4. a.** No player or coach shall deliberately throw or kick a piece of equipment as a result of disgust or frustration.

**EFFECT**—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual, unless the umpire judges the act to be so flagrant that the offender shall be ejected without warning. Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender.

- b. No player or coach shall use equipment in any way other than what is intended by the manufacturer (i.e., banging bats and balls in a dugout).

**EFFECT**—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending head coach. Any subsequent violation shall result in the abused equipment being removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).

### **Intentionally Pitching at a Batter (Pitcher)**

**SECTION 5.** A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter.



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

### **Use of Video Equipment**

SECTION 6. Team personnel shall not use television monitoring or replay equipment during a contest. Recording video from the dugout is permissible. Electronic equipment may be used to record only games in which the team is a participant.

**Exception:** A team may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game which is or will be televised.

**EFFECT**—When brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected.

### **Use of Tobacco Products**

SECTION 7. a. The use of tobacco products by student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers is prohibited while on site for practice and competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site.

**EFFECT**—Student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers who use tobacco products during practice or competition shall be ejected for the remainder of that practice or competition.

### *Notes:*

1. *During regular-season play, it is the responsibility of each institution to enforce the rule for their athletes and game personnel.*

2. *During postseason championship play (regional and championships competition in Divisions I, II and III), umpires shall enforce the tobacco rule. During pretournament meetings, the games committee shall remind all postseason participants that the rule and penalties (ejection) shall be enforced by game officials.*
- b. Umpires, scorers and other game personnel are prohibited from using tobacco products from the commencement of pregame activities until they leave the competition site.

**EFFECT—If observed by the umpire or game administrator, the offender shall be directed to immediately dispose of the tobacco product. Failure to comply when directed shall result in ejection.**

### **Use of Artificial Noisemakers**

SECTION 8. The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers is prohibited while on site for competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site.

**EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual. Any subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection. If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning.**

## Crowd Control

### **Crowd Control**

SECTION 9. The responsibility for crowd control rests with the director of athletics and the on-site administrator of the host institution. The on-site administrator shall be prepared to utilize the public-address system at the first sign of unsporting crowd behavior and request cooperation in maintaining proper playing conditions.

Profanity, sexist and racist comments or other intimidating actions directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches or other team representatives will not be tolerated. Individuals making such remarks shall be removed from the site of competition.

Artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers shall not be permitted, and such instruments shall be removed from the spectator areas by the games management personnel.

Bands, or any component thereof, shall not play while the ball is live. Play may occur immediately prior to the team's offensive half inning and/or for about 10 seconds immediately following a score.

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# RULE 14

## Scoring

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*Note: Failure of an official scorer to adhere to Rule 14 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for the official scorer.*

### **Official Scorer**

SECTION 1. The home team, conference commissioner or tournament director shall appoint an official scorer for each game. The official scorer shall be responsible for the following:

- a. The official scorer shall record in writing the inning, score, number of outs, runners' position and count on the batter throughout the game.
- b. The official scorer shall have sole authority to make all decisions involving scoring judgment. The scorer shall be objective and shall score for both teams in a similar manner.
- c. The official scorer shall have a current copy of the NCAA Softball Rules and shall know the rules pertinent to his or her responsibilities (e.g., illegal reentry, unreported substitution, designated player).
- d. The official scorer shall sit in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout) whenever possible.
- e. The official scorer's decision shall be communicated to both teams and members of the media present.
- f. The official scorer shall inform the public-address announcer of all substitutions recorded and relayed by the umpire.
- g. The official scorer's decision shall be in agreement with the NCAA Softball Rules and the umpire's decision. The scorer shall have the authority to rule on any scoring matter not specifically covered in the rules.
- h. The official scorer shall notify the umpire immediately if the teams attempt to change sides before three outs are recorded in one half of an inning.
- i. The official scorer shall notify an umpire immediately in the bottom of an inning if the home team has enough runs to win by the eight-run rule.

- j. The official scorer shall not notify an umpire, if the offensive team is batting out of order or if either team has an unreported substitution. This is the responsibility of the opposing team.
- k. If the game is protested or halted, the official scorer shall make note in writing of the exact situation at the time of the interruption. The inning, score, number of outs, runners' position and count on the batter shall be recorded.

### Scoring Terms

SECTION 2. a. **Assist:** Credit given to a defensive player when she handles or effectively deflects the ball during action that is connected with a putout.

- b. **At-Bat:** A plate appearance that does not include sacrifices, hit by pitch, base on balls, gaining first base by interference, obstruction, or an incomplete turn at bat.
- c. **Base Hit:** A batted ball that permits the batter to reach first base safely because of a fair hit; because a runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball or because the umpire is hit by a batted ball; when a fielder attempts to put out a preceding runner but is unsuccessful although there is no fielding error and the official scorer believes the batter-runner would have reached first base with perfect fielding; when a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that any fielder attempting to make a play has no opportunity to do so. A hit shall be scored even if the fielder deflects the ball from or cuts off another fielder who could have put out a runner.
- d. **Base on Balls (Walk):** An award of first base granted by the umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, receives four pitches that are declared balls. A base on balls also is referred to as a walk.
- e. **Batters Faced:** A statistic kept for each pitcher that indicates the number of opposing batters who make plate appearances.

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f. **Caught Stealing:** Action of a runner who is thrown out by the catcher as she attempts to steal a base.

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- g. **Double Play:** A play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action provided there is no error between the putouts.
- h. **Error:** A misplay charged to a defensive player when it is judged by the official scorer to have prolonged the time at bat (causes one or more

pitches to be thrown) of an offensive player or contributed to an offensive player being declared safe.

- i. **Extra Base Hit:** A hit that allows the batter-runner to safely advance past first base without an error or indifference by a defensive player. It may be a double, triple or home run.
- j. **Fielder's Choice:** A fielder's attempt to put out a base runner rather than the batter when a throw to first base would have put out the batter.
- k. **Force Out:** A putout in which a runner, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder (holding the ball) touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance.
- l. **Game-Winning Run Batted In:** The run batted in that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.
- m. **Games Started:** Credit given to the players listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game, whether or not they actually pitch, field or bat.
- n. **Games Played:** Credit given to starting players and their substitutes, as recorded on the umpire's official game lineup card.
- o. **Illegal Pitch:** Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.
- p. **Intentional Base on Balls (Intentional Walk):** An award of first base granted by the umpire to a batter who, during her time at bat, received a fourth ball which the pitcher intentionally threw outside the strike zone. An intentional base on balls also is referred to as an intentional walk.
- q. **Left on Base:** A runner legally occupying a base at the end of a half-inning. This includes a batter-runner whose batted ball results in another runner being the third out.
- r. **Passed Ball:** A pitched ball that the catcher can reasonably be expected to catch but misses, resulting in a base runner advancing.
- s. **Pick-Off:** Credit given to the catcher for a throw behind a runner that catches that runner off base and results in an out.
- t. **Plate Appearance:** Anytime a batter completes a turn at bat. **Exception:** When a batter leaves the game with two strikes and the substitute batter strikes out, the substitute receives credit for the game played but neither a plate appearance nor a time at bat. The first batter is credited with a game played, plate appearance, at bat and strikeout.

- u. **Putout:** Credit given to a defensive player for retiring a batter or base runner.
- v. **Run:** The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.
- w. **Run Batted In:** Credit given to the batter for each run that scores as a result of: a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded.
- x. **Sacrifice:** Credit given to a batter who, with less than two outs, advances one or more runners by bunting or slapping and is called out at first base or would have been called out had no error occurred.
- y. **Sacrifice Fly:** A legally batted fly ball with less than two out that results in a runner scoring a run. If the fielder drops the ball but, in the scorer's opinion, the runner would have scored had the fielder held the ball, the play shall be scored as a sacrifice fly, and an error shall be given to the defensive player.
- z. **Stolen Base:** Credit given to a runner who advances a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- aa. **Strikeout:** A putout that is credited to the catcher as a result of the batter being charged with three strikes in a single at-bat.
- bb. **Throw Out:** Credit given to the catcher for initiating the play on an attempted stolen base when an out results. It also is given to a catcher for throwing in front of a runner who subsequently is put out in a run-down.
- cc. **Total Bases:** The sum of all bases a player earns in a game as a result of a hit(s).
- dd. **Triple Play:** A play by the defense in which three offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action provided there is no error between putouts.
- ee. **Wild Pitch:** A pitched ball that the catcher misses and could not be expected to catch resulting in a base runner advancing.

## Batting

### Base Hit

SECTION 3. A base hit is credited to a batter when she advances to a base safely:

- a. On a fair ball that settles on the ground or clears or touches the home run fence before being touched by a fielder.
- b. On a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that more than a routine play is required to put out the batter-runner.
  1. It should not be anticipated that an off-balance throw would retire a runner. A hit is credited to the batter even if the throw is wild.
  2. When a ground ball is fielded and no throw or a late throw is made, a hit is credited to the batter unless a throw was not made or was made late due to checking or holding a runner on base.
  3. If a slowly hit ball or a hard hit ball is deflected and eliminates a routine play for another fielder, a hit is credited to the batter.
  4. If a play is made on a lead runner unsuccessfully and the batter would have been safe had a play been made on the batter, a hit is credited to the batter. This includes bunts and running slaps.
  5. If a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder does not recover in time to gain good position, a hit is credited to the batter.
- c. On a fair ball that takes an unnatural bounce so that the ball cannot be handled with ordinary effort or that bounces off the pitching plate or any base (including home plate) before being touched by a fielder and at an angle such that it cannot be handled with ordinary effort.
- d. On a ball that reaches the outfield untouched by the infield unless the ball should have been handled by an infielder with ordinary effort (e.g., ball between the legs).
- e. On a fair ball that might have touched a fielder but was blown by the wind, lost in the sun or lights or that falls to the ground because the fielder slips on the field or an object on the field (e.g., catcher's mask, base, home plate, sprinkler).
- f. On a fair line drive hit to the outfield that drops to the ground if the outfielder is attempting to catch the ball on the run or if the outfielder had to cover considerable distance or make the catch running at a high rate of speed. A hit is credited even if the ball is touched.
- g. On a fair batted ball not touched by a fielder that touches a runner or umpire.
- h. On a fair batted ball not touched by a fielder that becomes dead because of touching the person or clothing of a runner or umpire.
- i. On a fair batted ball that strikes a hat or glove thrown at it.
- j. When no one covers the base or a fielder is late in covering the base.

- k. If the runner interferes with a batted ball, a hit is credited to the batter.
- l. If the ball is not touched because of confusion as to who should have fielded it, a hit is credited to the batter.
- m. When a fielder obstructs a preceding runner.

*Note: Always give the batter the benefit of the doubt. A safe course to follow is to score a hit when exceptionally good fielding fails to result in a putout.*

### **Base Hit Not Credited**

SECTION 4. A hit is not credited to the batter in the following situations:

- a. When a batter advances one or more bases while a fielder who handles a fair hit attempts to put out a preceding runner.
- b. When a batter misses first base and is then called out on an appeal.
- c. When a batter hits safely and a preceding runner misses the first base to which she was advancing. This is an appealed force out, and the batter is safe on a fielder's choice.
- d. When a runner is called out for being touched by an infield fly ball.
- e. When a runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.
- f. 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.

### **Extra-Base Hit**

SECTION 5. a. A batter is credited with an extra-base hit when she reaches a base beyond first base solely because of her hit. It may be a double, triple or home run. **Exception:** A batter never gets credit for a triple if a preceding runner is out at home plate or would have been out had no error occurred. The same applies with receiving credit for a double.

