THE OFFICIAL RULES OF

SOFTBALL

2026 PARTICIPANT MANUAL

USA SOFTBALL

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WWW.USA.SOFTBALL.COM

2026 Official Rules of Softball

Adopted, published and distributed by:

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To view the USA Softball Code, Procedural Manual and Bylaws, please visit USASoftball.com

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear USA Softball Members,

As we close out an unforgettable 2025 and look ahead to 2026, I want to take a moment to thank each one of you — players, coaches, umpires, commissioners, volunteers, parents, and fans — for your unwavering passion and dedication to our great sport.

This year has been one of growth, triumph, and continued commitment to excellence at every level of USA Softball.

From the local fields where young athletes take their first swing, to Devon Park where our U-18 Women's National Team brought home gold at the 2025 WBSC Women's Softball World Cup, we have seen the very best of what softball offers: teamwork, resilience, joy, and community.

Congratulations to our national teams, our Hall of Fame Class of 2025 inductees, and the thousands of league champions crowned across the country. Every hit, every call, and every high-five this season contributed to the legacy that began in 1933 and remains stronger than ever today.

None of this happens without you. Our commissioners, board members, and national office staff have worked tirelessly to support your programs, provide world-class resources, and keep player safety at the forefront through background checks, SafeSport training, and our ongoing abuse-prevention efforts. Our umpire program continues to lead the nation in training and professionalism, ensuring fair and safe play on every diamond.

As we turn the page to 2026, exciting opportunities lie ahead:

- Continued preparation for softball's triumphant return to the Olympic stage at LA28
- Expanded youth and adult programming
- New tools and benefits for registered members
- A renewed focus on growing the game we all love

Your voice matters. Whether you have ideas for your local association, feedback on national initiatives, or simply want to share what USA Softball means to you, my door (and inbox) is always open. Together, we will keep building the most inclusive, supportive, and thriving softball community in the world.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, Council, and National Office, thank you for making 2025 another banner year. Here's to even brighter seasons ahead — may your bats stay hot, your gloves stay sure, and your love for the game never fade.

Play on,

Dan Pfeffer
President, USA Softball

CEO'S MESSAGE

Dear USA Softball Members,

On behalf of USA Softball, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to you.

To our athletes, coaches, umpires, administrators, and fans across the country – YOU continue to be the heartbeat of our sport. Your dedication, passion, and commitment strengthen USA Softball each and every day. Thank you for choosing to play with us, and for supporting our mission to develop, promote, and celebrate the sport of softball nationwide.

As we enter 2026, USA Softball remains rooted in the same spirit that began in 1933, and continues to thrive from our home in Oklahoma City, Okla. As the National Governing Body of Softball in the U.S., we take great pride in being recognized by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) for our unwavering commitment to member safety and organizational excellence. We continue to build on our long-standing legacy while pushing the sport forward at every level – both here at home and around the world.

Our commitment to athlete safety remains steadfast. USA Softball does not tolerate any form of abuse – physical, mental, emotional, or sexual. For more than a decade, all adults working with Youth Athletes have been required to complete background checks. In partnership with the USOPC and the U.S. Center for SafeSport, we uphold policies designed to protect athletes, ensuring the safest possible environment for everyone who steps onto the field.

The strength of USA Softball continues to come from the dedicated volunteers who bring this sport to life at the grassroots level. Through state and metro associations, local leaders organize countless events across the country, creating opportunities for players of all ages to participate, grow, and excel. Their hard work fuels the future of our organization, and we are grateful for their ongoing leadership.

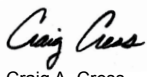
USA Softball remains one-of-a-kind in the opportunities we provide. Whether you compete or play for fun, whether you're eight-years old or eighty, whether it's fast pitch, slow pitch or modified pitch, there is a place for you in the USA Softball family. As the official pathway from grassroots programs to the National Team, we offer athletes the chance to represent the United States on the world stage – and each season, new talent emerges with the potential to become future National Team players.

The 2025 season delivered new accomplishments and important learnings, all of which energize us for the year ahead. With softball included in the 2028 Olympic Games, excitement for our sport continues to rise, and we are proud to help lead softball into a new era of global visibility.

In 2026, I look forward to watching athletes across all divisions – from youth leagues to international play – take the field with pride, determination, and love for the game.

As you begin a fresh season, we wish you success and fulfillment. Whether your goal is to win a USA Softball National Championship, receive the honor of umpiring a title game, or simply enjoy every moment with your teammates, we hope this year brings you joy and achievement. Every pitch, every swing, and every cheer reminds us why this sport means so much to so many. Thank you for choosing USA Softball.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Cress
USA Softball Chief Executive Officer

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EVERY SEASON STARTS AT
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SOFTBALL

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The BEST Play USA Softball!

Annually, USA Softball conducts over 100 National Championships in each of its major disciplines of the sport – slow pitch, fast pitch and modified pitch.

The road to USA Softball National Championships begins at the local level through each of USA Softball's state and metro associations. Whether it's a league or state championship or a series of qualifying tournaments – each association determines how berths are allocated for teams within their associations.

Map out your road to a USA Softball National Championship today! Contact your state/metro association Commissioner today to see how your team can participate at a USA Softball National Championship!

To find a list of National Championships, please visit USASoftball.com and click "Tournaments & National Championships" on the main navigation menu.

Is your softball equipment approved for USA Softball Championship play? For a complete updated listing of USA Softball Certified Equipment, please visit USASoftball.com!

USA
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RULE REFERENCES FOR 2026

RULE	SECTION	TOPIC	PAGE
3-1B	Equipment	Clarifies that bat sensors are allowed during play.	31
4-8B	Players	Clarifies that participants can be ejected any time that the umpires are on the field.	52
5-9A [3]	The Game	Changes the run ahead rules for Women's Open.	58
5-10A	The Game	Creates a time limit for One True Nationals.	58
5-10B	The Game	Allows the time limit to be either 1 hour 30 minutes or 1 hour 40 minutes.	58
6C-1B	Pitching Regulatations (SP)	Clarifies one or both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.	72
8-9A [2]	Adult Slow Pitch	Clarifies that the pitcher must bat for themselves and reach base safely to be eligible for a courtesy runner.	106

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If and/or when the USA Softball Rules and USA Softball Procedural Code conflict the USA Softball Procedural Code will override playing rules.

Where (Fast Pitch) is shown, Modified Pitch rules are followed the same as fast pitch with the exception of the pitching rule. Where (Slow Pitch) is shown, 16” Slow Pitch rules are followed the same as slow pitch with the exception of the pitching rule.

The words “Junior Olympic” or the initials “JO” refer to youth softball.

New rules and/or changes are in bold letters in each shaded section. Housekeeping changes are shaded, but not bold.

Read the “Rules Supplement” at the end of the rules to clarify various selected rules.

PREAMBLE TO THE RULES.
WARNING, DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER
One of the primary purposes of USA Softball’s Official Playing Rules (including its Equipment Standards) and USA Softball’s Code is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. USA Softball’s Official Playing Rules and Code should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. There are risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball, including specifically (but not limited to) the danger of being injured by thrown bats, thrown balls, batted balls or other objects. Softball poses a risk to its participants, spectators and other persons at or near USA Softball events or practices. Softball is a vigorous team sport at times involving severe cardiovascular stress and violent physical contact. Softball involves certain risk, including but not limited to death, serious neck and spinal injuries resulting in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage and serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, muscles and internal organs, and equipment provided for the protection of the participants may be inadequate to prevent serious injury. It is further disclosed that softball involves a particularly high risk of ankle, knee, head, and neck injury. In addition, participation in USA Softball events may involve activities incidental thereto, including but not limited to, travel to and from the site activity, participation at sites that may be remote from available medical assistance, and possible reckless conduct of other participants. Participants engaging in softball and activities incidental to softball do so with knowledge of the danger involved and agree to accept any and all inherent risks of property damage, personal injury, or death. Parents, family, guests, participants and spectators assume all risk and danger of personal injury, losses, damages to person or property and all hazards arising from, incidental to or related in any way to the game of softball.

DISCLAIMER: USA Softball Inc. (“USA Softball”), its officials, agents, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, contractors, LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND AFFILIATES are not responsible for ANY INJURY (INCLUDING DEATH) OR LOSS OF PROPERTY TO ANY PERSON SUFFERED WHILE WATCHING, PLAYING, PRACTICING, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY AT OR INVOLVED IN THE GAME OF SOFTBALL FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER, INCLUDING ORDINARY NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF USA SOFTBALL OR ITS AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, THE OWNERS AND LESSORS OF THE PREMISES AND ALL OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED AND INCLUDING THE RECKLESS CONDUCT OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS. USA Softball expressly disclaims any and all liability for any injury or property loss related in any way to the game of softball. This warning, disclosure and disclaimer is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted for applicable laws. If any portion is held invalid the remainder of the warning, disclosure and disclaimer will continue in full legal force and effect.

RULE 1 - DEFINITIONS

ALTERED BAT: When the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed.

APPEAL PLAY: A play or a rule violation on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player.

BALL COMPRESSION: The load force, in pounds, required to compress a softball 0.250 inches when measured in accordance with the ASTM test method for measuring compression-displacement of softballs.

BALL COR: The coefficient of restitution of a softball when measured in accordance with the ASTM test method for measuring coefficient of restitution of softballs.

BASE ON BALLS: Permits a batter to gain first base when four pitches are judged to be out of the strike zone.

BASE LINE: An imaginary line directly between bases.

BASE PATH: A line directly between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to tag that runner.

BATTED BALL: Any pitched ball that hits the bat or is hit by the bat and lands or is touched either in fair territory or foul territory.

BATTER'S BOX: The area to which the batter is restricted when batting.

BATTER-RUNNER: A player who has completed a turn at bat but has not yet been put out or reached first base.

BATTING ORDER: The official listing of offensive players in the order in which they bat.

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

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

BUNT: A pitched ball that is intentionally tapped with the bat, slowly, within the infield.

CATCH/NO CATCH:

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

❶ To establish a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove control of it and/or that the release of the ball is voluntary.

❷ If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arm(s) or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body, equipment or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand(s) or glove/mitt.

❸ The fielder's feet must be within the field of play, touching the "out of play" line or in the air after leaving live ball territory in order to have a valid catch. A player who is "out of play" and returns must have both feet touching live ball territory or one foot touching and the other in the air, for the catch to be legal.

B. It is not a catch:

❶ If a fielder, while gaining control, collides with another player, umpire or a fence, or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground.

❷ If a ball strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight it is the same as if it struck the ground.

❸ When a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt in its proper place.

CATCH AND CARRY: A legal catch followed by a defensive player carrying the ball into dead ball territory.

CATCHER'S BOX: The area to which the catcher is restricted while catching. The catcher must remain in the box until:

A. ***(Fast Pitch)*** The pitch is released.

B. ***(Slow Pitch)*** The pitched ball:

❶ Is batted.

❷ Touches the ground, plate, or batter.

❸ Reaches the catcher's box.

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY: When used in the USA Softball Playing Rules, the term "Championship Play" shall have the same meaning as is assigned to such term by the USA Softball Code.

CHARGED CONFERENCE: When a team representative requests a suspension of play or delays the game for the purpose of delivering a message to another team member, unless the pitcher is removed from the pitching position.

CHOPPED BALL: ***(Slow Pitch)*** Occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat.

COACH: A person who occupies the coach's box and/or assists in the direction of their team representatives on the field.

COACH'S BOX: The area in which the base coach is restricted to prior to the release of the pitch.

COURTESY RUNNER: Any player who runs for a runner without a charged substitution.

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

DEAD BALL: A ball that is not in play.

DEFENSIVE TEAM: The team in the field.

DESIGNATED PLAYER (DP): ***(Fast Pitch)*** The player who is initially on the line-up card in the team's batting order but not in the defensive line-up.

DISLODGED BASE: A base displaced from its proper position.

DISQUALIFIED PLAYER: A player removed from the game for a rule violation.

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

DUGOUT/TEAM AREA: An out-of-play area designated for players and team representatives.

EJECTED PARTICIPANT: A team representative removed from the game by the umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct.

EXTRA PLAYER (EP): ***(Slow Pitch and Junior Olympic Fast Pitch)*** An optional player(s) in these games.

FAIR BALL: A legally batted ball that:

A. Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or between home and third base.

B. Bounds over or past first or third base, which is in fair territory, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the base.

C. While on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire.

D. While over fair territory, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
E. Touches first, second or third base.
F. First falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second or third base.
G. While over fair territory, leaves the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
H. Hits the foul pole.

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

FAKE TAG: A form of obstruction by a fielder who attempts to tag a runner without the ball and thereby impedes a runner advancing or returning to a base.

FIELDER: Any player of the team in the field.

FLEX: The player who is initially listed in the tenth spot or the last spot in JO Play when batting more than 9 on the line-up card, and may play any defensive position, and may enter the game on offense only in the Designated Player's (DP) batting position.

FLY BALL: A batted ball, fair or foul, that rises into the air.

FORCE OUT: An out which may be made only when a runner loses the right to the base that the runner is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or a trailing runner has been put out.

FOUL BALL: A batted ball that:
A. Settles or is touched (not caught) on or over foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
B. Bounds or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory.
C. While over foul territory, touches the person, attached or detached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
D. While over foul territory, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
E. First hits the ground over foul territory beyond first or third base.
F. Touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand(s) a second time while the batter is within the batter's box.
G. Goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment and is caught by another fielder.
H. Hits the pitcher's plate and rolls untouched to foul territory before reaching first or third base.

FOUL TIP: A batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hand(s) or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher.

HOME TEAM: The team that starts the game on defense.

ILLEGAL BAT: A bat that does not meet the requirements of an official bat or warm-up bat.

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL: Occurs when the batter hits the ball fair or foul and:

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

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

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

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

INELIGIBLE PLAYER: A player who does not meet the requirements of the USA Softball Code.

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

INFIELDER: A fielder who defends the area of the field around first, second, third or shortstop areas.

INFIELD FLY: A fair fly ball, not including a line drive or an attempted bunt, which can be caught by an infielder, pitcher or catcher with ordinary effort when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs.

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

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

JUNIOR OLYMPIC PLAYER: Any player eligible to participate in the Junior Olympic program. If Junior Olympic players play on an adult team, it is considered playing in an adult league and adult rules will be in effect.
Warning: *If a Junior Olympic player elects to play on an adult team and be subject to adult rules, players may be subject to a heightened risk of injury because of: (A) a potential disparity in the skill level, weight and size of players; and/or (B) adult rules not mandating certain requirements or protective equipment.*

LEAPING: ***(Fast Pitch)*** An act by the pitcher when both feet become airborne on the initial move and push from the pitcher's plate.

LINE DRIVE: A batted ball that travels parallel or near the ground through most of its flight.

LINE–UP CARD: The official document listing starting players and substitutes of a given team.

MANAGER: The team representative that must have control of their team at all times on and off the field.

NON-APPROVED BAT: A bat that does not meet USA Softball specifications or is on the current USA Softball non-approved bat list with USA Softball Certification Marks.

OBSTRUCTION: The act of a defensive team member:
A. Who hinders or impedes a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
B. Who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases unless the fielder is:
❶ in possession of the ball.
❷ in the act of fielding a batted ball.
Note: *Contact is not necessary to impede the progress of the batter-runner or a runner.*

OFFENSIVE TEAM: The team at bat.

ON-DECK BATTER: The offensive player who is scheduled to bat next.

ON-DECK CIRCLE: The area nearest the offensive team's dugout in which the next batter is restricted to before the release of the pitch.

OUTFIELD: That portion of the field in fair territory which is normally covered by outfielders.

OUTFIELDER: A fielder who defends the area of the field that the left, left-center, right-center, and right fielders normally play.

OVER SLIDE: The act of an offensive player when, as a runner, slides beyond or loses contact with a base the player is attempting to reach.

OVERTHROW: A thrown ball from a fielder that goes:
A. Beyond the boundary lines of the playing field (dead ball territory), or
B. Becomes a blocked ball.

PARTICIPANT: A starting player, substitute, manager, coach or other team representative located in the dugout, team area or playing field.

PASSED BALL: A legally delivered pitch that should have been held or controlled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

PIVOT FOOT: The foot which:
A. ***(Fast Pitch)*** must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to pushing off.
B. ***(Slow Pitch)*** the pitcher must keep in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball is released.

PLAY: An attempt by a defensive player to retire an offensive player. A pitch is not considered a play except as it relates to an appeal.

PLAY BALL: The term used by the plate umpire to indicate that play shall start.

PROTEST: A formal request to review the decision of an umpire's rule interpretation.

QUICK PITCH: A pitch made with the obvious attempt to catch the batter off balance.

RUNNER: An offensive player who has reached first base and has not yet been put out or scored.

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

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

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

A. ***(Men's Adult and Women's Slow Pitch with stealing, Men's 21U and Junior Olympic Boys 18U Slow Pitch***) Runners can advance once the pitched ball reaches the front edge of home plate.

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

STRIKE MAT: A mat 24 inches long with a V shaped cut out with the edges 12 inches long to fit tight with the point of home plate.

STRIKE ZONE: That space over any part of home plate, when a batter assumes a natural batting stance adjacent to home plate:

A. ***(Fast Pitch)*** Between the batter's arm pits and the top of the knees.

B. ***(Slow Pitch)*** Between the batter's back shoulder and the front knee.

C. ***(Seniors Slow Pitch)*** A rectangle 17" x 32.5" mat is used which includes the plate and the plate extension. Any legally pitched ball not swung at that lands on any part of the plate or mat will be ruled a strike. The shoulder to the knee strike zone has been eliminated.

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

TAG: A legal tag is the act of a defensive player:

A. Touching a base with any part of the body while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or glove or:

B. Touching the runner or batter-runner with the ball while securely held in the hand or glove.

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

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

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

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

SECTION 1 - THE PLAYING FIELD

2

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

OFFICIAL DISTANCE TABLE

Adult	Division	Bases	Pitching	Min. Fence	Max. Fence
Fast Pitch	Women	60'	43'	200'	250'
	Men	60'	46'	225'	275'
Mod. Pitch	Women	60'	43'	200'	275'
	Men	60'	46'	265'	325'
Slow Pitch	Women	70'	50'	265'	300'
	Men	70'	50'	300'	325'
	Senior	70'	50'	300'	315'
	Coed	70'	50'	275'	300'
16-In. Pitch	Women	55'	38'	200'	250'
	Men	60'	38'	250'	300'

Youth	Division	Bases	Pitching	Min. Fence	Max. Fence
Fast Pitch	G10-U-A/B	60'	35'	175'	225'
	G12-U-A/B	60'	40'	200'	225'
	G14-U-A/B	60'	43'	200'	225'
	G16-U-A/B	60'	43'	200'	225'
	G16-U Gold	60'	43'	200'	225'
	G18-U-A/B	60'	43'	200'	225'
	G18-U Gold	60'	43'	200'	225'
	B10-U	60'	35'	175'	225'
	B12-U	60'	40'	200'	225'
	B14-U	60'	46'	200'	225'
	B16-U	60'	46'	200'	225'
	B18-U	60'	46'	225'	250'
Slow Pitch	G10-U	60'	40'	175'	200'
	G12-U	60'	46'	175'	200'
	G14-U	65'	50'	225'	250'
	G16-U	65'	50'	225'	250'
	G18-U	65'	50'	225'	250'
	B10-U	60'	40'	200'	225'
	B12-U	60'	46'	225'	250'
	B14-U	70'	50'	275'	300'
	B16-U	70'	50'	275'	300'
	B18-U	70'	50'	275'	300'

Note: CEO will establish the base and fence distance for Men's Super Slow Pitch Championship.

Note: In Junior Olympic Fast Pitch 8 - Under, the region hosting the Regional Championship Finals will establish the base, pitching, and fence distance as well as other sections of the USA Softball Playing Rules.

If the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be at the wrong dimensions during the course of the game, correct the error, with no penalty, and continue playing the game. Every effort should be made by the umpire to obtain the correct dimensions.

SECTION 2 - GROUNDS

Ground or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be established by tournament officials. Any obstruction on fair ground less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate should be clearly marked for the umpire's information. If using a baseball field, the mound should be removed and the backstop distances must meet those prescribed (minimum of 25 feet or a maximum of 30 feet from home plate).

SECTION 3 - LAYOUT

For the layout of the diamond, refer to the drawing showing the official dimensions for a softball diamond. This section serves as an example for laying out a diamond with 60-foot bases and a 46-foot pitching distance. To determine the position of home plate, draw a line in the direction desired to lay out the diamond. Drive a stake at the corner of home plate nearest the catcher. Fasten a cord to this stake and tie knots, or otherwise, mark the cord, at 46 feet, 60 feet, 84 feet 10 1/4 inches, and at 120 feet. Place the cord (without stretching) along the direction line and place a stake at the 46-foot marker. This will be the front line at the middle of the pitcher's plate. Along the same line, drive a stake at the 84-foot 10 1/4-inch marker. This will be the center of second base. Place the 120-foot marker at the center of second base and, taking hold of the cord at the 60-foot marker, walk to the right of the direction line until the cord is taut and drive a stake at the 60-foot marker. This will be the outside corner of first base and the cord will now form the lines to first and second bases. Again, holding the cord at the 60-foot marker, walk across the field and, in a like manner, mark the outside corner of third base. Home plate, first base, and third base are wholly inside the diamond. To check the diamond, place the home plate end of the cord at the first base stake and the 120-foot marker at third base. The 60-foot marker should now check at home plate and the middle of second base. In the layout of a 65-foot base path diamond, follow the same procedure with the following substitute dimensions: 65 foot, 130 foot, and 91 feet 11 inches. Check all distances with a steel tape whenever possible.

A. The three-foot line is drawn in foul territory parallel to and three feet from the baseline, starting at a point halfway between home plate and first base.
B. The batter's on-deck circle is a five-foot circle (2 1/2-foot radius) placed adjacent to the end of the player's bench or dugout area closest to home plate.
C. There shall be batter's boxes, one on each side of home plate. The front line of the

box will be drawn from the center of home plate. The inside lines of the batter's box shall be six inches from home plate.

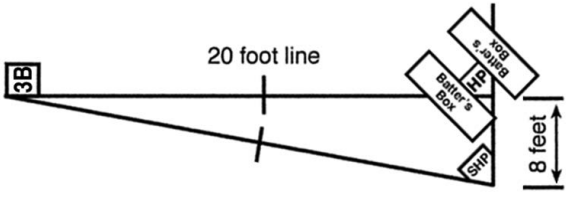
BATTER'S BOX TABLE:	
Fast, Modified & Slow Pitch:	3'W x 7'L
16" Slow Pitch	4'W x 8'L

D. The catcher's box shall be as wide as the two batter's boxes from outside line to outside line, 8'5" for Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch and 10'5" feet wide for 16" Slow Pitch. The length of the catcher's box will be seven feet long in Fast Pitch and 10 feet long in all Slow Pitch.

E. Each coach's box is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to and eight feet from the first and third base line, extended from the bases toward home plate.

F. The pitcher's plate shall be of rubber or wood, 24 inches long and six inches wide. The top of the plate shall be level with the ground. The front of the pitcher's plate shall be the prescribed pitching distances from the back point of home plate. It shall be permanently attached to the ground at distances indicated in Rule 2, Section 1. (Fast Pitch) There shall be a 16-foot circle, eight feet in radius, drawn from the center of the pitcher's plate. The lines drawn around the pitcher's plate are considered inside the circle.