*Note: If the batter is tagged out after oversliding or overrunning, she is not credited with reaching such base unless she touched the base before oversliding or overrunning and is tagged out while attempting to return. If a batter misses a base, she gets credit only for the bases touched before missing a base.*

- b. A batter is credited only with the base she would have reached had no play on a preceding runner taken place. If she stops, sees another play and then advances, she does not receive credit for that base.
- c. If a fielder merely holds the ball too long, the batter gets credit for all the bases she takes.
- d. A batter is credited with a home run when any fair batted fly ball clears the home run fence in fair territory, even if the ball is deflected by a fielder.



**Game-Ending Hit**

SECTION 6. a. A hit that scores a winning run is credited with as many bases as the scoring runner traveled as long as the batter advances at least the same number of bases. **Exception:** On an out-of-the-park home run, a home run is credited to the batter as long as all runners touch all bases.

- b. If the winning run scores on a home run, but a preceding runner stops running before reaching home plate, the batter is credited with her last legally touched base.

**Fielder's Choice**

SECTION 7. A fielder's choice is credited in the following situations:

- a. To a batter:

1. When a ball is put in play and any preceding runner is forced out on the hit or would have been out had no error occurred.
2. When a ball is put in play and the lead runner is safe but the batter would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.
3. When a ball is put in play and any preceding runner, who is forced to advance, is called out on an appeal for missing the first base to which she was advancing.
4. When a runner is checked and no throw or a late throw is made, but the runner would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.

- b. To the runner:

1. When, after reaching base safely, a batter earns extra bases because of a play on a preceding runner.
2. When other runners advance while the catcher makes a play on the batter on a dropped third strike.

**Sacrifice**

SECTION 8. A sacrifice is credited to the batter in the following situations:

- a. When, with less than two outs, the batter advances one or more runners by bunting (including a slap, slug, slash and running slap) and is called out at first base or would have been out had no error occurred.

*Note: The running slapper must clearly show the intent to advance a base runner(s). Always give the batter the benefit of the doubt.*

- b. When, with less than two outs, the defense (without error) fails to get the lead runner out on any type of bunt.

*Note: If the lead runner is tagged out in an attempt to advance more than one base, it is scored a fielder's choice. If the batter is obviously bunting for a hit in a situation where a sacrifice is not normally used, credit the hitter with an at-bat.*

- c. When, with less than two outs, the lead runner advances but a trailing runner is out.
- d. When, with less than two outs and runners at first and third base, the pitcher fields a bunt, holds the runner at third base, throws the runner out at first base and the runner at first advances safely to second base.

### **Sacrifice Not Credited**

SECTION 9. No sacrifice is credited in the following situations:

- a. When a lead runner advances on a bunt due to a dropped good throw.
- b. When a batter inadvertently taps the ball into fair territory and it results in a runner advancing and the batter being retired. The intent to sacrifice bunt or slap must exist.
- c. When modifications are not made to the running slapper's swing or motion.

*Notes:*

1. *Modifications could include, but are not limited to, the following: sacrifice motion, a controlled compact swing, a pause in the running slapper's motion or a reduction of foot speed.*
2. *Scoring for the left-handed running slapper should be the same as for a traditional left- or right-handed batter. If the running slapper clearly shows the intent to advance a base runner, credit a sacrifice. If modifications are not made to the running slapper's swing or motion, charge an at-bat, even if a base runner advances.*

### **Sacrifice Fly**

SECTION 10. A sacrifice fly is credited to the batter when, with less than two outs, the batter hits a fly ball or line drive that scores a runner regardless of where the ball is caught (in fair or foul territory) as long as it is in play. If a fair ball is dropped, credit the batter with a sacrifice fly if the runner would have scored with the catch.

*Notes:*

1. *If the catcher clearly has the ball in her possession before the runner arrives but drops the ball as the runner comes into home plate, the catcher is charged with an error, and a sacrifice fly and run batted in are not credited to the batter.*
2. *All sacrifice flies must result in a run batted in credited to the batter.*

## Run Batted In

SECTION 11. A run batted in is credited to the batter for each run that scores as a result of: a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a double play, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded. A game-winning run batted in is the RBI that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.

*Note: On a play involving an error, an RBI is credited to the batter only if the runner would have scored without the error. In addition, an RBI is credited if, with less than two outs, an infielder makes an error on a play made to a base other than home plate. On a third out, if the runner crosses the plate before the third out is made on another runner, credit an RBI.*

## Appeal Plays

SECTION 12. a. **Batting Out of Order.** When an incorrect batter is reported after she is retired and before the next pitch is thrown, the player who should have batted is out and the catcher is credited with the putout. If a pitch has been thrown, all play is legal and the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who batted out of order. If more than one batter bats out of order, score all play as it stands and skip the turn at bat of those who missed their turn.

b. If submitting an accurate lineup card results in a runner being removed from a base and declared out, the results of her at bat are nullified and the putout is credited to the catcher.

c. In all other appeals, credit the fielder close to the misplay with the putout.

## Strikeout

SECTION 13. The batter is charged with a strikeout in the following situations:

- a. When her third strike is caught by the catcher before striking the dirt.
- b. When she is put out while running to first base on a dropped third strike.
- c. When, with first base occupied and less than two outs in the inning, she is put out on a dropped third strike because she cannot legally advance to first base.
- d. When the catcher catches a foul tip directly from the bat to the glove/mitt on a third strike.

- e. When a foul bunt on the third strike is not caught in the air.
- f. When the batter receives two strikes, a substitute batter is inserted and the substitute batter strikes out. The strikeout is charged to the first batter and not the substitute batter.

### **Stolen Base**

SECTION 14. A stolen base is credited:

- a. To a runner who advances to a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- b. To a runner if the runner starts for the next base on the release, and the pitch results in what would otherwise be scored a passed ball or wild pitch. If the runner advances another base due to the wild pitch or passed ball, only the initial base is stolen.
- c. To a runner regardless of the accuracy of the throw and whether an accurate throw would have resulted in a sure putout. No error is charged unless another base is gained due to the wild throw.
- d. To a runner who gets caught in a rundown attempting to steal and advances to the next base safely only if the next base was unoccupied, and no error is made. The base runner must show the intent to steal. If the trailing runner advances, she is credited with a stolen base.
- e. To a runner awarded a base due to obstruction during an attempted steal.
- f. To a runner who advances to a base because of a pick-off play on another runner.
- g. To each runner who successfully advances in a double or triple steal attempt as long as no other runner is put out.

### **Stolen Base Not Credited**

SECTION 15. a. A stolen base is not credited to a runner who advances to a base with the aid of a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.

- b. A stolen base is not credited to any runner when any other runner is thrown out on an attempted double or triple steal.

#### ***Exceptions:***

1. On a double-steal attempt, with runners at first and third, an unsuccessful but legitimate attempt was made to put out the runner stealing second base, and the runner at third is thrown out at home plate on a continuous play.

2. With runners at first and third, credit a stolen base to the runner advancing to second base even if the initial throw is not to second base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
3. With runners at first and third, credit a stolen base to the runner advancing to home plate even if the initial throw is not to third base. The base runner must show intent to steal.
4. With runners on first and third, credit a stolen base to the runner advancing to second base if no throw is made even if the advance was immediately after a walk.

### **Caught Stealing**

SECTION 16. Charge a runner with caught stealing if she is put out or would have been put out had no error occurred on her attempt to steal a base. When in doubt, give the benefit of the doubt to the runner. Do not charge caught stealing unless the runner has an opportunity to be credited with a stolen base when the play starts. If there is a throw and the runner immediately attempts to advance to the next base and is thrown out, the runner is caught stealing.

### **Throw Outs**

SECTION 17. The catcher is credited with a throwout when she throws in front of the runner, resulting in a rundown, regardless of the base at which the putout occurs. If the catcher initiates the play on an attempted stolen base and an out results, she also is credited with a throwout.

### **Pick-Off**

SECTION 18. The catcher is credited with a pick-off when a throw behind the runner results in a putout. If there is a pick-off throw during which the runner immediately attempts to return to the last base touched and the runner is thrown out, it is a putout.

## Fielding

### **Putout**

SECTION 19. a. Credit a putout to a fielder who catches a fly ball or line drive, tags out a runner or tags the base to force out the runner.

b. Credit a putout to the catcher in the following instances:

1. A legally caught third strike.
2. The batter is called out for an illegally batted ball.
3. A batter is out on a third strike foul bunt.
4. A batter is out for being touched by her own fair batted ball while one or both feet are completely out of the batter's box or for stepping on home plate.

5. A batter is out for intentionally interfering with her own foul batted ball.
  6. A batter interferes with the catcher.
  7. A batter is out for batting out of order.
  8. A batter-runner fails to touch first base after a base on balls.
  9. A catcher steps on the plate with the ball in her possession with the bases loaded. This includes a dropped third strike.
  10. A runner is out for not advancing legally to home plate for the game-winning run.
  11. A runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return. The catcher properly appeals, and the runner is called out.
- c. Credit a putout to the nearest fielder in the following instances:
1. A batter is out on an infield fly that is not caught.
  2. A runner is out for failing to keep contact with the base to which she is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
  3. A runner is out for being hit by a fair batted ball.
  4. A runner is called out for being out of the baseline in order to avoid a tag.
  5. A runner runs backward in the first baseline to avoid a tag.
  6. A runner is out for passing another runner.
  7. A runner is out for running the bases in reverse order.
  8. A runner is out for interfering with a fielder. If the interference is a deliberate attempt to impede another play, a second runner also may be declared out.
  9. A runner is out when a proper appeal is made on a missed base or home plate.
  10. An unreported player or an illegal player is declared out.

**Assist**

SECTION 20. An assist is credited to a fielder in the following situations:

- a. A fielder deflects a batted or thrown ball that results in a putout.
- b. A fielder throws a ball that results in a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders. The fielder may receive a putout in addition to an assist.
- c. A fielder throws or deflects a ball that results in a runner being called out for interference or running out of the baseline.

- d. A fielder makes a wild throw and, after the throw, the runner is tagged out before reaching the next base. If the runner reaches the next base safely and, in an attempt to advance to another base, is tagged out, credit the initial fielder with an error.

*Note: Do not credit the pitcher with an assist on a strikeout or when after a pitch, the catcher tags out or throws out a runner.*

### **Error**

SECTION 21. a. An error is charged against any fielder for each misplay (i.e., fielding, wild throws, missed catches on good throws) that prolongs the life of a batter (causes one or pitches to be thrown) or a runner or permits a runner to advance. This includes a dropped foul ball unless it was allowed to drop intentionally to prevent a runner from advancing.

- b. A single error is charged even if more than one base is gained by a runner as a result of the play.
- c. An error shall be charged against any fielder when she catches a thrown ball or fields a ground ball in time to put out any runner on a force play and fails to tag the base or the runner, including a batter-runner on a play at first base.
- d. An error shall be charged against any fielder whose throw takes an unnatural bounce, touches a base or the pitcher's plate, or touches a runner, a fielder or an umpire; thereby, permitting any runner to advance. Apply this rule even when it appears to be an injustice to a fielder whose throw was accurate. The scorer must account for every base advanced by a runner.
- e. If a throw is made to a base and more than one fielder could have received the throw but neither did, an error is charged to the fielder who should have received the throw.
- f. An error is charged to a fielder (including the catcher) committing obstruction when an additional base is gained as a result of the obstruction.
- g. An error is charged to a defensive player who collides with a fielder making the initial catch on a fly ball that is dropped.

### **No Error Is Charged**

SECTION 22. No error is charged to a fielder in the following situations:

- a. When a ball is misplayed due to being lost in the sun or lights, blown by the wind, or if the fielder slips and falls—even if contact is made with the ball.