G. Home plate shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. It shall be a five-sided figure, 17 inches wide across the edge facing the pitcher's plate. The sides shall be parallel to the inside lines of the batter's box and shall be 8 1/2 inches long. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long.
(Senior Slow Pitch) The second home plate shall be placed eight feet from the back tip of home plate on an extended line from first base. A line shall be drawn from



third base to the second home plate.

H. The bases, other than home plate, shall be 15 inches square, be made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than five inches in thickness. The double base shall be used at first base, in all divisions of play. This base is 15 by 30 inches and both sides of the double base, white and contrasting color, shall be equal in height

(5" max). Half the base is white (over fair territory) and half is of contrasting color (over foul territory). The bases should be properly fastened in position.

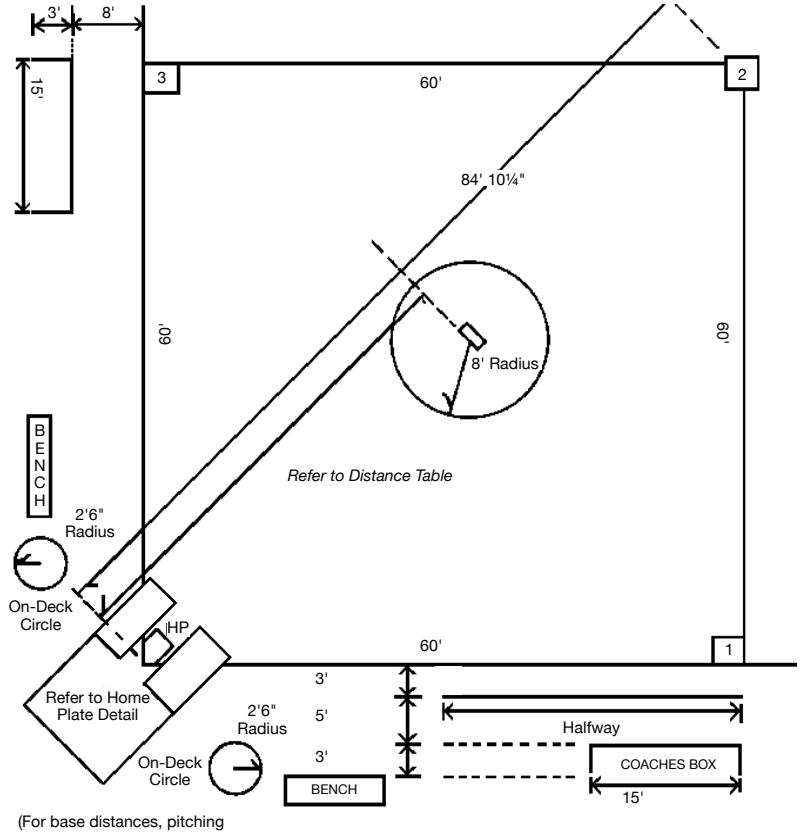
I. The outfield fence height for Local Association, Regional, National Championships, National Championship Finals and the USA Softball Championships must be at least four feet high (at least three feet high if using temporary fencing) and it is suggested that it be eight feet in height.

J. Local Association, Regional, and National Championship Final play; the minimum lighting guidelines can be found at www.USA Softball.com.

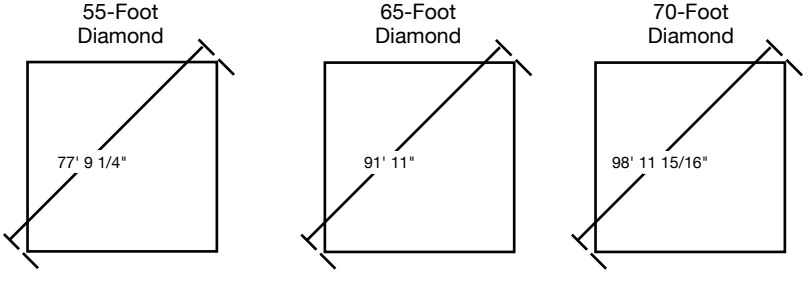
DIMENSION TABLE

Area	***Dimensions***
Backstop	25' minimum and 30' maximum from home plate.
Bases	15" square.
Base (Double)	15" X 30" of white/contrasting color.
a) FP/MP Home Plate to first/third	60' from the back point of home plate to the back of the base.
b) SP Home Plate to first/third	70' from the back point of home plate to the back of the base.
c) 16" SP Men / Women	60'/55' from the back point of home plate to the back of the base.
Batter's Box FP/MP/SP	6" from home plate, 3 feet wide by 7 feet long: 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate.
Batter's Box 16" SP	6" from home plate, 4 feet wide by 8 feet long: 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate.
Catcher's Box	10' in length in Slow Pitch and 7' in Fast Pitch from rear outside corner of batter's box and 8' 5" wide in FP and SP and 10' 5" in 16" SP.
Coaches Box	8' from the first and third base line, 15' long by 3' wide.
Home Plate	17" wide, sides parallel to the batter's box line and are 8 ½" long, sides of the point facing the catcher are 12" long. The width of the black edge is ¾".
On-Deck Circle	5' in diameter and 2' 6" radius.
Pitcher's Circle	8' radius drawn from the front edge of the pitcher's plate.
Pitcher's Plate	24" long and 6" wide.
Three-foot lane	Halfway line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3' from the first base foul line. It starts halfway from home plate and goes to the back edge of first base.
Skinned Infield	Use front center of the 46' pitcher's plate as the center point of arc. 55' radius is recommended with 55' bases. 60' radius is recommended with 60' bases. 65' radius is recommended with 65' bases. 70' radius is recommended with 70' bases.

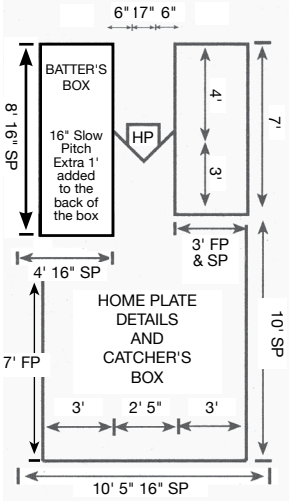
FIELD DIMENSIONS

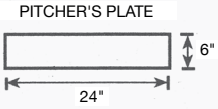


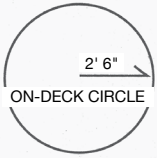
(For base distances, pitching distances and fence distances, see Rule 2, Section 1)

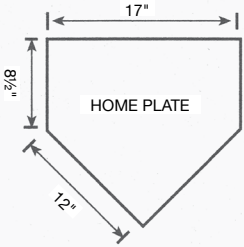


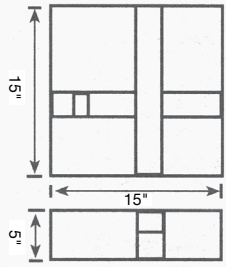
FIELD DIMENSIONS

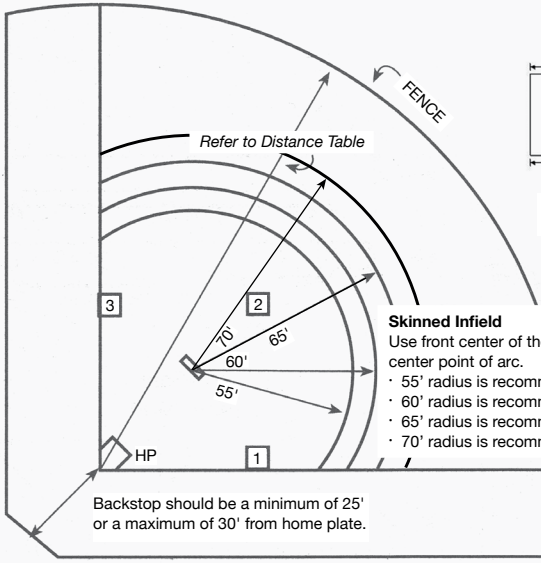


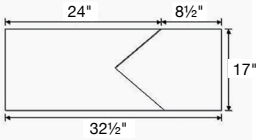












SENIORS' STRIKE MAT DIMENSIONS

Skinned Infield

Use front center of the 46' pitcher's plate as the center point of arc.

- 55' radius is recommended with 55' bases.
- 60' radius is recommended with 60' bases.
- 65' radius is recommended with 65' bases.
- 70' radius is recommended with 70' bases.

PREAMBLE TO RULE 3: *Rule 3 governs the equipment to be used in USA Softball Championship Play. Equipment bearing USA Softball's approved certification mark(s) should not be construed as a warranty or guarantee that the equipment is safe or will safeguard participants or spectators from injury. Instead, USA Softball's certification marks merely indicate that the equipment model has been tested and complies with USA Softball's rules for Championship Play. The primary purpose of Rule 3 and USA Softball's equipment standards is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. The use of USA Softball approved equipment in Championship Play or otherwise should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. There are risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball including specifically, but not limited to, the danger of being injured by thrown bats, thrown balls, batted balls or other objects.*

SECTION 1 - OFFICIAL BAT

A. **CERTIFIED/APPROVED:** The official bat for USA Softball Championship Play must meet all the USA Softball specifications and the requirements of Rule 3, Section 1, and:

❶ The official bat made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel and end cap shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges, rattles and show no signs of excessive wear. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The official bat shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion. The official bat must bear the appropriate certification mark as shown below and must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks.

Allowed in all games

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

AND

❷ must be included on a list of approved bat models published by USA Softball.

OR

❸ must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with the USA Softball Bat Performance Standard. This includes wooden bats.

Exception: Any bats bearing the USA Softball, USSSA, or WBSC Certification marks and pass our Fast Pitch Compression testing thresholds are allowed in the USA Softball Men's Major and Men's Open Fast Pitch Championships.

❹ Barrel Compression Machine: A USA Softball approved barrel compression testing machine shall be used at all National Championship Finals. The barrel compression testing shall be coordinated by the Tournament Director and shall be conducted under the direction of the umpire staff or their designees.

Exception: Senior Softball bats may be used in Senior Championship Play only.

Exception: Men's 16-Inch and Senior Slow Pitch National Championship Finals

B. **SAFETY KNOB:** The knob shall have a diameter of at least 1.6 inches with no sharp edges. The knob will be permanently attached to the bat and may be covered with grip tape. **The use of an internal or external bat sensor is allowed provided that the sensor is properly attached.**

C. **HANDLE:** The region of the bat from the knob, not including the knob, to the start of the taper where the diameter increases. The handle will include a grip.

D. **GRIP:** The handle region of the bat must have a grip made of cork, grip tape, or other synthetic material. No bare metal, wood or composite material may be exposed in this area. The grip shall not be less than 6" and not more than 15" from the knob. Resin, pine tar or spray substances are permissible on the grip region only.

E. **TAPER:** The transition area between the handle and the barrel. The taper shall have a generally conical shape. It starts where the barrel decreases in size and ends where the handle diameter becomes constant.

F. **BARREL:** The region of the bat from the taper to the end cap, not including the end cap. The barrel region shall be smooth and round within 0.050 inches in diameter.

G. **END CAP:** The cap placed at the barrel end of the bat. The end cap shall be permanently affixed to the bat to prevent alterations to the interior of the bat. It shall be affixed so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer without damaging or destroying the end cap or barrel.

H. **ALTERED BAT:** A USA Softball Official Bat's characteristics shall remain fixed at the time of manufacture and may not be altered in any way other than specifically provided for in Rule 3, Section 1 or as specifically approved by USA Softball. Approved bats shall be considered altered if they are rolled, shaved, repainted, weighted or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer. Identifying the bat by means of laser marking, engraving, or painting the name or number of the player will not make the bat an altered bat.

I. **CONSTRUCTION:** The official bat shall be of one-piece construction, multi-piece permanently assembled or two-piece interchangeable construction. If the bat is designed with interchangeable components it must meet the following additional criteria:

❶ Mating components must have a unique locking key to prevent uncertified equipment combinations in the field.

❷ All component combinations must meet the one-piece bat rules.
❸ Manufacturer must demonstrate that the interchangeable bat fails in a safe manner (i.e. visible damage before locking feature(s) fail(s)).
❹ Bat components must be designed in a way to prevent uncertified equipment alterations.

Note: *If the bat is not constructed of wood, and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, the barrel end shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other approved material insert, or end cap at the large end of the bat.*

SECTION 2 - WARM-UP BAT

The warm-up bat shall meet the following requirements to be approved:

A. Stamped with 1/4 inch letters WB on either end of the bat or marked in one-inch letters the words WARM-UP BAT only on the barrel end of the bat.
B. The warm-up bat shall comply with the safety grip and the safety knob requirements of the official bat.
C. Be of one-piece construction or a one-piece permanently assembled bat that clearly distinguishes itself as a warm-up bat and is approved by USA Softball.
D. The knob shall have a diameter of at least 1.6 inches with no sharp edges. The knob will be permanently attached to the bat and may be covered with grip tape.
E. Only approved attachments included in the list published by USA Softball can be used on warm-up bats.

SECTION 3 - OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

A. **CERTIFIED/APPROVED:** Only softballs which bear an ASA or USA Softball approved certification mark signifying compliance with the Ball COR and Ball Compression limitations then in effect, and which satisfy all other applicable provisions in Rule 3, Section 3, will be allowed for use in USA Softball Play. USA Softball has developed two certification marks for softballs. One mark signifies Ball Compression 300 lbs or less. The other signifies Ball Compression of more than 275 lbs, but less than 375 lbs. The ball must not appear on the USA Softball Non-Approved Ball List. The markings are also distinguishable by color, where green represents a Ball COR of .520 or under, red represents a Ball COR of .470 or under, black represents a Ball COR of .440 or under and blue represents a Ball COR of .400 or under. One of the following must be appropriately and indelibly stamped on each softball allowed for use in USA Softball Championship Play.

Green Colored
Marking & Stamp
Max 300.0 lbs
Max .520 cor

Red Colored Marking
& Stamp
Max 300.0 lbs
Max .470 cor

Black Colored Marking
& Stamp
Max 300.0 lbs
Max .440 cor

Blue Colored Marking
& Stamp
Max 300.0 lbs
Max .400 cor

Red Colored Marking
& Stamp
275.0 - 375.0 lbs
Max .470 cor

Black Colored
Marking & Stamp
275.0 - 375.0 lbs
Max .440 cor

Blue Colored Marking
& Stamp
275.0 - 375.0 lbs
Max .400 cor

B. **COVER:** The official softball shall have a cover of leather or synthetic material. The ball shall be regular, smooth-seamed, and smooth-surfaced.

C. **THE 16-INCH BALL:** The official 16-inch softball shall be at least 16.0 inches in circumference when measured across two seams, and shall weigh at least 9.0 ounces. The 16-inch ball shall have a white cover, white stitches, a Ball COR of .470 or under, and a Ball Compression of 375.0 lbs. or under. The 16-inch ball shall be used in the following USA Softball play: All Men's 16-inch Slow Pitch.

D. **THE 14-INCH BALL:** The official 14-inch softball shall be at least 14.0 inches in circumference when measured across two seams, and shall weigh at least 8.0 ounces.

E. **THE 12-INCH BALL:** The official 12-inch softball shall be 11 7/8 – 12 1/4 inches in circumference when measured across two seams and weigh 6.50 - 7.00 ounces. It shall have no fewer than 88 stitches in each cover, sewn by the two needle method, or with an authentic facsimile of stitching as approved by USA Softball It is acceptable for the Slow Pitch ball to be molded and the facsimile of 88 stitches must be red.

❶ **Fast Pitch Ball:** The yellow optic cover, red stitch 12-inch ball with a Ball COR of .470 or under and a Ball Compression of 275.0 - 375.0 lbs. shall be used in the following USA Softball play:

a. Women's and Women's Masters Fast Pitch, Girls 12, 14, 16 and 18-under Fast Pitch

b. Men's, Men's Master's and Men's Seniors Fast Pitch, Boys 12, 14, 16 and 18-under Fast Pitch (may have white cover, white stitches)

❷ **Modified Pitch Ball:** The white cover, red stitch or yellow optic cover, red stitch 12-inch ball with a Ball COR of .470 or under, and a Ball

Compression of 275.0 - 375.0 lbs.

❸ **Slow Pitch Ball:** The yellow optic cover, red stitch 12-inch ball with a size of 11.875 inches or over, a weight of 6.250 ounces or over, a COR of .520 or under, a compression of 300.0 lbs. or under, and a Dynamic Stiffness of 5500.0 lbs. or under shall be used in the following USA Softball play:

a. Men's, Coed (male batters only), Masters, Boys 14, 16, and 18–under Slow Pitch, and may be used in Senior Slow Pitch.
b. Seniors may use above ball or may use the yellow optic color, red stitch 12-inch ball with a Ball COR of .440 or under and a Ball Compression of 375.0 lbs.

F. **THE 11-INCH BALL:** The official 11-inch softball shall be at least 11.0 inches in circumference. It shall weigh at least 6.0 ounces. The smooth-seamed style shall not have fewer than 80 stitches in each cover, sewn by the two-needle method, or with an authentic facsimile of stitching as approved by USA Softball. It is acceptable for the Slow Pitch ball to be molded and the facsimile of 80 stitches must be red.

❶ **Fast Pitch Ball:** The white cover white stitch or optic yellow cover red stitch 11-inch ball (may be white stitch for Boys Fast Pitch) with a Ball COR of .470 or under and a Ball Compression of 375.0 lbs. or under shall be used for the following USA Softball play:

a. Boys 10-under Fast Pitch
b. Girls 10-under Fast Pitch

❷ **Slow Pitch Ball:** The yellow optic cover, red stitch 11-inch ball with a Ball COR of .520 or under, and a Ball Compression of 300.0 lbs. or under, shall be used in the following USA Softball play:

a. Women's Slow Pitch
b. Coed (female batters only)
c. Women's Master's and Seniors Slow Pitch
d. Boys 10 and 12-under Slow Pitch
e. Girls 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18-under Slow Pitch

G. **THE 10-INCH BALL:** The official 10-inch softball shall be at least 10.0 inches in circumference when measured across two seams, and shall weigh at least 5.50 ounces.

SOFTBALL	THREAD COLOR	COVER COLOR	SIZE	WEIGHT	MARKING
10" (Boys only)	white or red	white/yellow	at least 10.0 in	at least 5.50 oz	
11" FP	white	white	at least 11.0 in	at least 6.0 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo
11" FP	red	white/yellow	at least 11.0 in	at least 6.0 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Red Marking
11" SP	red	yellow	at least 11.0 in	at least 6.0 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Green Marking
12" FP	white	white	11 7/8 – 12 ¼ in	6.50 – 7.00 oz.	ASA or USA Softball Logo Red Marking
12" FP	white	white/yellow	11 7/8 – 12 ¼ in	6.50 – 7.00 oz.	ASA or USA Softball Logo Red Marking
12" FP	red	yellow	11 7/8 – 12 ¼ in	6.50 – 7.00 oz.	ASA or USA Softball Logo Red Marking
12" SP	red	yellow	at least 11.875 in	at least 6.250 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Green Marking
12" SP (Seniors Only)	red	yellow	at least 11.875 in	at least 6.250 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Black Marking
14" SP	red	yellow	at least 14.0 in	at least 8.0 oz	
16" SP	white	white	at least 16.0 in	at least 9.0 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo

DIVISION OF PLAY	SIZE	COR	DESCRIPTION	COMPRESSION	DYNAMIC
FAST PITCH:					
Men & Men's Masters Boys 12, 14, 16, & 18-U	12"	.470 max	White cover/White Stitch or Yellow Optic Cover/Red Stitch	275.0 – 375.0 lbs	7,500 lbs max
Women's/ Women's Masters Girls 12, 14, 16, & 18-U	12"	.470 max	White cover/Yellow Optic Cover/Red Stitch only	275.0 – 375.0 lbs	7,500 lbs max
Boys & Girls 10-U	11"	.470 max	Yellow Optic Cover Red Stitch only	375.0 lbs max	9,500 lbs max
MODIFIED PITCH:					
Men and Women's	12"	.470 max	White Cover/Red Stitch or Yellow Optic Cover/Red Stitch	275.0 – 375.0 lbs	7,500 lbs max
SLOW PITCH:					
Women's, Coed (Female), JO Girls 12,14,16 & 18-U	11"	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover Red Stitch only	300.0 lbs max	5,500 lbs max
JO Boys 10 & 12-U	11"	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover	300.0 lbs max	5,500 lbs max
Men's, Coed (Male) JO Boys 14,16 & 18-U	12"	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover	300.0 lbs max	5,500 lbs max
Seniors	12"	.440 max	Yellow Optic Cover Red Stitch	375 lbs max	7,500 lbs max
	12"	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover	300.0 lbs max	5,500 lbs max
16" SLOW PITCH Men's	16"	.470 max	White Cover/White Stitch	375.0 lbs max	

SECTION 4 - GLOVE/MITT

A glove/mitt may be worn by any player. The dimensions of any glove/mitt used by any fielder shall not exceed the specifications set forth below (see drawing and specifications). (Fast Pitch) The Pitcher's glove may be of one solid color or multicolored as long as the color(s) are not the color of the ball being used in the game.

(A)	Palm width (top)	8 in.
(B)	Palm width (bottom)	8 1/2 in.
(C)	Top opening of web	5 in.
(D)	Bottom opening of web	4 1/2 in.
(E)	Web top to bottom	7 1/4 in.
(F)	1st finger crotch seam	7 1/2 in.
(G)	Thumb crotch seam	7 1/2 in.
(H)	Crotch seam	17 1/2 in.
(I)	Thumb top to bottom edge	9 1/4 in.
(J)	1st finger top to bottom edge	14 in.
(K)	2nd finger top to bottom edge	13 1/4 in.
(L)	3rd finger top to bottom edge	12 1/4 in.
(M)	4th finger top to bottom edge	11 in.

SECTION 5 - CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT, FACE MASK/GUARDS AND HELMET

A. **CATCHER MASKS:** (Adult Fast Pitch) Catchers must wear masks with throat protectors. An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of an attached throat protector. Helmets are optional, and if worn any style is allowed. FP Catchers cannot merely wear the plastic face mask/guard.

B. **CATCHER MASKS:** (Junior Olympic Slow Pitch) Catchers must wear an approved batter's helmet with ear flaps, the catcher's helmet and mask, or an approved plastic face mask/guard with catcher's helmet. The throat protector is optional on the catcher's mask.

C. **CATCHER MASKS & EQUIPMENT:** (Junior Olympic Fast Pitch) Catchers must wear a mask with throat protector, approved helmet with ear flaps, shin guards which offer protection to the knee caps and body protector. An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of an attached throat protector. Any player warming up a Junior Olympic pitcher must wear a mask with throat protector and approved helmet with ear flaps. FP Catchers cannot merely wear the plastic face mask/guard.

Note: *(Sections A-C) The ice hockey goalie style face mask is approved for use by catchers. If the throat protection built into the mask is inadequate, in the judgment of the umpire, a throat protector must be added to the mask before using.*

D. **FACE MASK/GUARDS:** Any defensive player or offensive player may wear a face mask/guard. Face masks/guards that are cracked or deformed, or if padding has

deteriorated or is missing, are prohibited.

Exception: *Fast pitch catchers cannot merely wear the plastic face mask/guard. Fast pitch catchers must wear the protective equipment provided by Rule 3 Section 5 A-C.*

Note: *A NOCSAE approved mask is only compatible with certain NOCSAE approved helmets. Failure to ensure proper compatibility may create unsafe conditions and may affect any manufacturer's product liability obligation. Contact the manufacturer or supplier of the helmet and the mask to ensure proper compatibility and approval of your specific mask-helmet combination.*

E. **HELMETS:** Any defensive player or offensive player may wear a helmet at any time. (Fast Pitch Only) Helmets shall have a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface.