- b. When there is a mental mistake. Throwing to the wrong base is considered a mental mistake.
- c. When a catcher attempts a pick-off unless the runner advances an additional base.
- d. When a runner returns safely to her original base on a rundown.
- e. When a runner beats a wild throw or dropped catch (unless an additional base is gained). This also pertains to the second or third out of a double or triple play.

*Note: A dropped ball by the receiver is an error if the runner would have been out.*

- f. When a ball is hit with such force, so slowly or with erratic spin that it would require more than ordinary effort to play the ball.
- g. When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder cannot recover in time to make the play.
- h. When a fielder drops a ball after running a considerable distance or if she fails in her attempt to catch the ball while running at a high rate of speed.
- i. When a fielder drops a line drive after moving more than a few steps to catch the ball.
- j. As a result of an illegal pitch, wild pitch, passed ball or hit batter, even if more than one base is gained from the initial misplay.
- k. When a runner advances on a dropped third strike. In such a case, a wild pitch or passed ball shall be charged; however, if an accurate throw or proper catch would have resulted in an out, an error shall be charged to the appropriate player.
- l. When a pitcher mishandles a sharply batted ball. Wild throws and the mishandling of routine ground balls and bunts are reason for charging the pitcher with an error.

### **Double Play/Triple Play**

SECTION 23. a. A double or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time the pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is in the possession of the pitcher in her pitching position. Play must be continuous. If an error occurs between putouts, no double or triple play is credited. In addition, a double or triple play is credited if an appeal play results in a second or third out after the pitcher has the ball in her possession but before the next pitch is thrown.

- b. The second part of a double play never should be assumed. If an over-throw is made, no error is recorded unless the runner advances to



another base. If the second throw is catchable and is dropped, an error is charged to the person receiving the throw.

## Pitching

### Earned Run

**SECTION 24.** a. Earned runs are runs for which the pitcher is statistically accountable. An earned run shall be charged against the pitcher when a runner scores as a result of: a base on balls, a fielder's choice, a hit, a batter hit by a pitch, an illegal pitch, a sacrifice bunt (including a slap and running slap), a sacrifice fly, a stolen base and a wild pitch (including a third strike wild pitch). Earned runs are charged only in the event that the defense did not have the opportunity to make the third putout. Earned runs are determined by reconstructing the inning as if there were no errors or passed balls. The pitcher should be given the benefit of the doubt in determining the advancement of runners had the defensive team been errorless. Any pitcher who is replaced is charged with earned runs for which she is totally responsible.

*Note: A batter who gets on base as a result of a fielder's choice can score an earned run only if the runner that was out as a result of the fielder's choice was a potential earned run.*

- b. A run is unearned if the runner, who scores, reached first base by error or prolonged life due to a dropped foul fly or obstruction.
- c. A relief pitcher is charged with every run that scores if the batter has reached base while she was pitching. Charge a pitcher with the number of runners she put on base.
- d. When a relief pitcher enters the game to pitch to a batter in mid-count and the batter gets on base and scores, charge the first pitcher with the run if the batter has a count of two or three balls and less than two strikes or if the count is full and in either case the batter walks. Charge the relief pitcher with any other action of the batter (including a strikeout).
- e. A relief pitcher does not receive the benefit of previous chances of outs when reconstructing the inning to determine earned and unearned runs charged to her. The original pitcher does. Thus, a relief pitcher could be charged with an earned run that does not appear in the team's totals.
- f. If a runner who began the inning on second base during the tiebreaker scores and the pitcher is held accountable for all bases gained, score the run as earned but charge it to the team total and not to the individual. (See Rule 14-29 for information on the tiebreaker rule.)

**Strikeout**

SECTION 25. a. The pitcher who throws the third strike to a batter is credited with the strikeout, even if the batter reaches first base on a dropped third strike.

b. The scorer determines whether it is scored as a strikeout-passed ball or strikeout-wild pitch.

**Wild Pitch**

SECTION 26. A wild pitch is charged to a pitcher when the pitch is so high, wide or low that the catcher cannot handle the ball with ordinary effort and at least one runner advances. Any pitch in the dirt is wild. Only one wild pitch is recorded regardless of the number of runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher because it was wild, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a wild pitch and a strikeout. No wild pitch is charged if a runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A wild pitch is not an error.

**Passed Ball**

SECTION 27. A passed ball is charged to the catcher when she fails to stop or control a pitch with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Only one passed ball is recorded regardless of the number of runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher that could have been handled with ordinary effort, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a passed ball and a strikeout. No passed ball is charged if a runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A passed ball is not an error.

## Statistics

**Pitching Statistics**

SECTION 28. a. Credit a pitcher with a complete game, no hitter, shutout etc., if she pitches the first pitch and every subsequent pitch of a new game. For statistical purposes, she is considered the starting pitcher, however, she does not have the substitution rights of a starting player unless she is listed on the lineup card in one of the nine or 10 starting positions.

The tenth player is charged with a game played in terms of eligibility but not statistically (unless she participates in the game as a pitcher) if she is replaced in the lineup prior to the first pitch.

**b. Starting Pitcher.**

1. The starting pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
  - (a) She has pitched at least four total innings of a game of six or more innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced, and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
  - (b) She has pitched a total of three innings when a regulation game is called after five innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced, and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
2. A starting pitcher receives the loss if she is relieved while her team is behind, and her team remains behind for the remainder of the game, regardless of the number of innings pitched.

**c. Relief Pitcher.**

1. The relief pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
  - (a) The starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, or her team fell behind.
  - (b) The relief pitcher who pitches most effectively after the starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, more than one relief pitcher was used and the lead was never lost.
  - (c) The relief pitcher was the pitcher of record when her team gained the lead and stayed in the lead.
  - (d) A relief pitcher left the game while the score was tied or her team was behind, and she reentered the game and regained the lead.
2. A relief pitcher receives the loss if she is the pitcher of record when the opponent goes ahead and stays ahead for the remainder of the game.

*Notes:*

1. *If a pitcher is removed from the game offensively by a batter or a runner, all runs scored by her team during the remainder of that inning are credited to her benefit in determining when her team is in the lead.*
  2. *A shutout is recorded if scoreless ball is pitched for the entire game by the starting pitcher or if a relief pitcher pitched scoreless ball after relieving in the first inning before any outs or score. If two or more pitchers combine for a shutout, it shall be noted in the game summary as a combined shutout.*
- d. A pitcher must meet all three of the following conditions to be credited with a save:

1. She is the last pitcher in the win.
2. She is not the winning pitcher.
3. She meets one of the following conditions:
  - (a) She enters the game with a lead of no more than three runs and pitches for at least one inning.
  - (b) She pitches effectively for at least three innings.
  - (c) She enters the game with the potential tying run on base, at bat or on deck.
- b. No more than one save may be credited in a game.

### **Tiebreaker Rule**

- SECTION 29. a. A run scored by the player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team and not the pitcher. Whether a run scored by any other player shall be charged to the pitcher is up to the judgment of the official scorer.
- b. If action by a subsequent batter, such as a fielder's choice, causes the lead-off runner to be put out, the first run scored that inning may be charged to the team. (Example: If a runner reaches first base safely on a fielder's choice as a result of a first-to-third putout, this new runner still is charged to the team.)
  - c. If the lead-off runner at second is put out without action by the batter (caught stealing, picked off or leaving the base early), then, no run is charged to the team.

#### *Notes:*

1. *A run charged to the team is neither earned nor unearned because there is no actual person to whom the run is to be charged. It is technically impossible for the team to have an earned-run average, because the team will always have zero innings pitched.*
2. *In the statistical pitching summary for a game using the tiebreaker rule, "team," is listed as a pitcher. The only statistic recorded for team is total runs allowed. The total runs allowed by a team may exceed the sum total of earned and unearned runs. The box score will not prove as it normally does since there is usually an extra runner left on base for each inning in which the rule is in effect.*
3. *See Rule 6-15 for an explanation of the tiebreaker rule.*

### **Cumulative Performance Records**

- SECTION 30. a. A consecutive hitting streak continues with a hit if the plate appearance results in a base on balls, hit batter, defensive obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly ends a streak even though it is not counted as an official at-bat.

- b. A consecutive-game hitting streak continues without a hit if all plate appearances result in either a base on balls, hit batter, defensive obstruction, interference or a sacrifice. A sacrifice fly and no other hit ends the streak.
- c. A consecutive-game playing streak continues by playing one half of an inning on defense (three outs) or by completing one turn at bat. Pinch running does not continue the streak.
- d. If a player is ejected from a game before an official at bat and before meeting any of the above requirements, a streak continues.
- e. All performances in the completion of a suspended game are considered as occurring on the date when the game officially began.

### **Called, Forfeited and Protested Games**

**SECTION 31. a. Called Game.** If a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is called, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game ends shall be recorded. If a called game is a tie, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

- b. **Forfeited Game.** If a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is forfeited, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game is forfeited shall be recorded. If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall be designated. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or the score is tied at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated. If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, no statistics shall be recorded. Refer to Bylaw 31.10 of the NCAA Manual for more information concerning statistics from forfeited games.
- c. **Protested Game.** If a protest is ruled valid but the game is not replayed to conclusion, it shall be declared "no contest." The record of all individual and team actions shall be recorded; however, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

### **Proving the Box Score**

**SECTION 32.** To prove a box score, the total of the team's plate appearances (times at bat, bases on balls, hit batters, sacrifice hits, sacrifice flies and batters awarded first base because of interference or obstruction) and the international tie-breaker runner must equal the total of the team's runs, players left on base and the opposing team's putouts.

## Table of Symbols

Symbol	Definition	Symbol	Definition
A	assist	L	loss
AB	at-bat	LOB/LEFT	left on base
BA	batting average	OB	obstruction (defensive)
BB	base on balls (walk)	PA	plate appearance
BF	batters faced	PB	passed ball
CG	complete games pitched	PKO	pick-off
CS	caught stealing	PO	putout
DP	double play	R	run scored
E	error	RBI	run batted in
ER	earned runs	SB	stolen base
ERA	earned-run average	SBA	stolen base attempt
GP	games played	SAC/SH	sacrifice
GS	games started	SF	sacrifice fly
GWRBI	game-winning run batted in	SHO	shutout
H	base hit	SO	strikeout
HBP	hit by pitch	SV	save
HR	home run	TB	total bases on safe hits
IBB	intentional base on balls	TO	throw out
ILP	illegal pitches thrown	TOA	throw out attempt
INT	interference (offensive)	TP	triple play
IP	innings pitched	W	win
K	strikeout (swinging)	2B	double
⋈	strikeout (called)	3B	triple

## Percentage Table

Batting average:	<u>hits</u> at-bats	<u>H</u> AB
Earned-run average:	<u>earned runs</u> ×7.0 innings pitched	<u>ER</u> ×7.0 IP
Fielding percentage:	<u>putouts+assists</u> putouts+assists+errors	<u>PO+A</u> PO+A+E
On-base percentage:	<u>walks+hit by pitch+hits</u> walks+hit by pitch+sacrifices+at bats	<u>BB+HBP+H</u> BB+HBP+SAC+AB
Winning percentage:	<u>games won</u> + .5 <u>games tied</u> games won+game lost+games tied	<u>W</u> + .5 <u>T</u> W+L+T
Slugging percentage:	<u>total bases earned by hits</u> at-bats	<u>TB</u> AB
Stolen base percentage:	<u>stolen bases</u> stolen base attempts	<u>SB</u> SBA
Strikeout ratio:	<u>strikeouts</u> ×7.0 innings pitched	<u>SO</u> ×7.0 IP
Throw-out percentage:	<u>throw outs</u> throw out attempts	<u>TO</u> TOA
Total bases:(home runs x 3) + (triples x 2) + (doubles x 1) + total number of hits		



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# RULE 15

## Umpires

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*Note: Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 15 shall not be grounds for protest.*

### **Apparel and Equipment**

SECTION 1. a. The umpiring crew shall be dressed alike. The standard uniform shirt is a powder blue, short-sleeve pull over shirt (major league baseball style button placket with navy and white trim). The navy blue, short-sleeve pullover shirt with red and white trim may be substituted if all umpires concur. Remaining parts of the uniform are navy blue or heather grey slacks and ball bag, socks and navy cap (plain unless all umpires concur to wear a cap with a conference affiliation), black shoes and belt. A jacket or sweater may be worn but must be completely navy blue. A T-shirt is optional, but if worn, must be white.