❶ **Offense:** All Adult Fast Pitch, Modified Pitch and all Junior Olympic offensive players, including the on-deck batter, and Junior Olympic players acting as coaches in the coach's box, must properly wear double ear flap NOCSAE approved batting helmets. All Junior Olympic batting helmets *may* be equipped with chin straps. All Junior Olympic Fast Pitch batting helmets shall be equipped with a securely fastened NOCSAE approved face mask/guard. Batting helmets that are broken, cracked, dented, or that have been illegally altered are prohibited from use.

Note: *A NOCSAE approved mask is only compatible with certain NOCSAE approved helmets. Failure to ensure proper compatibility may create unsafe conditions and may affect any manufacturer's product liability obligation. Contact the manufacturer or supplier of the helmet and the mask to ensure proper compatibility and approval of your specific mask-helmet combination.*

Effect: *Failure to wear the batting helmet when ordered to do so by the umpire shall cause the player to be removed from the game. Wearing the helmet improperly or removing the helmet during a live ball play and judged by the umpire to be a deliberate act shall cause the violator to be declared out immediately. The ball remains live. Calling a runner out for removing a helmet does not remove force play situations. Umpires should use discretion as to the intent of the rule concerning player safety.*

❷ **Defense:** Any defensive player may wear a helmet, with or without ear flaps, of similar color as the team caps. It must have a bill.

Exception: *Hockey Style Face Mask.*

F. **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** Unless more stringent equipment is required by these rules any offensive or defensive player may wear any protective equipment. As specifically set forth in these rules, helmets may be required to be worn in certain situations during certain play, however, regardless of whether helmets are mandated by rule, any player shall have a right to wear a helmet at any time and during any part of the game, if that player so desires. Helmets shall have a bill.

WARNING: *The game of softball involves certain risk, including but not limited to death, serious neck and spinal injuries resulting in complete or partial paralysis, brain*

damage and serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, muscles and internal organs. Equipment used may be inadequate to prevent serious injury. However, in certain situations, the player's use of a helmet may prevent or lessen certain injuries. Players choosing to not wear helmets do so with knowledge of the danger involved and agree to accept any and all liability for any injury or property loss related in any way to a player's decision not to wear a helmet.

SECTION 6 - UNIFORM

All players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are like in color and style. Sleeves or straps of the uniform top may be adjusted, with or without tie-ups, to the comfort of the players, provided uniform numbers remain visible. If because of the blood rule a change is required and the uniform part does not match, the player will not be penalized. All protective equipment should be worn properly. If a player is requested by the umpire to remove jewelry, illegal shoes or illegal parts of the uniform and they refuse, the player will not be allowed to play.

Exception: *Men's D and E/Rec Slow Pitch, Women's Open, C, D and E/Rec Slow Pitch and Coed C, D and E/Rec Slow Pitch: the only uniform requirement are shirts similar in color with a number.*

A. HEADWEAR:

❶ (Fast Pitch Male) Ball caps are mandatory, must be alike, and worn properly.

❷ (Female Fast Pitch and all Slow Pitch) Ball caps, visors, and head/sweat bands, both pullover and tied are optional for players. If worn, they may be mixed and must be worn properly. Colors to include black, white, gray, beige, pink or team colors. The colors may be mixed and are not required to be the same for all team members. Handkerchiefs do not qualify as headwear and cannot be worn around the head or neck. Plastic visors are not allowed.

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

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

D. NUMBERS: An Arabic whole number (0-99) of contrasting color, or outlined in contrasting color, at least three inches high must be clearly visible on all uniform shirts.

00 and 0, 01 and 1 are examples of different numbers. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. Players without numbers will not be permitted to play. There is no penalty for a player wearing a wrong number or a duplicate number. Correct the number in the score book or have the player(s) change jerseys in case of duplication, and continue play.

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

F. **JEWELRY:** Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and may not be worn during the game. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body so the medical alert information remains visible.

G. **SHOES:** Must be worn by all participants. A shoe shall be considered official if it is made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar material(s). The soles may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber cleats. Ordinary metal sole or heel plates may be used if the cleats on the plates do not extend more than 3/4 of an inch from the sole or heel of the shoe. Shoes with round metal spikes are illegal. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw on are not permitted however; shoes with detachable cleats that screw INTO the shoe are permitted.

Exception: *Junior Olympic Fast Pitch 10U, 12U, Junior Olympic Slow Pitch, Coed Slow Pitch, and Senior Slow Pitch Play: No metal cleats. No metal spikes nor hard plastic or polyurethane spikes similar to metal sole and heel plates are allowed.*

Effect: Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the umpire, shall be ejected.

SECTION 7 - ALL EQUIPMENT

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

Note: *The characteristics of any approved equipment cannot be unnaturally changed. Examples include icing, cooling, or heating of any equipment. In addition, approved bats shall not be rolled, shaved or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer. Warming devices for bats are not approved.*

B. The National Championship UIC, Assistant UIC or Staff has the right to remove any and all equipment not meeting Rule 3 including bats and helmets, through pregame

inspection, bat testing or during a game. Removed equipment will be marked properly with the name of the team and/or player and will be returned after the team's final game of the Championship. The equipment will be securely stored by the Championship Committee until returned to the team and/or player.

C. (JO Fast Pitch Only) For pregame inspection, all equipment shall be inspected by the umpire, and is to be placed outside the dugout/team area prior to the start of the game.

SECTION 1 - PLAYERS

A. A team must have the required number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game.

1. Line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official scorer and umpire at the start of each game. A starting player shall be official when the line-up is inspected and approved by the plate umpire and team manager at the pre-game meeting. The line-up shall contain the first and last name, defensive position and uniform number of each player. If a wrong number is on the line-up, correct it and continue playing with no penalty. All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place by their first name, last name and uniform number.
2. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list at any time during the game.

B. Male rosters shall include only male players and female rosters shall include only female players.

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

1. **Fast Pitch:**
   - A. With nine players: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base player (F3), second base player (F4), third base player (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), center fielder (F8) and right fielder (F9).
   - B. With Designated Player (DP) and Flex: 10 Players with nine batting
   - C. Junior Olympic Pool Play Only: When batting up to all roster players, any additional batter(s) shall be listed as an EP and may be listed anywhere in the batting order and may play defense at any position.
   - D. JO Fast Pitch Only with one Extra Player (EP): Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base player (F3), second base player (F4), third base player (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), center fielder (F8), right fielder (F9), and one Extra Player (EP) with 10 batting.
   - E. JO Fast Pitch with Designated Player (DP) and Flex with one Extra Player (EP): 11 players with 10 batting.

2. **Modified Pitch:**
   - A. Nine players as follows: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base player (F3), second base player (F4), third base player (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), center fielder (F8) and right fielder (F9).
   - B. Nine Player with Designated Player (DP) and Flex: 10 Players with nine batting.
   - C. 10 players as follows: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base player (F3), second base player (F4), third base player (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left center fielder (F8), right center fielder (F9) and right fielder (F10).
   - D. 10 Player with Designated Player (DP) and Flex: 11 players with 10 batting.

❸ Slow Pitch:

A 10 players as follows: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base player (F3), second base player (F4), third base player (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left center fielder (F8), right center fielder (F9) and right fielder (F10).

B 10 Players with Extra Player (EP): 11 players with only 10 playing defense.

C Senior Slow Pitch (50-55-60): 10 defensive players will bat (F10) and 1 or 2 Extra Players (EP) or has the option of having up to and including all roster players present bat.

Note: *The Shorthanded Rule allows the game to continue with one less than is in the batting order.*

D Senior Slow Pitch (65-70-75): 11 defensive players will bat (F11) and 1 or 2 Extra Players (EP) or have the option of having up to and including all roster players present bat.

Note: *The Shorthanded Rule allows the game to continue with one less than is in the batting order.*

Exception: *Age 65-Over may use either 10 or 11 defensive players for the Championship, at the discretion of the Championship Director.*

E Coed 10 players five male and five females: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base player (F3), second base player (F4), third base player (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left center fielder (F8), right center fielder (F9) and right fielder (F10). They must have two males and two females in both the infield and the outfield and one male and one female as pitcher and catcher.

F Coed with Extra Player (EP) 12 players: Six male and six females as in 10 players with two Extra Players (EPs).

If discovered using the wrong number of females or males in the outfield or infield and brought to the umpire's attention by the offended team:

1 After a pitch legal or illegal or play made,
Effect: *All action stands.*

2 Before the next pitch legal or illegal or play made,

3 Before the defense has left the field,

4 Before the umpires have left the field of play,
Effect: 2, 3 *and* 4

① *If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and all other runners have advanced at least one base. All action of the batted ball stands.*

② *If all runners, including the batter-runner, do not advance at least one base, the manager has the option of taking the result of the play, or award the batter first base and advances all runners, if forced.*

D. <u>Shorthanded Rule:</u>

❶ **To start a game:**

Ⓐ A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start.

Ⓑ The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order.

Ⓒ An out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.

Ⓓ (Coed Slow Pitch) If a team plays shorthanded with either three players in the infield or outfield, at least one must be male and at least one must be a female.

Effect: *Failure to have the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game will result in a forfeit.*

❷ **To continue a game once started with a full team listed on the line-up card:**

Ⓐ If a team begins play with the required number of players as listed, that team may continue a game with one less player than is currently in the batting order whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection. Under no circumstances shall a team be permitted to bat:

1. less than 8 in Fast Pitch
2. less than 9 in JO Fast Pitch when using an EP
3. less than 9 in Slow Pitch
4. less than 10 in Slow Pitch when using an EP
5. less than 11 in Slow Pitch when using two EPs

Exception: In All Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Pool Play Only. When a team elects to use more than nine batters an out will be recorded if a player leaves the game for any reason other than injury or ejection. If a player leaves for an injury and cannot continue in the game, the game will continue with the injured player(s) batting position(s) being skipped with no out recorded. Teams cannot play with fewer than eight players.

Ⓑ If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot. If the substitute refuses to enter for any reason that player becomes ineligible for the remainder of the game.

Ⓒ (Coed) If another player of the correct gender arrives, that player must be inserted into the line-up in the vacant spot by alternating genders.

Ⓓ If the player leaving the game is a runner or batter, the runner or batter shall be declared out.

Ⓔ When the player who has left the game is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat. An inning or the game can end with an automatic out.

Ⓕ The player who has left the game cannot return to the line-up.

Exception: *A player who has left the game under the blood rule may return even after missing a turn at bat.*

Ⓖ (Coed) The batting order must still alternate and the defensive positioning remains as required.

Effect: *Failure to have the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game will result in a forfeit.*

SECTION 2 - AMERICAN DISABILITY ACT RULE

These Rules shall be subject to requests for reasonable modification for purposes of complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) unless such modifications would change the fundamental nature of the activity or would pose a significant risk to the safety of other participants. A person who, because of a disability, would like a reasonable modification to the Rules in order to participate should advise the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer of the requested modification, why it is needed, and how the modification would avoid disability discrimination, including how the modification will address the player's specific disability. Such modification requests should be made sufficiently in advance so that an individualized inquiry may be undertaken to decide whether to allow the requested modification. Such an inquiry will include consideration of the participant's specific circumstances and the purpose of the rule, policy, or practice at issue. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament.

A. This rule may be used for a player that has been determined by the American Disabilities Act of July 25, 1990, to be physically challenged. As a result of the player's disability, the player can play either offense or defense.

B. In appropriate circumstances, the following Rules may be used in the event a person is determined to be an ADA Player. In order for these ADA Flex Player, EP and DP rules to apply, the ADA player's specific disability shall correspond to the need for the application of these Flex Player, EP and DP rules.

C. Teams using a physically challenged player on offense or defense must have 11 players. If the physically challenged player can play both, 10 players are needed.

D. When a physically challenged person plays offense only, the team will follow the EP rule as written. There would be 11 hitters including the ADA player, and only 10 who play defense.

E. When a physically challenged player plays defense only, they will be listed as the FLEX and placed last in the line-up. The team has the option to bat 10 or 11 players (if the EP is also used). When using a FLEX, it must be made known prior to the start of the game.

F. If a team starts the game with the FLEX option, the FLEX player can never play offense. If this person for any reason cannot continue to play and the team has no

other physically challenged player for a substitute, the EP can now play defense.

G. The FLEX position has the same re-entry status as any other starting position as long as the person substituted is also determined to be physically challenged under the ADA program. The original FLEX player may re-enter only in the same spot in the line-up.

H. (Coed) When a FLEX or two FLEX players, one male and/or one female are used, the name(s) must be inserted at the end of the line-up. The EP or two EP's can be listed anywhere in the first 10 positions.

Note: *This special rule has been adopted to accommodate the athlete who is physically challenged. The intent is not to change the game and/or not to deprive any player from playing who would normally play, therefore, when using the EP, the normal EP rules will be followed including substitutions and re-entry. If the EP is used in addition to the FLEX, the FLEX must play defense and any of the other 11 players will be eligible to play defense. Only 11 are allowed to bat.*

I. The DP/FLEX rule in fast pitch accommodates the ADA rule.

J. Any eligible player on the official line-up, including available substitutes, may be used as a courtesy runner for an ADA player. Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed each inning.

K. A participant who is hearing-impaired may use a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary hearing aid during play to assist that hearing-impaired participant. A sign language interpreter shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play (fair or foul territory), or in other areas in order to be able to provide communication to the hearing-impaired participant, but such sign language interpreter shall be subject to any other rules, policies or practices generally applicable to participants, including submitting to and passing an annual background check screening, if applicable. Any concerns, issues or requests concerning the specific location of such interpreters on the field of play shall be resolved by the umpire(s) during gameplay and such concerns or requests shall be addressed to and resolved by the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer in advance of gameplay. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament registration process prior to the start of a season or tournament.

L. Subject to the requirements of this rule, any player with a disability, including a diabetic condition, who needs to come out of the ball game while on offense or defense due to the disability, including when batting due to a sugar imbalance caused by diabetes, may have a replacement player substitute for the player until such time as the disability subsides. In order to qualify under this rule, the player with the disability must be disclosed and noted by the player's manager to the umpire at the home plate conference at the outset of play. In the umpire's discretion, the umpire may waive the requirement

that the subject player be disclosed at the home plate conference at the outset of play. For purposes of this rule, the term disability shall be defined and construed consistent with the definition of disability in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SECTION 3 - DESIGNATED PLAYER (Fast Pitch)

A. A designated player (DP) may be used for any player provided it is made known prior to the start of the game and the player's name is indicated in the line-up as one of the nine in the batting order (or any position in the batting order for Junior Olympic Fast Pitch).

B. The name of the player for whom the DP is batting (FLEX) will be placed in the 10th position (or the last position in Junior Olympic Play) in the line-up.

C. The starting player listed as the DP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game. The DP and the DP's substitute, or the substitute's replacement, may never play offense at the same time.

D. The DP may be substituted for at any time by a pinch-hitter, pinch-runner or the FLEX. If the starting DP is replaced on offense by the FLEX the DP will leave the game. If replaced by a substitute the DP position remains in the line-up. A starting DP may re-enter one time, as long as the DP returns to the original position in the batting order.

- ❶ If replaced by the FLEX the number of players are reduced from 10 to nine. If the DP does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.
- ❷ If the DP re-enters and the FLEX was batting in the DP's position, the FLEX can return to the 10th position and play defense only or leave the game.

E. The DP may play any defensive position. Should the DP play defense for a player other than the one for whom the DP is batting (FLEX), that player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game. If the DP plays defense for the FLEX, the FLEX is considered to have left the game, the number of players are reduced from 10 to nine. The FLEX can re-enter the game one time.

F. The person being batted for (FLEX) may be substituted for at any time, by a legal substitute, an EP, (the FLEX is no longer in the game) or the DP for whom the FLEX is playing defense. The FLEX may re-enter the game one time, in the 10th position or in the DP's position in the batting order.

G. If returning to the 10th position, the FLEX will again play defense only but may play any defensive position.

H. If the FLEX returns to the DP's position the FLEX will play offense and defense; there will be only nine players in the batting order.

I. Placing the defensive only player (FLEX) into one of the first nine positions for someone other than the DP is considered an illegal player. The illegal player shall be disqualified. Rule 4, Section 6F[2]. The FLEX replacing the DP is not considered a substitution for the FLEX. The DP, who has left the game, can re-enter the game one time.

Section 4 - EXTRA PLAYER (Slow Pitch/Junior Olympic Fast Pitch)

A. An extra player (EP) is optional, but if used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed in the line-up card in the regular batting order. If the EP is used, the EP must be used the entire game. If an EP is used and not listed on the line-up card the following occurs:

Effect:

① *If discovered while the non-listed EP is at bat, the legal batter enters the game and assumes count, or*

② *If discovered while the non-listed EP is on base and before a pitch legal or illegal has been thrown to the next batter, treat as batting out of order. The player who should have batted is out. Any advancement or score of a runner as a result of the non-listed EP is negated. The person not listed in line-up is disqualified from the game, or*

③ *If discovered while the non-listed EP is on base and a pitch has been thrown to the next batter, remove the non-listed EP from the base, or if the player has scored, nullify the run, and disqualify the player from the game.*

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

C. (Slow Pitch) When an EP is used, all 11 on the starting line-up must bat and any 10 of those 11 may play defense.

D. The EP may be substituted for at any time. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting EP may re-enter one time.

E. (Slow Pitch) If the EP's are used in Coed, all 12 must bat and any 10, (five male and five female), may play defense. Defensive positions may be changed as long as the Coed positioning is followed. The batting order must remain the same throughout the game.

F. (Seniors) One or two extra players may be designated at any place in the batting order. The EP(s) may enter the game on defense at any time, but the batting order must remain the same throughout the game.

G. (Junior Olympic Fast Pitch) Any batter listed in addition to the nine defensive players and DP if used. They can be listed anywhere in the batting order and may play defense.

SECTION 5 - RE-ENTRY

A. Any player may be substituted for or replaced and re-entered once, provided the players occupy their same batting position in the batting order.

B. The starting player and their substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.

C. If a player re-enters the game a second time or a player re-enters the game in a position in the batting order other than their original starting or substitute position, this is considered an illegal re-entry.

Effect - Section 5A-C: *Violation of the re-entry rule is considered an illegal player. The illegal player shall be disqualified. Rule 4, Section 6F[4].*

SECTION 6 - SUBSTITUTES/ILLEGAL PLAYER

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

A. The manager or team representative of the team making the substitution shall notify the plate umpire at the time the substitute enters. The plate umpire shall then report the change to the scorer. (Fast Pitch) Any defensive change involving the pitcher or catcher must be reported to the umpire.

B. A substitute shall be considered officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire. The player does not violate the unreported substitute rule until a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play has been made. The use of an unreported substitute is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game.
Effect: *Upon being properly protested, the player will now be officially in the game, and subject to penalties as appropriate and listed in Rule 4, Section 6C[1-9].*

C. A substitute who enters the game without reporting is considered an unreported substitute:

❶ After a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made.
Effect: *Player is officially in the game and all action stands.*

❷ When an unreported substitute is discovered while at bat.
Effect: *The unreported substitute is officially in the game and assumes the ball and strike count and all action stands.*

❸ When discovered after completing their turn at bat and:
[A] BEFORE the next pitch, legal or illegal.
[B] BEFORE the defense has left the field of play.
[C] BEFORE the umpires have left the field of play.
Effect:
① *The unreported substitute is officially in the game and called out.*
② *All other outs that occur on this play stand.*
③ *All other runners will return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

❹ When discovered after completing their turn at bat and:
[A] AFTER the next pitch, legal or illegal.
[B] BEFORE the defense has left the field.
[C] BEFORE the umpires have left the field of play.
Effect:
① *The unreported substitute is officially in the game.*
② *Any advance of a runner as a result of the play is legal.*

❺ When a runner and that runner is protested BEFORE a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made.

Effect: *No penalty. Replace the unreported substitute with the correct player or enter them as a legal substitute.*

❻ When a runner and that runner is protested AFTER a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made.
Effect: *The runner is officially in the game. Any advance of the runners is legal.*

❼ When on defense is protested by the offense BEFORE a pitch, legal or illegal.
Effect: *No penalty. Replace with the correct player or enter them as a legal substitute.*

❽ When on defense MAKES A PLAY and is protested:
Ⓐ BEFORE the next pitch, legal or illegal.
Ⓑ BEFORE the defense has left the field.
Ⓒ BEFORE the umpires have left the field of play.
Effect: *The unreported substitute is officially in the game and the offensive team has the option to:*
① *Take the result of the play or*
② *Have the last batter return to bat and assume the ball and strike count and*
③ *All runners return to the last base occupied prior to the play.*

❾ When on defense is protested AFTER a pitch, legal or illegal, to the next batter;
Effect: *The unreported substitute is officially in the game and all play stands.*
Note: *If the substitute is an illegal player for any reason, the substitute will be subject to the penalty for that violation.*
Note - Rule 4, Section 6C [1-9]: *In 16 inch SP a protest must be made before a pitch legal or illegal, or a hesitation.*

D. If an injury to a batter-runner or runner prevents them from proceeding to an awarded base, and the ball is dead, a substitute for the batter-runner or runner may be made. The substitute will be allowed to proceed to any awarded base(s). The substitute must legally touch any awarded or missed base(s) not previously touched. This is not a courtesy runner, but a legal substitute.
Exception: *Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Pool Play only, any player may replace the injured player.*

E. A player will not violate the illegal player rule until a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made. The use of an illegal player is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game.
Effect: *Once the umpire has been informed, the illegal player shall be disqualified and can be legally replaced either by a substitute or a starter who re-enters the game.*

F. Illegal Players Include:

❶ **Illegal Pitcher.** A player who returns to pitch after being removed from the pitching position by the umpire,
Effect: *Once discovered, the illegal pitcher shall be disqualified and all play stands.*

❷ **Illegal Batter.** (Fast Pitch) Placing the "FLEX" player in one of the first nine positions in the batting order for someone other than the DP.

❸ **Illegal Runner.** Occurs when:

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

Exception: *Adult Slow Pitch**,** Senior or Master Fast Pitch (pitcher and catcher only), and in the Tie-Breaker Rule. Rule 5, Section 11.*

[B] (Fast Pitch) The FLEX is placed in the line-up as a runner for someone other than the DP.

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

❹ **Illegal Re-Entry.** Occurs when:

[A] A starting player returns to the game a second time after being substituted for twice.

[B] A starting player returns to the game, but is not in their original position in the batting order.

[C] A substitute returns to the game a second time after being replaced twice.

Effect - Rule 4, Section 6F[2-4]: *The Illegal Player is disqualified and replaced with a legal substitute. All other provisions of Rule 4, Section 6A-C[1-9] apply.*

SECTION 7 - COACH

A. A coach is responsible for the team's actions on the field and will represent the team in communications with the umpire and opposing team. A player may be designated as a coach in the event the coach is absent or that player is acting as a player/coach.

B. Coaches must be neatly attired or dressed in the team uniform. If a coach wears a hat/cap, it must be approved head wear.

Effect: *The coach(s) cannot be on the playing field to coach their team.*

C. A base coach is an eligible team member or coach of the team at bat who occupies the coach's box at first or third, to direct the offensive players.

❶ When in the coach's box a base coach may have:

[A] A score book (electronic or paper), pen, pencil, or electronic marker and an indicator all of which shall be used for scorekeeping or record keeping purposes only.