*Note: Conference affiliation may be embroidered on caps and/or shirts for use in conference play only.*

b. The plate umpire shall wear a black mask with natural or black padding and black throat protector. (An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of a throat protector on the mask.)

*Note: An attached throat protector must be commercially manufactured, properly attached and unaltered. A throat protector that is part of the mask shall extend far enough to adequately protect the throat.*

c. It is required that the umpiring crew have a current NCAA Softball Rules book accessible during the competition.

d. It is strongly recommended that all umpires wear appropriate protective equipment.

### **Duties**

SECTION 2. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team personnel to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties. Each umpire is an



approved official of the institution or conference by which they have been assigned to a particular game and is authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpires shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sporting behavior. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is general information for umpires:

- a. It is recommended that the umpire not be affiliated with a team or its institution.
- b. The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and should report to the playing field at least 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 he/she arrives on the field and reports to the home coach, and it ends when he/she leaves the field after the game.
- c. The umpires should introduce themselves to the coaches and other appropriate game management personnel.
- d. The umpires shall inspect the playing field and equipment.
- e. At the pregame meeting, the plate umpire shall clarify all ground rules for the representatives of each team.
- f. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension of play.
- g. No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his or her respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- h. An umpire should consult his or her associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it is to make the decision and who requests the opinion of the other umpire(s).
- i. In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes shall be designated as the plate umpire, while the umpire(s) whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions shall be designated as the base umpire(s).
- j. The plate umpire and base umpires shall have equal authority to:
  1. Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon;
  2. Call "Time/Timeout" for suspension of play;

3. Eject or suspend a player, coach or other team personnel; and
  4. Call illegal pitches.
- k. The umpire shall declare the batter or runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire shall not render a decision on:
1. Submitting an inaccurate lineup card;
  2. Batting out of order;
  3. Missing a base;
  4. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched; or
  5. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base.
- l. The plate umpire calls, "Let's play ball," loud enough for the coach charged with the conference, the batter and catcher to hear. The base umpire(s) calls, "Let's play ball," loud enough for the opposing coach to hear. Failure of players and coaches to hear the call shall not void the call.
- m. The umpire shall not impose an effect on a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the effect would be an advantage to the offending team.
- n. The umpire shall use his/her authority to protect the well being of the participants by granting warm-up fielding and/or throwing to players following an injury or additional warm-up pitches in inclement weather.

### **Plate Umpire**

SECTION 3. The plate umpire shall:

- a. Have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- b. Take a position behind the catcher.
- c. Have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.
- d. Call and count all balls and strikes and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes.
- e. By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire, make decisions on plays, fair or foul balls and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield in a two umpire sys-

tem, the plate umpire will assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.

- f. Determine and declare whether:
  1. A batter is out when, with two strikes, a batted ball is bunted foul;
  2. A batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter; and
  3. A fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.
- g. Call or indicate “Play/Play ball” to start the game or resume play, “Time/Timeout” to temporarily suspend play, “Let’s play ball,” to end a charged conference, and “Game” to terminate play for a regulation game.
- h. Announce each substitution to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer, if applicable.
- i. Render base decisions as indicated in the umpires’ mechanics manual.
- j. Have the lights turned on when necessary for safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.
- k. Be the sole judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play should bad weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game. (See Appendix E for lightning guidelines)
- l. Be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of a second game of a doubleheader.
- m. Penalize rule infractions (such as illegal pitch, interference, delay of the game, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsporting conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher).
- n. Conduct the pregame meeting with the opposing coaches five minutes before the scheduled starting time.
- o. Assume all duties when circumstances warrant starting or finishing a game as a single umpire.

### **Base Umpire(s)**

SECTION 4. The base umpire(s) shall:

- a. Take such positions on the playing field as outlined in the umpires’ mechanics manual.
- b. Assist the plate umpire in administering the rules of the game.
- c. Render base decisions as indicated in the umpires’ mechanics manual.
- d. Call base runners out for leaving a base before the pitch has been released.

### **Change of Umpires**

SECTION 5. Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game unless an umpire is incapacitated by injury or illness.

## Pregame Responsibilities

SECTION 6. Before the start of the game, the plate umpire shall:

- a. For legality and safety, inspect the equipment, particularly the bats and helmets. Umpires should make certain that dented, bent or illegal bats or broken helmets are not available for use during the game (i.e., not allowed in the dugout). To determine whether a bat with dent(s) or a flat spot is legal, a bat ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.

**EFFECT—If, after one warning, a player continues to use illegal equipment, the individual shall be ejected from the game.**

- b. Check the condition of the field, inspect all playing lines and markers for proper location and adequate visibility, and direct the host institution to correct problems if possible or be prepared to make a ground rule to address the situation.

*Note: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the pitching distance or base distances are incorrect, the error shall be corrected at the start of the next full inning, with no effect, and the game shall continue from that point.*

- c. Collect from the teams a minimum of five game softballs, one new ball rubbed up by each team and three additional balls from the home team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications and are of suitable quality for play. Additional balls should be furnished by a home team or tournament representative.
- d. Have balls available to replenish the supply of game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:
  1. A ball has been hit out of the playing field.
  2. A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play.
  3. The pitcher requests a different ball. The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

## Pregame Meeting

SECTION 7. Prior to the scheduled starting time, the plate umpire shall conduct the pregame meeting with the a member of each

coaching staff. During this meeting, warm-ups shall be suspended, and the plate umpire shall:

- a. Receive from the home team and visiting team their respective batting orders on a lineup card. The umpire shall review each team's lineup card with its coach to be sure it is complete and shall provide one last opportunity for changes without the changes being charged as substitutions. Once returned to the umpire, each team's lineup is official. In the event of a subsequent change, the plate umpire shall report the substitution to the opposing team, official scorer and public-address announcer.

*Notes:*

1. *Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*
  2. *All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*
- b. Collect a minimum of five game softballs, one new ball rubbed up by each team and three additional balls from the home team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications and are of suitable quality for play.
  - c. Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. Where the teams do not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the umpires.
  - d. Review special game rules (e.g., tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules).
  - e. Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.

**Procedures at End of Game**

SECTION 8. At the completion of the game, the plate umpire shall return the game balls to the appropriate games management staff or coach and report any flagrant conduct or irregularity associated with the game. The umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play or protest. The umpires shall leave the field together in as polite, businesslike and inconspicuous a manner as possible.

**Umpire's Judgment**

SECTION 9. a. Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed but is never subject to protest. There will be no protest on such judgments as whether a batted ball was fair

or foul, a runner was safe or out, a pitched ball was a ball or strike, or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with his or her associate(s) before taking any action but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.

***Exceptions:***

1. On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the catcher, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball.
  2. On a decision regarding a pick off, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with the plate umpire.
- b. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.
- c. The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

**Suspension of Play**

SECTION 10. a. An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations:

1. When, in his/her judgment, conditions justify such action.
  2. When he/she leaves his/her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
  3. When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
  4. If a fair batted ball hits the umpire before passing an infielder. (See Rule 9-16.)
- b. An umpire shall not temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
1. While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.

2. After the pitcher has started her delivery.
3. In case of injury until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at her base. **Exception:** When necessary to protect an injured player, the umpire may suspend play immediately.
4. At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed.

### **Umpire's Responsibility for a Protest**

SECTION 11. a. During regular-season play, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:

1. Following input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rule book.
2. The protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and submit a written protest to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.
3. If the protesting coach decides to continue the game under protest:
  - (a) The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game will be resumed under protest.
  - (b) The plate umpire and the protesting coach must note and record the relevant information including:
    - (1) The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
    - (2) The names and phone numbers or addresses of the umpires and official scorer.
    - (3) The rule and section of the official rules or a copy of the ground rule under which the protest is made.
    - (4) The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.
  - (c) Within 72 hours, the plate umpire and the protesting coach must each complete an official protest form (see Appendix D) and send it to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The opposing

coach may also choose to complete and send the official protest form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

- (d) The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:
  - (1) The protest is considered to be invalid, and the game score stands as played.
  - (2) The protest is considered valid, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.

*Notes:*

- (a) It is the responsibility of each conference to determine if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
- (b) For nonconference games, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to determine if the games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
- (3) The protest for participation by an ineligible player is determined to be valid, and the offending team shall forfeit the game(s) played.
- (e) When a protest is upheld and a game is rescheduled:
  - (1) The same lineup card must be used when the game is resumed, and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.
  - (2) If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because she was legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew a suspension.
- b. During play that determines an NCAA qualifier (automatic or play in) and during NCAA championship play itself, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:



1. Following input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rule book.
2. The protesting coach has the right to submit a written protest to a protest committee comprised of the “off” umpire, the umpire in chief (if not involved with the call) and an additional member (chair) who is:
  - (a) Predetermined by the conference for a conference championship;
  - (b) The tournament director for an NCAA playin;
  - (c) The NCAA representative for regional play; or
  - (d) A designated member of the women’s softball championship committee for the NCAA championship series.
3. If the protesting coach proceeds with the protest:
  - (a) The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game is being suspended pending the results of the protest.
  - (b) The protesting coach must complete the appropriate protest form (provided in Appendix D of the NCAA rule book or in the championship handbook) and state the rule in question at the time of the action or incident which caused the protest.
  - (c) All protests must be ruled upon immediately by the protest committee. The committee shall confer with the umpires (and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, if available) before making its decision, and the chair shall make a written report to the chair of the respective women’s softball committee and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

### **Umpire’s Responsibility for an Appeal**

SECTION 12. Once the appeal is made to the umpire responsible for the play that umpire will make the proper call.

### **Umpire’s Responsibility for a Forfeited Game**

SECTION 13. All game umpires must concur in order to declare a game forfeited. If the umpires declare the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (Appendix C or downloaded from [www.ncaa.org/champadmin/softball](http://www.ncaa.org/champadmin/softball)), in writing, to the directors of athletics of the institutions concerned, the conference commissioner (if applic-

able) and to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours following the game.

### **Umpire's Responsibility for Ejections and/or Suspensions**

SECTION 14. The umpire has the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game (ejection) when imposing penalties for violations of Rules 13-1 and 13-2. The plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report, in writing, to the director of athletics, the conference commissioner (if applicable) and the softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours following the game.

# Appendix A

## Feet and Lines Chart

	Reference	FEET AND LINES Line in question	must be within line	foot on line	1 foot entirely over line
Legal catch	Rule 1, Section 22	dead ball territory	no	legal	illegal
Catcher in box	Rule 6, Section 5b	catcher's box	yes	illegal	illegal
Fielder before pitch	Rule 6, Section 5c	dead ball territory	yes	illegal	illegal
Pitcher within chute when taking signal	Rule 10, Section 2	width of pitcher's plate	yes	illegal	illegal
Pitcher stride within chute	Rule 10, Section 4	width of pitcher's plate	yes	illegal	illegal
Batter in box	Rule 11, Section 2	batter's box	yes	illegal	illegal
Batter at moment of contact	Rule 11, Section 2	batter's box	no (on line is a fair ball)	legal	illegal
Batter runner inter- feres with throw at first base	Rule 12, Section 3h	runner's lane	no	legal	illegal
Line determines dead ball territory	Rule 12, Section 11	dead ball territory	no (on line is in play)		
Look back rule	Rule 12, Section 18	pitcher's circle	no	both feet	illegal

## Improper Player Chart

Information found in	Batting Out of Order	Inaccurate Lineup	Unreported Sub	Illegal Player
1. Offending Team Corrects Own Mistake (Offense or Defense)	Rule 11, Section 11 Not recommended but if coach insists, same penalty as if reported by opponent	Rule 7, Section 1 No penalty to correct name or number as long as player was listed on lineup card	Rule 8, Section 5d No penalty; declared officially in game	Rule 8, Section 5e Offending player is ejected; all play stands
2. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire While Offender is At Bat	No penalty; correct batter steps in; all advances are legal	All play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
3. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Immediately After Turn At Bat Before Next Pitch	Missed batter is out; nullify all advances; next batter is one who follows missed batter	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
4. Defensive Team Alerts The Umpire AFTER Turn At Bat And After A Pitch	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; next batter is one who follows incorrect batter	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; all advances are legal
5. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiebreaker Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify all advances
6. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiebreaker Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced And Alter Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out (if on base) and ejected; all advances are legal
7. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After She Makes A Play But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and do over or take results of play; correct lineup	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and do over or take results of play; declared officially in game	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and do over or take results of play; offending player is ejected
8. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After She Makes A Play And Alter Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	All play stands; declared officially in game	All play stands; offending player is ejected

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# Appendix B

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## ***UMPIRE SIGNAL CHART***



**DOUBLE**  
Raise right arm showing two fingers. Verbally call, "Two Bases."



**TRAPPED BALL/SAFE**  
Extend arms straight out with palms down. Verbally call, "Trapped Ball" or "Safe."



**DELAYED DEAD BALL**  
Extend left arm straight out with fist closed.



**HOLD UP PLAY**  
With palm up, raise hand farthest away from pitcher towards batter.



**FOUL TIP**  
Fingers from both hands are touched together chest high in front of body and then a strike signal with no verbal call.



**HOME RUN**  
Raise right arm. With fist closed move it a counter-clockwise twirling motion. Verbally call, "Four Bases."

# UMPIRE SIGNAL CHART



## INFIELD FLY

Raise right arm with fist closed.  
Verbally call, "Infield Fly."



## FAIR BALL

Point towards fair ground with  
hand closest to infield. No verbal  
call.



## FOUL BALL

First give DEAD BALL signal.  
Verbally call, "Foul Ball."



## PLAY BALL

Motion with either hand to the  
pitcher. Verbally call, "Play Ball."



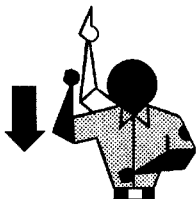
## TIME/DEAD BALL

Raise both hands with open  
palms away from the body.  
Verbally call, "Time" or "Dead  
Ball."



## COUNT

Raise both arms up, indicate  
strikes with fingers on right hand  
and balls with fingers on left  
hand. Verbally give count.



## STRIKE/OUT

Bring left arm with hand closed to  
midsection as right arm is  
extended straight up with hand  
facing ear. Then, pull down at  
elbow while closing fist. Verbally  
call, "Strike" or "Out."

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# Appendix C

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## NCAA Softball Incident Report

Send to: Dee Abrahamson

(fax: 815/753-9355; e-mail: abrahamson@niu.edu)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Site \_\_\_\_\_ Event: \_\_\_Tournament \_\_\_Doubleheader

Inning \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_ Outs \_\_\_\_\_

Batter Number \_\_\_\_\_ Batter's Count \_\_\_\_\_ Runner(s) on Base \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Information:** On-site administrator \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Team \_\_\_\_\_ Visiting Team \_\_\_\_\_

Coach \_\_\_\_\_ Coach \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Institutional Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Ejected \_\_\_\_\_ Person(s) Ejected \_\_\_\_\_

**Tournament Information, if applicable:**

Tournament Director \_\_\_\_\_ Umpire in Chief \_\_\_\_\_

Site Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Umpire Information:**

Plate Umpire \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Base Umpire \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Base Umpire \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for Report:**

\_\_\_ Physical Abuse of Officials      \_\_\_ Physical Abuse of Opponents

\_\_\_ Unsporting Participant Behavior      \_\_\_ Refusal to Continue Play

\_\_\_ Unsporting Fan Behavior      \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe Situation** (continue on back) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Person Submitting Form** \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

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# Appendix D

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## NCAA Softball Protest Form

Send to: Dee Abrahamson  
(fax: 815/753-9355; e-mail: abrahamson@niu.edu)

Game Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting Team \_\_\_\_\_ Home Team \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting Coach \_\_\_\_\_ Home Coach \_\_\_\_\_

Plate Umpire \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

First Base Umpire \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Umpire(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Official Scorer \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Protest Filed by \_\_\_\_\_

Game Details: Visitor's Score \_\_\_\_ Home Score \_\_\_\_ Inning \_\_\_\_ (Indicate Top or Bottom)

Outs \_\_\_\_ Batter's # \_\_\_\_ Balls \_\_\_\_ Strikes \_\_\_\_

Indicate Runners on Base \_\_\_\_\_

NCAA Rules Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Situation:

Filing Coach's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution:

Chair of Protest Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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# Appendix E

## Lightning Guidelines

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### **Guidelines for Game Officials and Game Management to Use Regarding Lightning**

The purpose of this appendix is to provide information to those responsible for making decisions about suspending and restarting games based on the presence of lightning.

The current recommendation of the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) is to consider terminating play when the lightning is six miles away (flash-to-bang time of 30 seconds or less). This recommendation was developed as a practical way to make a judgment in situations where other resources such as technology and instrumentation are not available.

As a minimum, NSSL staff strongly recommends that by the time the flash-to-bang count is 30 seconds, all individuals should have left the game site and reached a safe structure or location.

In addition, a smaller, but still real, risk exists with the presence of lightning at greater distances. Unfortunately, current science cannot predict where within the radius the next strike will occur.

The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.

The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished because of background noise in the immediate environment and its distance to the observer. To use the flash-to-bang method, count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how many miles away the lightning is occurring.

When considering resumption of a game, NSSL staff recommends that everyone ideally should wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field of activity.

If available, electronic detection devices should be used as additional tools to determine the severity of the weather. However, such devices should not be used as the sole source when considering terminating play. (Information taken from the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook and NCAA Championships Severe Weather Policy).

# Index to Rules

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Altered Bat				Rotation.....	10	12	111
Defined.....	1	1	13	Specifications.....	3	1	38
Penalty for.....	11	8a	124	Bands .....	4	3	46
Regulations governing.....	11	8a	124	Base(s)			
Announcer.....	4	10	48	Defined.....	1	6	13
Appeals				Dislodged.....	1	35	17
Appealable plays .....	7	1a	64	Distance.....	2	2	28
Attempting to advance to second	12	21a	165	Double.....	2	4	28
Batting out of order .....	11	11	125	Layout.....	2	17	32
Dead-ball.....	7	1c	64	Release-type.....	2	4	28
Defined.....	1	2	13	Specifications.....	2	4	28
Leaving base on caught fly .....	7	1f	66	Base Awards			
.....	12	24a, b	166	batter.....	12	2	139
Lineup card.....	7	1a	64	runner.....	12	5	147
Live-ball.....	7	1c	64	Base Coaches			
Missing a base.....	7	1f	66	Defined.....	1	7	13
.....	12	19a-c	163	Interference.....	9	10	94
Number of .....	7	1e	66	Responsibilities.....	4	4	46
Runner forced to advance .....	12	24	166	Base Hit			
Runner is safe/out.....	7	1b	64	Circumstances of .....	11	7a	123
Scoring of runs.....	7	1g	66	Credited, scoring.....	14	3	181
Timing.....	7	1d	65	Defined, scoring.....	14	2c	179
Umpire responsibilities.....	15	12	208	Not credited, scoring.....	14	4	183
Approved Ruling				Base Line			
Defined.....	1	3	13	Defined.....	2	3	28
Artificial Noisemakers .....	13	8	177	Distance.....	2	2	28
Assist				Base on Balls			
Defined, scoring.....	14	2a	179	Abandons base.....	12	10b	156
Scoring procedure .....	14	20	189	Base award.....	12	2	139
Assistant Coach				Defined, scoring.....	14	2d	179
Misconduct.....	13	1	172	Intentional.....	10	15	113
Responsibilities.....	4	1	46	Defined.....	1	70	21
At-Bat				Scoring.....	14	2	179
Defined, scoring.....	14	2b	179	Base Path			
Backstop				Defined.....	1	8	13
Defined.....	1	4	13	Runner out.....	12	23	165
Specifications.....	2	1	28	Base Runner			
Ball				Abandons base.....	12	6e	150
Called by umpire.....	11	3b	119	.....	12	7s	153
Dead ball.....	6	9	56	.....	12	10	155
Defined.....	1	5	13	Assisted by anyone .....	9	10d	94
Delayed dead ball .....	6	8	56	.....	12	7d	151
Fair ball.....	1	41	17	Base awards.....	12	5	147
.....	11	4	121	Bases touched in legal order.....	12	19a	163
For NCAA championships play .....	3	1	38	Coach draws throw at home .....	9	10b	94
For regular-season play .....	3	1	38	.....	12	7m	152
Foreign substance on .....	10	13a	112	Collision.....	12	7n	152
Foul ball.....	1	51	19	.....	12	12	157
.....	11	5	122	Defined.....	1	9	14
Live ball.....	6	7	55	Deliberate contact with fielder			
Pregame preparation/number .....	3	1	38	with ball .....	9	13a	95
.....	5	2	49	.....	12	7n	152
.....	5	6e	51	Dislodged base.....	12	13	158
.....	15	6c	203	Effect .....	1	38	17