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

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

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

❷ A base coach shall stay within the confines of these boxes with both feet.

[A] A coach may leave the coach's box to signal the runner to slide, advance or return to a base or move out of a fielder's way as long as the coach does not intentionally interfere with the play.

[B] A coach may not leave the coach's box to give verbal communications or signals to the batter.

Effect: *After a warning, an offensive conference will be charged.*

❸ Base coaches may not use language that will reflect negatively upon players, umpires or spectators.

❹ A base coach may address only their team members.

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

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

SECTION 8 - DISQUALIFIED OR EJECTED PARTICIPANT

A. A disqualified player is prohibited from playing but can remain in the team area or serve as a coach/manager.

Effect: *If found playing, the game is forfeited.*

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

Effect: *The game is forfeited.*

C. Any arguing on the judgment of balls and strikes will result in a team warning.

Effect: *Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.*

D. If a player is disqualified a team can play shorthanded, however if a player is ejected and the team does not have enough players, play cannot continue.

Effect: *The game is forfeited.*

SECTION 9 - BLOOD RULE

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

A. Stop the game and immediately, call a coach, trainer or other authorized person to the injured player and allow treatment.

B. Apply the rules of the game regarding substitution, short-handed rule and re-entry if necessary.

SECTION 10 - INJURED PLAYER

During a live ball situation, when a player becomes injured, and in the umpire's judgment requires immediate attention, the umpire shall call "DEAD BALL".
Effect: *Award any bases that would have been reached.*

SECTION 1 - HOME TEAM

Prior to the start of all games, the home team shall be decided by a coin toss.

Exception: *In the Championship game only, the undefeated team shall decide the home team. If there is more than one undefeated team or in the event of an "IF" game, the home team shall be decided by a coin toss.*

SECTION 2 - FITNESS OF THE GROUNDS

The fitness of the grounds for a game shall be decided solely by the plate umpire.

SECTION 3 - REGULATION GAME

A. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six and one-half innings and/or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning, the run-ahead rule is applied or after the time limit has expired in JO Play.

B. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings, or after time limit has expired shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.

C. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic or any other cause that places the patrons or players in peril.

D. Games that are not considered regulation or stopped at a National Championship in the event of rain or any cause that interrupts the game shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

E. A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more complete innings, or if the team second at bat has equaled the score of the first team at bat in the incomplete inning.

F. Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

SECTION 4 - FORFEITED GAMES

A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

A. If an umpire is physically attacked by any team member and/or spectator.

B. If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for

which it is scheduled or assigned within a time set for forfeitures by the organization that the team represents.

C. If one side refuses to continue to play after the game has begun, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.

D. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after "play ball" has been declared by the umpire.

E. If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or to hasten the game.

F. If, after a warning by the umpire, any rules of the game are willfully violated.

G. If the order for the ejection of a game participant is not obeyed within one minute.

H. If the ejection of a player or players from the game results in fewer than the required number of players to continue the game.

I. If an ejected participant is discovered participating or has contact with the umpires or other participants in the game.

J. If a team is playing one player short and another player becomes injured or ill leaving the team with two less players than the required number.

K. Once a game has been forfeited the forfeit cannot be changed.

SECTION 5 - SCORING OF RUNS

A. One run shall be scored each time a runner:

❶ Touches first, second, third base and home plate.

❷ When using the tie breaker rule, a runner starting at second base, touches third base and home plate.

Exception: All Adult Slow Pitch. *Any fair ball hit over the fence for a home run or a four base award, the batter and all runners are credited with a run. The batter and all runners are not required to run the bases.*

B. No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of:

❶ A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.

❷ A runner being put out by a tag, called out for passing a runner or a live ball appeal prior to the lead runner touching home plate.

❸ A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.

C. No run shall be scored if a "fourth out" is the result of an appeal of a base missed or left too soon on a runner who has scored.

SECTION 6 - GAME WINNER

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

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

B. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.

C. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven to zero in favor of the team not at fault.

SECTION 7 - CONFERENCES

A. Offensive Conference: There shall be only one charged conference between team representatives and the batter, another team representative, and/or runners in an inning. The umpire shall not permit any such conferences in excess of one in an inning.
Effect: *Ejection of the manager or team representative who insists on another charged conference.*

B. Defensive Conference: There shall be only three charged conferences without penalty between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defensive players in a seven inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning without penalty between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defensive players.
Effect: *The fourth and each additional, charged conference in a seven inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one per inning in an extra inning game, shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The removed pitcher can play another position on defense but cannot pitch again.*

SECTION 8 - HOME RUN RULE

A. (Men's, Men's Masters, Coed and Women's Slow Pitch) A limit of over-the-fence home runs will be used in all Men's, Men's Masters, Coed and Women's slow pitch divisions. The following limitations are per team per game:

❶ Twelve (12).....Class AA
❷ Ten (10).....Class A
❸ Eight (8).....Coed Open
❹ Seven (7) .....Men's Class B
❺ Six (6).....Industrial
❻ Five (5) .....Men's, Women's, Coed Class C, Men's Masters 35, 40, 45-over

❼ Four (4) .....Church
❽ Three (3) .....Men's, Women's, Coed Class D
❾ One (1) .....Class E/REC

Note: *CEO will establish a home run limit for Men's Super Slow Pitch Championship.*
Effect: *For any in excess, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and no runners can advance.*
Note:

[A] Any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, should be declared a four base award and shall not be included in the total of over-the-fence home runs.
[B] A home run will be charged for any ball hit over the fence whether runs score or not.
[C] Both male and female home runs count toward the Coed limit.

B. **(Men's Senior Divisions)** The following limitations are per team per game:
Seniors 50-55-60-65:

❶ Nine (9) plus "one-up" .....Major Plus
❷ Six (6) plus "one-up" .....Major
❸ Three (3).....AAA
❹ One (1) .....AA

Seniors 70 & 75:

❶ Six (6).....Major
❷ Three (3).....AAA

Effect: *For any in excess, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and no runners can advance.*
Note: *One-up Ruling: If both teams have reached the limit of home runs, either team is allowed to hit an additional home run, to go one home run ahead of the opposing team. (Example: With a six home run limit, the home team hits their sixth home run in the 2nd inning. The visiting team can then hit a total of seven home runs, and do so in the top of the 3rd inning. In the bottom of the 3rd, the home team could then hit two more home runs to go "one-up" again, with a total of eight. This can continue throughout the game until the bottom of the 7th inning.) The home team can only equal the number of home runs by the visitors (in excess of six) in this inning. If neither team has hit six home runs by the bottom of 7th, the home team can hit their sixth.*

SECTION 9 - RUN AHEAD RULE

A. A run ahead rule must be used at all National Championships.

❶ **Fast Pitch:**

[A] Men's: 15 after three innings, 12 after four innings or seven after five innings.

[B] Women's and JO: 15 after three innings, 12 after four innings or eight after five innings.

❷ **Modified Pitch:** 15 after three innings, 12 after four innings or 10 after five innings.

❸ **Slow Pitch:**

[A] Slow Pitch (except Men's Class A, B, **Women's Open** and Seniors): 20 after three innings, 15 after four innings or 10 after five innings.

[B] Men's Class A, B, **Women's Open** and Seniors: 20 after four innings, 15 after five innings.

❹ **16" Slow Pitch:** 12 after four innings and 10 after five innings.

❺ Men's Super Slow Pitch: CEO will establish the run ahead limit.

B. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

C. **(Men's Senior Slow Pitch Only)** All age groups will have a maximum number of runs allowed per inning except for the seventh inning, the last inning of a time limit game or any extra inning. The Major and Major Plus will have a maximum of 7 runs and the AAA & AA Divisions will have a maximum of 5 runs. The seventh inning, the last inning of a time limit game or any extra innings will have unlimited runs allowed.

SECTION 10 - TIME LIMIT RULE

When the time limit rule is in effect time begins with the first warm up pitch. If the game is tied after the time limit has expired, the tie-breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning and play shall continue until a winner is determined. The time limit rule is as follows:

A. **In National Championship Finals (One True Nationals) pool and elimination play, the time limit will be one hour and forty minutes and finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie-breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.**

Exception: **The Championship and "IF" games will have no time limit.**

B. In Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Class A and Class B **10-under,** 12-under, 14-under, 16-under, 18-under pool and elimination play, the time limit is one hour and **thirty** minutes and**/or one hour forty minutes and** finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie-breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

Exception: **The Championship and "IF" games will be one hour and forty minutes.**

Note: Game times must be determined prior to the event per USA Softball Procedural Code Article 310.N.01-03.

C. In Junior Olympic Fast Pitch 16U Gold and 18U Gold Pool Play Only, the time limit is one hour and forty minutes and finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie-breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning. There is no time limit in elimination play.

D. In all Junior Olympic Slow Pitch, (Except Boys 14U, 16U and 18U) the time limit shall be 1 hour and 10 minutes. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie-breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

SECTION 11 - TIE-BREAKER RULE

(Men's 40-Over, Men's Masters 50-Over & Seniors, Women's & Junior Olympic Girls Fast Pitch, Junior Olympic Slow Pitch (Except Boys 14U, 16U and 18U), Men's Senior Slow Pitch) When after the completion of seven innings of play (or where there is a time limit in J.O. Play and time has expired), the score is tied, the following Tie-Breaker Rule will be played to determine a winning team.

A. Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the number five batter is the lead off batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner).

B. If a team is in the tie-breaker and the Short Handed Rule is in effect, do not declare an out if the absent player is the one who should begin the half inning at second base. Instead, place on second base the player whose name precedes the absent player's name in the line-up.

SECTION 12 - DUGOUT AND ON FIELD CONDUCT

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

B. Adult**:** Participants may not smoke or use alcoholic beverages inside the dugout or on the playing field.

C. (JO Only): The use of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products by participants is prohibited at all Junior Olympic Championships.
Effect-Section 12A-C: *The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.*

D. No person may knowingly possess or have under his/her control a weapon or explosive device on the playing field or in the dugout. For purposes of this subsection, a "weapon" means any firearm or any weapon of the kind usually known as slung shot, sand club, or metal knuckles, or any knife, dagger, dirk, or other similar weapon that is capable of causing death or bodily injury and is commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury, but the definition of weapon shall specifically exclude an ordinary pocket knife or any softball-related equipment.
Effect-Section 12A-D: *The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.*

E. A participant who is hearing-impaired may use a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary hearing aid during play to assist that hearing-impaired participant. A sign language interpreter shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play (fair or foul territory), or in other areas in order to be able to provide communication to the hearing-impaired participant, but such sign language interpreter shall be subject to any other rules, policies or practices generally applicable to participants, including submitting to and passing an annual background check screening, if applicable. Any concerns, issues or requests concerning the specific location of such interpreters on the field of play shall be resolved by the umpire(s) during gameplay and such concerns or requests shall be addressed to and resolved by the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer in advance of gameplay. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament registration process prior to the start of a season or tournament.

USA
SOFTBALL

SECTION 1 - PRELIMINARIES

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

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

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

C. Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. The pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate.

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

E. The pitcher shall bring the hands together for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball, a backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.
Effect: Section 1A-E: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6A Section 11 for penalty.*

SECTION 2 - STARTING THE PITCH

The pitch starts when the hands are separated once they have been placed together.
Effect: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6A Section 11 for penalty.*

SECTION 3 - LEGAL DELIVERY

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

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

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

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

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

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

G. The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward

and past the straight line of the body.

H. **(Men's and JO Boys)** In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher shall take one step with the non-pivot foot simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward toward the batter. It is not a step if the pitcher slides the pivot foot across the pitcher's plate toward the batter, or if the pivot foot turns or slides in order to push off the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate. Raising the foot off of the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act.

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

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

K. **(Women's and JO Girls)** Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground or having both feet in the air is allowed.