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Entitled to advance with liability.....	12	4	146	Two runners on same base .....	12	26	169
Exempt from liability to be put out.....	12	6	149	Base Umpire			
Extra base scoring .....	14	5	183	Duties.....	15	4	202
	14	2h	179	Bat			
Fails to return to base when play resumes .....	12	7q	153	Altered.....	11	8a	124
Fake tag.....	12	14	159	Defined.....	1	1	13
Force plays.....	12	24	166	Broken.....	11	8b	124
Hit by batted ball .....	9	13a	95	Defined.....	1	10	14
	12	15	159	Hitting ball second time .....	9	9a	92
Illegal glove/mitt use .....	12	16	161		11	15	128
Intentionally kicking ball .....	9	13a	95	Illegal.....	11	8c	124
	12	15e	160	Defined.....	1	58	19
Interference.....	9	13	95	Official.....	3	2	38
Lane.....	2	22	33	Specifications.....	3	2	38
Leading off.....	12	17	161	Thrown.....	11	8d	124
Leaving base after returning .....	12	7r	153		9	9a3	93
Leaving base before pitch release.....	12	17	161	Warm-up specifications .....	3	3	40
Leaving base too soon on a tag-up.....	12	24d-f	167	Batted Ball			
	12	25b	168	Blocked.....	9	1-7	86
Look-back rule .....	12	18	161	Defined.....	1	11	14
Misses base or home plate .....	12	19	163	Detached equipment of fielder.....	9	1	86
	12	25b	168		12	2b	141
Not out.....	12	9	154	Hits defensive equipment.....	9	3b	87
Occupying bases .....	12	20	164		12	2b	141
Offensive team collecting to confuse defense .....	12	7o	153	Hits offensive equipment .....	9	3a	87
Out.....	12	7	150	Hits runner.....	9	9b	93
	12	23a, d	165		9	13	95
Out on appeal.....	12	8	153		12	7h,i	152
	12	19a-c	163	Hits umpire.....	9	16a, b	101
	12	21a	165		12	2a	139
	12	24a	166	Illegally batted .....	11	17	130
Overruns first base, attempts second.....	12	18f	162	Off batter.....	11	9	125
	12	21a	165	Batter			
Overrunning/oversliding.....	12	21	165	Base awards.....	12	2	139
Passes another runner .....	12	7c	150	Becomes a batter-runner.....	12	1	138
Pitcher has possession of ball in pitcher's circle .....	12	18b,f	162	Checked swing.....	11	13	127
	12	21b	165	Defined.....	1	12	14
Return to base.....	12	19d-e	164	Enters batter's box with altered bat.....	11	21b	133
	12	26	169	Hindering the catcher .....	9	8b, d	91
Rounding a base.....	12	21b	165		11	21q	136
Running bases in reverse order.....	12	19d	164	Hit by pitch.....	11	16	129
	12	24d	167		12	2a	139
	12	25c-d	168	Hitting a fair ball with the bat a second time.....	9	9a	92
Running out of base line .....	12	23	165		11	15	128
Running start.....	12	7t	153	Hitting ball on second swing.....	9	8c	91
	12	25g	168	Hitting with an illegal bat.....	11	21c	133
Suspension of play .....	12	20c	164	Illegal glove/mitt use .....	12	16	161
	12	26	169	Intentional base on balls.....	10	15	113
Tag plays.....	12	24	166	Interference.....	9	8	90
Tagging on a fly.....	12	25	168	Not taking position in 10 seconds .....	11	2a	118
	12	24d	167	On-deck batter .....	11	1	117
Touching bases .....	12	26	169	Out.....	11	21	133
					12	3	143
				Position in batter's box .....	11	2	118
				Stepping across home plate while pitcher is in pitching position .....	9	8a	91
				Stepping out of batter's box .....	11	20	132

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
When third out is made while at bat.....	11	10	125	With two strikes on the batter.....	11	7b	123
<b>Batter's Box</b>				<b>Bunt Attempt</b>			
Defined.....	1	13	14	Defined.....	1	20	14
Specifications.....	2	5	28	<b>Called Game</b>			
Stepping out.....	11	20	132	Defined.....	1	21	15
Violation.....	11	2	118	Procedures.....	6	16	60
<b>Batter-Runner</b>				Scoring.....	14	31a	196
Abandons base.....	12	10	155	<b>Caps</b>			
Base awards.....	12	2	139	Players.....	3	11c	44
Batter-runner is not out.....	12	24	166	Umpires.....	15	1	199
Batter-runner is out.....	12	3	143	<b>Casts/Prostheses/Braces/Splints</b>			
Defined.....	1	14	14	Use of.....	3	4	40
Force plays.....	12	24	166	Defined.....	1	22	15
Going directly to first base.....	12	3d,e	143	<b>Catch and Carry</b>			
Illegal glove/mitt use.....	12	16	161	Blocked ball.....	9	6	89
Interference.....	9	9	92	Regulations governing.....	12	11	156
Moving back to home.....	12	26e	170	<b>Catcher</b>			
Out.....	12	3	143	Defined.....	1	23	16
Overrunning first base.....	12	21	165	Equipment.....	3	5	40
Position in runner's lane.....	12	23	165	Glove/mitt.....	3	7	41
Rounding a base.....	12	21b	165	Helmet.....	3	8b	42
Tag plays.....	12	24	166	Returning ball to pitcher.....	10	16	113
<b>Batters Faced</b>				<b>Catcher's Box</b>			
Defined, scoring.....	14	2e	179	Defined.....	1	24	16
<b>Batting Order</b>				Specifications.....	2	7	29
Defined.....	1	15	14	<b>Catcher's Obstruction</b>			
For designated player.....	8	2	71	Abandons base.....	12	10d	156
Out of order.....	11	11	125	With batter.....	9	18b	103
.....	App A		211	With play at plate.....	9	18c	104
Regulations governing.....	11	10	125	.....	12	2	139
<b>Batting Out of Order</b>				<b>Caught Stealing</b>			
Appeal.....	7	1a,2	64	Scoring.....	14	16	188
Defined.....	1	16	14	Charting Pitches.....	3	6	41
Regulations governing.....	11	11	125	<b>Checked Swing</b>			
Scoring.....	14	12	186	Defined.....	1	25	16
<b>Batting Practice</b>				Regulations governing.....	11	13	127
Regulations governing.....	5	3a	49	<b>Cleats (see Spikes)</b>			
<b>Blocked Ball</b>				<b>Coach</b>			
Catch and carry.....	9	6	89	Assistant.....	4	1	46
Defined.....	1	17	14	Assists runner.....	9	10d	94
Equipment.....	9	1	86	Base.....	1	7	13
Fair batted ball.....	9	3	87	.....	4	4	46
Foul batted ball.....	9	2	87	Conduct.....	13	1	172
Live thrown ball.....	9	4	88	.....	13	3	174
Pitched ball.....	9	5	89	Head.....	4	5	46
<b>Blood Saturation</b>				Interferes with throw.....	9	10c	94
Treatment.....	4	7	47	Misconduct.....	13	1,3	172
Uniform exception.....	3	11	43	Removal from the game.....	8	3	75
<b>Box Score</b> .....	14		198	Uniform.....	3	11a	43
<b>Braces/Casts/Prostheses/Splints</b>				<b>Coaches' Box</b>			
Use of.....	3	4	40	Defined.....	1	26	16
<b>Bullpen</b>				Specifications.....	2	8	29
Defined.....	1	18	14	<b>Collisions</b>			
Pregame warm-up.....	2	6	29	Deliberate crash (runner).....	9	13f	98
Specifications.....	2	6	29	.....	12	7n	152
<b>Bunt</b>				.....	12	12	157
Defined.....	1	19	14	<b>Conduct</b>			
Circumstances of.....	11	7b	123	Coaches.....	Code		8

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
	13	1	172	Home plate.....	2	14	31
General.....	13	3	174	Infield.....	2	15	31
Tobacco use.....	13	7	176	Layout of field.....	2	16	31
Umpires.....	Code		8	Lines (markings).....	2	17	32
Unsportsmanlike.....	13	3	174	On-deck circle.....	2	19	33
Conferences				Pitcher's circle.....	2	20	33
Defensive.....	6	11a	57	Pitcher's plate.....	2	21	33
Defined.....	1	27	16	Runner's lane.....	2	22	33
Offensive.....	6	11b	58	Sideline territory.....	2	24	33
Crow Hop				Warning track.....	2	25	33
Defined.....	1	28	16	Dislodged Base			
Prohibition against.....	10	4c	108	Defined.....	1	35	17
Crowd Control				Following a base.....	12	26h	170
NCAA statement.....	5	9	52	Not out if off dislodged base.....	12	26h	170
Responsibility for.....	13	9	177	Runner attempts to continue.....	12	13b	159
Dead Ball				Double Base			
Blocked ball.....	9	1-7	86	Prohibition against use.....	2	4	28
Circumstances of.....	6	9	56	Double-Header			
Defined.....	1	29	16	Defined.....	1	36	17
Intentionally carrying into dead-ball area.....	12	11	156	Fitness of field.....	2	11	30
Intentionally carrying into dead-ball area.....	12	5a	147	Procedures.....	6	21	63
Dead-Ball Territory				Double Play			
Defined.....	1	30	16	Defined, scoring.....	14	2f	179
Defense				Scoring procedure.....	14	23	191
Defined.....	1	31	17	Dropped Fly Ball			
Defensive Team				Intentional.....	11	19	131
Conferences.....	6	11a	57	Dropped Third Strike			
Defensive player distracts batter.....	9	18c	104	Regulations governing.....	11	14	127
Defensive player distracts runner.....	9	18c	104	Scoring.....	14	25	193
Positions.....	6	5	54	Dugout (Bench)			
Definitions				Defined.....	1	37	17
Scoring terms.....	14	2	179	Specifications.....	2	9	29
Delayed Dead Ball				Earned Run			
Catcher obstruction.....	9	18b	103	Scoring procedure.....	14	24	192
Circumstances of.....	6	8	56	Editorial Rule Changes.....			
Defined.....	1	32	17	Eight-Run Rule			
Detached equipment hitting ball.....	9	18d	106	Procedures.....	6	13	59
Illegal Pitch.....	10	8	110	Ejection			
Obstruction.....	9	17,18	102	Altered bat.....	11	8a	124
Umpire interference.....	9	16	101	Coach.....	8	3	75
Deliberate Crash				Collision.....	9	13f	98
Base running.....	9	13f	98		12	7n	152
	12	7n	152	Defined.....	12	12	157
	12	12	157	Deliberate crash.....	9	13f	98
Delivery					12	7n	152
Defined.....	1	33	17		12	12	157
General.....	10	6	109	Equipment abuse.....	13	4	175
Designated Player (DP)				Illegal glove/mitt.....	3	7	41
Defined.....	1	34	17	Personnel.....	8	3	75
Regulations.....	8	2	71	Pitching at batter.....	13	5	175
Dimensions				Player.....	8	3	75
Backstop.....	2	1	28	Reentry.....	8	7	85
Bases.....	2	4	28	Tobacco use.....	13	7	176
Batter's boxes.....	2	5	28	Unsportsmanlike conduct.....	13	3	174
Catcher's box.....	2	7	29	Use of video equipment.....	13	6	176
Coaches' boxes.....	2	8	29	Violation of the rules.....	8	3	75
Fences.....	2	10	30	Electronic Equipment			
Foul pole.....	2	12	30				

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Prohibition against .....	13	6	176	Fitness of .....	2	11	30
Relay of information .....	3	6	41		5	1	49
Videotaping .....	3	6	41	Layout .....	2	16	31
Equipment				Lines .....	2	17a	32
Abuse of .....	13	4	175	Nonregulation .....	2	18	32
Ball .....	3	1	38	Pregame inspection .....	5	4b	50
Bats (game) .....	3	2	38	Specs .....	2	11	30
Bats (warm-up) .....	3	3	40	Fielder			
Blocked ball .....	9	1	86	Defined .....	1	45	18
Casts/prostheses/braces/splints .....	3	4	40	Obstruction .....	9	18c	104
Catcher's .....	3	5	40	Fielder's Choice			
Electronic .....	3	6	41	Defined, scoring .....	14	2j	180
Field				Scoring procedure .....	14	7	184
Bases .....	2	4	28	Fitness of Field			
Home plate .....	2	14	31	Conditions of weather or field .....	2	11	30
Pitcher's plate .....	2	21	33	Pregame procedures .....	5	1	49
Gloves/mitts .....	3	7	41	Flagrant			
Helmets .....	3	8	42	Defined .....	1	46	18
Illegal gloves/mitts .....	3	7	41	Flagrant Obstruction			
Inspection of .....	5	4a	50	Defined .....	9	18a	103
Jewelry .....	3	9	43	Fly Ball			
Left on field .....	9	1-4	86	Carried into dead ball area .....	12	11	156
Logos, equipment and apparel .....	3	11f	44	Coach interferes with catch .....	9	10a	94
Logos, shoes .....	3	10	43	Defined .....	1	47	18
Obstruction .....	9	18d	106	Offensive team interferes			
Shoes .....	3	10	43	with catch .....	9	15b	100
Standards .....	3	all	37	On-deck batter interferes			
Umpires .....	15	1	199	with catch .....	9	12	95
Uniforms .....	3	11	43	Spectator interferes with catch .....	9	14	100
Warming up a pitcher .....	3	5	40	Force Out			
Error				Defined, rules .....	1	48	18
Charged, scoring .....	14	21	190	Defined, scoring .....	14	2k	180
Defined, scoring .....	14	2g	179	Regulations governing .....	12	7a	150
Not charged, scoring .....	14	22	190		12	24	166
Extra Base Hit				Force Play			
Defined, scoring .....	14	2i	180	Defined .....	1	49	18
Scoring procedure .....	14	5	183	Foreign Substance on Ball			
Extra Inning				Regulations governing .....	10	13a	112
Defined .....	1	40	17	Forfeited Game .....	6	2c	54
Fair Ball				Defined .....	1	50	18
Blocked .....	9	3	87	Records from .....	6	19b	62
Circumstances of .....	11	4	121	Score of .....	6	19b	62
Defined .....	1	41	17	Scoring, records .....	14	31b	196
Fair Territory				Foul Ball			
Defined .....	1	42	18	Blocked .....	9	2	87
Fake Tag				Circumstances of .....	11	5	122
Base award .....	12	2e	142	Defined .....	1	51	19
Defined .....	1	43	18	Foul Pole			
Fielder obstruction .....	9	18c	104	Specifications .....	2	12	30
Regulations governing .....	12	14	159	Foul Territory			
Feet and Lines .....	App. A		210	Defined .....	1	52	19
Fence				Foul Tip			
Catch at .....	2	10	30	Circumstances of .....	11	6	123
Specifications .....	2	10a	30	Defined .....	1	53	19
Field of Play				Foul Weather			
Authorized personnel allowed on .....	4	2	46	Apparel .....	3	11b	43
Defined .....	1	44	18	Covers .....	2	11	30
Dimensions/specifications .....	2		34	Fitness of field .....	2	11	30
Dimensions table .....	2	-	36	Game			

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Called.....	6	16	60	Regulations governing.....	11	16	129
Eight-run rule .....	6	13	59	Home Plate			
Forfeited.....	1	50	18	Specifications.....	2	14	31
	6	19	62	Layout.....	2	16	31
Scoring.....	14	31b	196	Home Run			
Halted.....	1	55	19	Base award.....	12	2d	142
	6	17	61	Touching batter who hits home run	9	15c	100
No contest.....	1	75	21	Home Team			
	6	20	63	Defined.....	1	57	19
No game .....	1	76	22	Game balls provided by.....	3	1	38
	6	18	61	General.....	6	6	55
Protested game scoring .....	14	31c	196	Illegal Bat			
Regulation.....	6	12	59	Defined.....	1	58	19
Regulation defined.....	1	97	24	Penalty for.....	3	2	38
Tied .....	6	14	59	Regulations governing .....	11	8c	124
Winner.....	6	2	53	Illegal Pitch .....	10	8	110
Game-Ending Hit				Defined, rules .....	1	59	19
Scoring.....	14	6	184	Defined, scoring.....	14	2o	180
Game-Winning Run Batted In				Illegal Player			
Defined, scoring.....	14	2l	180	Defined.....	1	60	20
Games Played				Regulations governing.....	App A		211
Defined, scoring.....	14	2n	180	Regulations governing.....	8	5d	81
Gloves/Mitts				Illegal Reentry			
Illegal use.....	12	16	161	Defined.....	1	61	20
Limitations for catcher, first				Penalty for.....	8	7	85
baseman, pitcher .....	3	7	41	Illegally Batted Ball			
Specifications.....	3	7	41	Defined.....	1	62	20
Ground Ball				Regulations governing .....	11	17	130
Defined.....	1	54	19	Illegally Caught Ball			
Ground Rules				Detached equipment .....	12	2c	141
Adoption of.....	2	13	31	Illegal glove/mitt .....	12	16	161
Establishing ground rules .....	5	7	51	Inaccurate Lineup Card			
	5	4b	50	Circumstances of appeal.....	7	1a1	64
Pregame.....	5	6b	51	.....	App A		211
Ground-Rule Double				Definition.....	1	63	20
Regulations governing.....	12	2b	141	In Flight			
Halted Game				Defined.....	1	64	20
Defined.....	1	55	19	In Jeopardy			
Procedures.....	6	17	61	Defined.....	1	65	20
Head Coach				Incident Report.....	App.	C	214
Misconduct.....	13	1	172	Infield			
	13	3	174	Defined.....	1	66	20
Responsibilities.....	4	5	46	Specifications.....	2	15	31
Headgear				Infield Fly			
Legal/illegal.....	3	11c	44	Regulations governing.....	11	18	131
Helmet				Rule .....	1	67	20
Attachable face mask .....	3	8d	43	Infielders			
Defined.....	1	56	19	Defined.....	1	68	21
Removed helmet hitting ball.....	9	1d	87	Injured Player			
Worn by the defense .....	3	8c	43	Substitution for .....	8	6c	85
Worn by the offense .....	3	8a	42	Inning			
Hit				Defined.....	1	69	21
Circumstances of .....	11	7a	123	Regulation games.....	6	12	59
Game Ending.....	14	6	184	Intentional Base on Balls			
Hit Batter				Defined, rules.....	1	70	21
Abandons base.....	12	10c	156	Defined, scoring.....	14	2p	180
Intentionally pitching at.....	10	14	113	Delivery of.....	10	15	113
	11	16	129				
	13	5	175	Intentionally Dropped Fly Ball			



	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Regulations governing.....	11	19	131	Logos			
	12	3i	144	Shoes.....	3	10	43
Interference, Offensive				Uniforms.....	3	11f	44
Aiding a runner.....	9	10d	94	Look-Back Rule			
Ball hitting umpire.....	9	16	101	Regulations governing.....	12	18	161
By base coach.....	9	10	94	Loss Credited to Pitcher			
	12	7i	152	Relief pitcher.....	14	28c	194
By batter.....	9	8	90	Starting pitcher.....	14	28b	194
By batter-runner.....	9	9	92	Major Rules Changes.....			
By game personnel.....	9	7	89	Manager (Team)			
By on-deck batter.....	9	12	95	Responsibilities.....	4	11	48
By runner.....	9	13	95	Media			
	12	7g	151	Designated areas for.....	4	6	47
By umpire.....	9	16	101	Medical Personnel			
Catcher with batter on attempted				Responsibilities.....	4	7	47
squeeze play.....	9	18b	103	Misconduct			
Defined.....	1	7i	21	General.....	13		172
Deliberate collision.....	9	13f	98	Mitts (see Gloves/Mitts)			
	12	12a	157	Multi-Colored Gloves/Mitts			
Deliberate crash by runner.....	12	7n	152	Specifications.....	3	7	41
	9	13f	98	No Contest			
Offensive team.....	9	15	100	Defined.....	1	75	21
Personnel.....	9	7	89	Procedures.....	6	20	63
	9	11	95	No Game			
Spectator.....	9	14	100	Defined.....	1	76	22
With a bat.....	9	8d	91	Procedures.....	6	18	61
	9	9a	92	No Pitch			
Jersey				Declaration of.....	10	10	111
Specifications.....	3	11d	44	Defined.....	1	77	22
Jewelry				Nonregulation Field			
Allowable.....	3	9	43	Regulations governing.....	2	18	31
Medical alert bracelets/necklaces	3	9	43	Numbers			
Knee/Shin Pads				Uniforms.....	3	11d	44
Specifications.....	3	11e	44	Obstruction, Defensive			
Layout				Catcher.....	9	18b	103
Playing field.....	2	16	31		12	2a	139
Leading Off Base				Defined.....	1	78	22
Regulations governing.....	12	17	161	Equipment.....	9	18d	106
Leap				Fake tag.....	9	18c	104
Defined.....	1	72	21		12	14	159
Left on Base				Fielder.....	9	18c	104
Defined, scoring.....	14	2q	180	Flagrant.....	9	18a	103
Lightning.....	App E.		216	General.....	9	17	102
Line Drive				Offense			
Defined.....	1	73	21	Defined.....	1	79	22
Feet and Lines.....	App. A		210	Offensive Team			
Lines (Markings)				Conferences.....	6	11b	58
Field of play.....	2	17	32	Interference.....	9	15	100
Lineup Card				Positions.....	6	4	54
Appeal process.....	7	1a	64	Official Scorer			
Defined.....	1	74	21	Duties.....	4	8	47
Official.....	5	6a	51		14	1	178
Pregame exchange.....	5	5	50	On-Deck Batter			
Required information.....	5	5	50	Defined.....	1	80	22
Live Ball				Interference by.....	9	12	95
Blocked.....	9	4	88	Regulations governing.....	11	1	117
Circumstances of.....	6	7	55	Warm-up bats.....	3	3	40
Defined.....	6	7	55	On-Deck Circle			

	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Page</b>		<b>Rule</b>	<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Page</b>
Defined.....	1	81	22	Intentionally pitching at batter.....	10	14	113
Dimensions.....	2	19	33		11	16c	130
Warm-up bats.....	3	3	40		13	5	175
<b>Out</b>				No pitch declared.....	10	10	111
Defined.....	1	82	22	Pitched out of play.....	9	5	89
Regulations governing.....	11	21	133	Quick pitch.....	10	9	111
<b>Outfield</b>				Returned by catcher.....	10	16	113
Defined.....	1	83	22	Start of pitch.....	10	3	108
<b>Outfielder</b>				Slips from pitcher's hand.....	10	7	110
Defined.....	1	84	23	Time between pitches.....	10	18	114
<b>Overslide</b>				Warm-up in bullpen.....	2	6	29
Defined.....	1	85	23	Warm-up pitches allowed.....	10	19	114
Runner is out.....	12	21	165	Windup.....	10	5	109
<b>Overthrow</b>				Windup definition.....	1	118	27
Blocked ball.....	9	4	88	<b>Pitcher</b>			
Defined.....	1	86	23	Batting glove on pitching hand.....	10	13b	112
From pitching plate.....	9	5	89	Credited with loss			
<b>Pants/Shorts</b>				Relief pitcher.....	14	28c	194
Specifications.....	3	11g	44	Starting pitcher.....	14	28b	194
<b>Passed Ball</b>				Credited with win			
Defined, scoring.....	14	2r	180	Relief pitcher.....	14	28c	194
Scoring procedure.....	14	27	193	Starting pitcher.....	14	28b	194
<b>Personnel</b>				Defensive conference.....	6	11a	57
Assistant coach.....	4	1	46	Defined.....	1	90	23
Authorized to be in dugout.....	2	9	29	Deliberately dropped or rolled ball	10	7b	110
Authorized to be on field.....	4	2	46	time.....	10	18	114
Band.....	4	3	46	Foreign substance on ball.....	10	13a	112
Base coach.....	4	4	46	Illegal pitcher.....	8	6b	84
Ejected.....	8	3	75	Legal delivery.....	10	6	109
Head coach.....	4	5	46	Penalty for illegal pitch.....	10	8	110
Manager (team).....	4	11	48	Playing runners back to base.....	12	18	161
Media.....	4	6	47	Position of feet in pitcher's circle.....	10	2	107
Medical.....	4	7	47		12	18a	161
Public-address announcer.....	4	9	48	Removal after conference with			
Scorer.....	4	8	47	coach.....	8	6b	84
Umpires.....	4	11	48	Signals.....	10	2	107
Unauthorized Area.....	9	7	89	Step during delivery.....	10	4	108
<b>Pick Off</b>				Substitution.....	8	6b	84
Defined, scoring.....	14	2s	180	Stats.....	14	28	193
Scoring procedure.....	14	18	188	Tape on finger.....	10	13b	112
<b>Pinch Hitter</b>				Throwing to base.....	10	17	114
Defined.....	1	87	23	Warm-up pitches allowed.....	10	19	114
<b>Pinch Runner</b>				<b>Pitcher's Circle</b>			
Defined.....	1	88	23	Dimensions.....	2	20	33
<b>Pitch</b>				<b>Pitcher's Drag Foot</b>			
Aborting.....	10	11	111	Defined.....	1	91	23
Blocked.....	9	5	89	<b>Pitcher's Pivot Foot</b>			
Charting.....	3	6	41	Defined.....	1	92	23
Defensive positioning for.....	10	1	107	Step/stride.....	10	4	108
Defined.....	1	89	23	<b>Pitcher's Plate</b>			
Delivered with catcher in box.....	10	1c	107	Contact at delivery.....	10	4a	108
Delivered with catcher out of				Dimensions.....	2	21	33
catcher's box.....	6	5b	55	Layout.....	2	31	31
Delivery.....	10	6	109	Pitcher throws while in contact			
	1	33	17	with.....	10	4a	108
Dropped or rolled ball.....	10	7	110	<b>Pitcher's Stride Foot</b>			
Illegal.....	1	59	19	Defined.....	1	93	23
	10	8	110	<b>Pitching at Batter</b>			
Intentional base on balls.....	10	15	113	Penalty for.....	13	5	175

	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Page</b>		<b>Rule</b>	<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Page</b>
Prohibition against .....	10	14	113	Defined, scoring .....	14	2t	181
	11	16c	130	Scoring procedure .....	14	19	188
Pitching Position				Quick Pitch			
Regulations governing .....	10	2	107	Defined .....	1	96	24
Plate Appearance				No pitch .....	10	9	111
Defined, scoring .....	14	2t	180	Reentry			
Plate Umpire				Defined, illegal .....	1	61	20
Duties .....	15	3	201	Regulations governing .....	8	7	85
Play Ball (Play)				Regulation Game			
Defined .....	1	94	24	Circumstances of .....	6	12	59
Players				Defined .....	1	97	24
Designated/DEFO .....	8	2	71	Resin			
Ejected from game .....	8	3	75	Legality of .....	10	13a	112
Illegal .....	8	4d	84	Resumption of play			
Defined .....	1	60	20	Circumstances of .....	6	10	56
Minimum number to play .....	8	1a	71	Run			
Misconduct .....	13	2	173	Defined, rules .....	1	98	24
Officially entering the game .....	8	5a	84	Defined, scoring .....	14	2v	181
On a team .....	8	1	71	Eight run .....	6	13	59
Positions .....	8	1	71	Game winner .....	6	2	53
Starter .....	8	5	84	Scoring of .....	6	1	53
Substitutions .....	8	6	84	Run Batted In			
Unreported .....	1	115	26	Defined, scoring .....	14	2w	181
Pregame Procedures				Scoring procedure .....	14	11	186
Announcement .....	5	9	52	Run-Ahead Rule (see Eight-Run Rule)			
Equipment inspection .....	5	4a	50	Rundown			
Fitness of field .....	2	11	30	Defined .....	1	100	24
	5	1	49	Runner (see Base Runner)			
	5	4	50	Runner's Lane			
Game balls .....	3	1	38	Specifications .....	2	22	33
	5	2	49	Runs Scored			
Lineup exchange .....	5	5	50	Regulations governing .....	6	1	53
Meeting .....	5	6	51	Sacrifice			
	15	7	203	Credited, scoring .....	14	8	184
Practice .....	5	3	49	Defined, scoring .....	14	2x	181
Umpires' duties .....	5	4	50	Not credited, scoring .....	14	9	185
	15	6	203	Sacrifice Fly			
Prostheses/Casts/Braces/Splints				Defined, scoring .....	14	2y	181
Use of .....	3	4	40	Scoring procedure .....	14	10	185
Protest				Safe			
Allowable .....	7	2	67	Defined .....	1	101	24
Defined .....	1	95	24	Save			
Form .....	App.	D	215	Scoring .....	14	28c	194
Game .....	14	31c	196	Scoreboard			
Judgment and misinterpretation .....	7	2b	67	Specifications .....	2	23	33
Information needed .....	7	2e	68	Scorer			
Intent to protest .....	7	2e	68	Specifications .....	4	8	47
Nonregulation field .....	2	18	32		14	1	178
	7	2d	68	Scoring			
Post Season .....	7	2f	69	Batting .....	14	3-17	181
Regular Season .....	7	2e	68	Box Score .....	14		198
Scoring .....	14	31c	196	Cumulative performance records .....	14	30	195
Unallowable .....	7	2a	67	Fielding .....	14	19-23	188
Upheld .....	7	2e	68	Pitching .....	14	28-29	193
Written procedure .....	7	2e	68	Proving the box score .....	14	32	196
Public-Address Announcers				Runs .....	6	1	53
Announcement .....	5	9	52	Statistics .....	14	28-32	193
Responsibilities .....	4	10	48	Symbols .....	14		197
Putout							

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Terms.....	14	2	179	Defined.....	1	105	25
Tiebreaker.....	14	29	195	General.....	11	3	119
Shoes				Substitute			
Specifications.....	3	10	43	Defined.....	1	106	25
Sideline Territory				Injured player, regulations governing.....	8	6c	85
Dimensions.....	2	24	33	Pitcher, regulations governing.....	8	6b	84
Slap Hit				Player, regulations governing.....	8	6a	84
Circumstances of.....	11	7c	124	Reentry.....	8	7	85
Defined.....	1	102	25	Unreported, regulations governing	8	4c	79
Spectator Interference				Substitute Runner			
Circumstances of.....	9	14	100	Injury to runner.....	8	6c	85
Spikes				Suspension, Player			
Specifications.....	3	10	43	Defined.....	1	107	25
Splints/Casts/Prostheses/Braces				Suspension of Play			
Use of.....	3	4	40	Circumstances of.....	6	10	56
Starter				Umpire.....	15	10	205
Defined.....	1	103	25	Tag			
Starting Lineup				Defined.....	1	108	26
Number of players.....	8	1	71	Defined, fake tag.....	1	43	18
Official.....	8	5	84	Regulations governing.....	12	24	166
Positions.....	8	1	71	Tagging up on caught fly.....	12	25	168
Reentry.....	8	7	85	Tape			
	8	7	85	Pitching hand.....	10	13b	112
Starting Player				Team Representative Defined.....	1	109	26
Specifications.....	8	5	84	Tenth Player			
Statistics				Defined.....	1	110	26
Called/forfeited/protested games ..	14	31	196	Regulations.....	8	2	71
Cumulative performance records..	14	30	195	Third Strike Rule			
Pitching.....	14	28	193	Regulations governing.....	11	14	127
Proving the box score.....	14	32	196	Throat Protectors (Masks)			
Save.....	14	28d	194	Catchers.....	3	5	40
Table of symbols.....	14		197	Umpires.....	15	1b	199
Tiebreaker.....	14	29	193	Throw Out			
Stealing				Defined, scoring.....	14	2bb	181
Base runner out.....	12	7	150	Scoring procedure.....	14	17	188
Interference by batter.....	9	8	90	Tiebreaker			
Interference by umpire.....	9	16	101	Procedures.....	6	15	60
Leaving bases after returning.....	12	7r	153	Scoring.....	14	29	195
Scoring.....	14	14-16	187	Tie Games			
When ball leaves pitcher's hand...	12	4a	146	Regulation tie.....	6	14	59
Step				Tiebreaker.....	6	15	60
By Pitcher.....	10	4	108	Time (Timeout)			
Stepping Out of Batter's Box				By umpire.....	15	2j	200
Batter interference.....	9	8	90	Defined.....	1	111	26
	11	20	132	Player, coach.....	6	10a	56
Stolen Base				Timing Play Defined.....	1	112	26
Credited, scoring.....	14	14	187	Tobacco Use			
Defined, scoring.....	14	2z	181	Prohibition against.....	13	7	176
Not credited, scoring.....	14	15	187	Total Bases			
Strike				Defined, scoring.....	14	2cc	181
Ball hitting batter on third strike....	11	16b	130	Triple Play			
Called by umpire.....	11	3c	120	Defined, scoring.....	14	2dd	181
Defined.....	1	104	25	Scoring procedure.....	14	23	191
Dropped third strike.....	11	14	127	Turn At Bat			
Strikeout				Defined.....	1	113	26
Defined, scoring.....	14	2aa	181	Umpires			
Scoring, batter.....	14	13	186	Apparel.....	15	1	199
Scoring, pitcher.....	14	25	193	Appeals.....	15	12	208
Strike Zone							

	Rule	Sec.	Page		Rule	Sec.	Page
Authority/obligation.....	4	12	48	Unsportsmanlike Conduct			
Base umpire.....	15	4	202	Circumstances of.....	13	3	174
Change of.....	15	5	202	Videotaping.....	13	6	176
Defined.....	1	114	26	Policy.....	3	6	41
Duties, game.....	15	2	199	Visiting Team			
Duties, pregame.....	5	4	50	Defined.....	1	116	26
	15	6-7	203	Game balls.....	3	1	38
Duties, postgame.....	15	8	204	Walk (see Base on Balls)			
Ejections/suspensions.....	15	14	209	Warm-Up Bats			
Equipment.....	15	1	199	Specifications.....	3	3	40
General information.....	4	12	48	Warm-Up between innings			
Hit by batted ball.....	12	15	159	offense.....	6	4d	54
Hit by pitched or thrown ball.....	9	16	101	defense.....	6	5e	55
Interference.....	9	16	101	Warm-Up Pitches			
Judged bases.....	12	2e	142	Allowable.....	10	19	114
	12	5d	149	Bulpen requirements.....	5	3c	50
Judgment.....	15	9	204	Defined.....	1	117	26
Number of.....	4	12	48	Equipment recommended for.....	3	5	40
Plate umpire.....	15	3	201	In bullpen.....	2	6	29
Protest responsibility.....	15	11	206	Warning Track			
Responsibilities of forfeited game	15	13	208	Specifications.....	2	25	33
Reversal of decision.....	15	9	201	Wild Pitch			
Signals.....	App.	B	212	Defined.....	14	2ee	181
Suspension of play.....	15	10	203	Goes out of play.....	9	5	89
Undershirts/Undershorts				Scoring procedure.....	14	26	193
Specifications.....	3	11h	45	Win Credited to Pitcher			
Uniforms				Relief pitcher.....	14	28c	194
Coaches.....	3	11a	43	Starting pitcher.....	14	28b	194
Foul weather.....	3	11b	43	Windup			
Headgear.....	3	11c	44	Defined.....	1	118	27
Jersey.....	3	11d	44	Regulations governing.....	10	5	109
Knee/shin pads.....	3	11e	44	Winning Team			
Logos.....	3	11f	44	Regulation game.....	6	2	53
Numbers.....	3	11d	44	Without Liability to be putout			
Pants/shorts.....	3	11g	44	Defined.....	1	119	27
Players.....	3	11	43	Wristbands			
Umpires.....	15	1	199	Pitcher.....	10	13b	112
Undershirts/undershorts.....	3	11h	45				
Unreported Player							
Defined.....	1	115	26				
.....	App A		211				
Regulations governing.....	8	4c	79				