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

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

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

Effect - Section 3A-J; L-N: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6A Section 11 for penalty.*

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

Effect: *A ball on the batter.*

P. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery

Effect:

① The ball remains live.
② A ball on the batter.
③ Runners may advance at their own risk.

SECTION 4 - INTENTIONAL WALK

If the pitcher desires to intentionally walk a batter, all pitches must be legally delivered.

SECTION 5 - DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

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

B. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, or act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.

Effect - Section 5A&B: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6A Section 11 for penalty. In addition, the offending player shall be ejected from the game for violating section 5B.*

SECTION 6 - FOREIGN SUBSTANCE/PROTECTIVE WRAPS

A. A defensive player shall not, at any time during the game, be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball, pitching hand or fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin and/or an approved drying agent that is included on the list published by USA Softball may be used by the pitcher. The resin must be left on the ground and the approved drying agent in the pitcher's pocket. A pitcher who licks their fingers must wipe the fingers off before bringing them in contact with the ball.

Effect:

① *Illegal Pitch; refer to Rule 6A, Section 11 for penalty.*

② *After the first offense, if any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected from the game. If any other substance is found on the pitcher's person, the pitcher shall be ejected.*

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

SECTION 7 - CATCHER

A. The catcher shall remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitch is released.
Effect: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6A Section 11 for penalty.*

B. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout, a put out or an attempted put out made by the catcher.
Effect: *A ball on the batter.*
Exception: *Does not apply with runners on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.*

SECTION 8 - THROWING TO A BASE

The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while either foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after taking the pitching position. If a throw from the pitcher's

plate occurs during a live ball appeal, the appeal is canceled. The pitcher may remove themselves from the pitching position by stepping back off of the pitcher's plate prior to separating their hands. Stepping forward or sideways is illegal.

Effect: *Illegal Pitch*

① Men's Fast Pitch:
- [A] Ball on the batter
- [B] Award all runners one base

② Junior Olympic Fast Pitch: Ball on the batter.

SECTION 9 - WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another pitcher, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than five pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position as long as the player is legally in the game.

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

SECTION 10 - NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared:

A. When the pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

B. When the pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance.

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

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

E. When a player, manager or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch. A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

Effect - Section 10A-E: *Dead ball. All subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.*

SECTION 11 - ILLEGAL PITCH PENALTY

A. Adult Fast Pitch

1. If the batter reaches first base safely and each other base runner advances at least one base, 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:
   - A the result of the play or
   - B a ball on the batter and each runner is awarded one base.

B. Junior Olympic Fast Pitch

1. If the batter reaches first base safely and each other base runner advances at least one base, 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, a ball on the batter.
3. If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch not swung at, the batter is awarded first base, and other base runners are advanced one base only if forced.

6A

SECTION 1 - PRELIMINARIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Effect - Section 1A-E: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6B Section 11 for penalty.*

SECTION 2 - STARTING THE PITCH

The pitch starts when the hands are separated once they have been placed together.
Effect: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6B Section 11 for penalty.*

SECTION 3 - LEGAL DELIVERY

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

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

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

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

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

F. Position of the ball:

❶ (9 Player) No restriction on the back swing or on the downward motion and during the complete delivery.

❷ (10 Player) The ball must not be outside the pitcher's wrist on the back swing, at the top of the back swing, on the downward motion, or during the complete delivery.

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

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

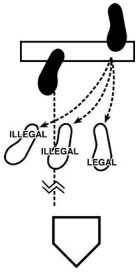
I. Arm, shoulder, hip:

❶ (9 Player) There is no restriction on the arm. The shoulders and driving hip must be squared to home plate when the ball is released.

❷ (10 Player) On the forward swing of the pitching arm, the elbow must be locked at the point of release, and the shoulders and driving hip must be squared to home plate when the ball is released.

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

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



❶ **(9 Player)** The pivot foot must drag and not lose contact with the ground. Raising the foot off the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act.

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

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

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

Effect - Section 3A-M: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6B Section 11 for penalty.*

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

Effect: *A ball on the batter.*

O. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery

Effect:

① The ball remains live.

② A ball on the batter.

③ Runners may advance at their own risk.

SECTION 4 - INTENTIONAL WALK

If the pitcher desires to intentionally walk a batter all pitches must be legally delivered.

SECTION 5 - DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

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

B. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, or act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.

Effect - Section 5B: *The offending player shall be ejected from the game.*

Effect - Section 5A&B: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6B Section 11 for penalty.*

SECTION 6 - FOREIGN SUBSTANCE/PROTECTIVE WRAPS

A. A defensive player shall not, at any time during the game, be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball, pitching hand or fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin and/or an approved drying agent that is included on the list published by USA Softball may be used by the pitcher. The resin must be left on the ground and the approved drying agent in the pitcher's pocket. A pitcher who licks their fingers shall wipe the fingers off before bringing them in contact with the ball.

Effect:

① *Illegal Pitch; refer to Rule 6B, Section 11 for penalty.*

② *After the first offense, if any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected from the game. If any other substance is found on the pitcher's person, the pitcher shall be ejected.*

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

SECTION 7 - CATCHER

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

Effect: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6B Section 11 for penalty.*

B. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout, put out or an attempted put out made by the catcher.
Effect: *A ball on the batter.*
Exception: *Does not apply with runners on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.*

SECTION 8 - THROWING TO A BASE

The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while either foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after taking the pitching position. If a throw from the pitcher's plate occurs during a live ball appeal, the appeal is canceled. The pitcher may remove themselves from the pitching position by stepping backwards off the pitcher's plate prior to separating their hands. Stepping forward or sideways is illegal.
Effect: *Illegal pitch. A ball on the batter and award all runners one base.*

SECTION 9 - WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another pitcher, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than three pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position as long as the player is legally in the game.
Effect: *For excessive warm-up pitches, a ball on the batter is awarded for each pitch in excess of three. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, and other umpire responsibilities.*

SECTION 10 - NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared:
A. When the pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
B. When the pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance.
C. When a runner is called out for leaving a base prior to the pitcher releasing the pitch.
D. When a pitch is delivered before a runner has returned to the base after being legitimately off that base.
E. When a player, manager or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live for the purpose of trying to make the pitcher

commit an illegal pitch. A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

Effect - Section 10A-E: *The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.*

SECTION 11 - ILLEGAL PITCH PENALTY

A. If the batter reaches first base safely and each other base runner advances at least one base, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled.

B. 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:

❶ the result of the play or

❷ a ball on the batter and each runner is awarded one base.

C. If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch not swung at, the batter is awarded first base, and other base runners are awarded one base.

RULE 6C - PITCHING REGULATIONS (SLOW PITCH)

SECTION 1 - PRELIMINARIES

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

B. (Men's, Women's and Coed Class C, D and E/REC) The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to 6 feet behind the pitcher's plate **with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.**

C. (Seniors) The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to ten feet behind the pitcher's plate within the **24-inch length** of the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground.

D. The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be maintained at least one second before starting the delivery.

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

Effect: Section 1 A-E *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.*

F. The pitcher shall not simulate a legal pitch while not in contact with the pitcher's plate.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *Illegal pitch, ball on the batter*

③ *A warning is issued, and a repeat action would result in the pitcher ruled illegal and removed from the pitching position.*

SECTION 2 - STARTING THE PITCH

The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion with the ball after the required stop. While on the pitcher's plate prior to the required stop, any motion may be used.
Effect: Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.

SECTION 3 - LEGAL DELIVERY

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

B. The delivery is a continuous motion.

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

D. The pitcher shall deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip with an underhand motion. The palm of the pitcher's hand may be over or under the ball.

E. The pivot foot shall remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot remains in contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

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

G. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.

Effect:

① *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.*

② *The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, they shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.*

H. The ball shall be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 10 feet from the ground.
Exception: *Senior Slow Pitch Only shall not exceed a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.*

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

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

K. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch from the glove.
Effect - Section 3A-K: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.*

SECTION 4 - DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

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

B. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, or act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.
Effect: *The offending player shall be ejected from the game.*

SECTION 5 - FOREIGN SUBSTANCE

A defensive player shall not, at any time during the game, be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball, the pitching hand or the fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin may be used to dry the hands. The pitcher may wear tape on the fingers or a sweatband on the wrist or forearm of the pitching arm. Batting gloves shall not be worn on the pitching hand.

Effect:

① *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.*

② *If any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected.*

SECTION 6 - CATCHER

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

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

Effect - Section 6B: *A ball on the batter.*

Exception: *Does not apply with runners on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.*

SECTION 7 - QUICK PITCH

The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance.

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

SECTION 8 - WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than three warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position as long as the player is legally in the game.

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

SECTION 9 - NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared:

A. When the pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

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

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

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

E. When a player, manager or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch. A warning shall be issued to the offending team,

and a repeat of this type act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

Effect - Section 9A-E: *The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.*

SECTION 10 - ILLEGAL PITCH PENALTY

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

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

RULE 6D - PITCHING REGULATIONS (16" SLOW PITCH)

SECTION 1 - PRELIMINARIES

A. The pitcher shall take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher's pivot foot shall be in contact with the pitcher's plate throughout the delivery.

B. The pitcher shall come to a complete stop with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be maintained at least one second before starting the delivery.

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

D. The pitcher shall not simulate a legal pitch while not in contact with the pitchers plate.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *Illegal pitch; ball on batter*

③ *A warning is issued, and a repeat action would result in the pitcher ruled illegal and removed from the pitching position.*

E. While the pitcher is in the pitching position, in the motion for the delivery or in the act of faking a delivery prior to a hesitation, the pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's plate. After a hesitation, the foot may leave the pitcher's plate during an attempted pickoff or a fake throw. When the pitching motion is restarted, the restriction takes effect again.

F. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without possession of the ball.

Effect - Section 1A-C; E & F: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6D Section 10 for penalty.*

SECTION 2 - STARTING THE PITCH

The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion with the ball that is part of the delivery after the required stop. While on the pitcher's plate, prior to the required stop, any motion may be used.

SECTION 3 - LEGAL DELIVERY

A. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot remains in contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with a hesitation or with the release of the ball.

B. The pitcher shall not pitch the ball behind the back or through the legs.

C. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left to the judgment of the umpire.

Effect: *The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, they shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.*

D. The ball shall be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.

Effect – Section 3A&B; D&E; G-I:

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

Effect – Section 3A&B; D&E; G-I:

F. The pitcher shall not attempt a pick off after the second hesitation.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *Illegal pitch; ball on the batter*

G. The pitcher shall not commit a third hesitation before the mandatory delivery of a pitch, legal or illegal.

Hesitations are defined as:

❶ A pickoff attempt by the pitcher.

❷ Making any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

❸ Using a delivery that is not a continuous motion.

❹ Using a delivery in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.

❺ Not delivering the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.

- [A] After a hesitation of the pitching motion, and before a restart of the motion, the pitcher may attempt or fake a throw for a pick off with his pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- [B] Runners may be off the bases without penalty during the delivery or fake delivery.
- [C] During the pick off attempt by the pitcher, or the catcher following a pitch, each runner shall return to the base occupied at the start of the pitch before the runner is touched with the ball.
- [D] If the ball is overthrown, runners may not advance.
- [E] If the thrown ball remains in live ball territory, the runners are in jeopardy until they return to their original bases.

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

I. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch from the glove.

Effect - Section 3A&B; G-I: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6D Section 10 for penalty.*

SECTION 4 - DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

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

B. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.

Effect: *The offending player shall be ejected from the game.*

SECTION 5 - FOREIGN SUBSTANCE

Any defensive player shall not, at any time during the game, be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball, the pitching hand or the fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin may be used to dry the hands. The pitcher may wear tape on the fingers or a sweatband on the wrist or forearm of the pitching arm. Batting gloves may not be worn on the pitching hand.

Effect:

① *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6D Section 10 for penalty.*

② *If any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected.*

SECTION 6 - CATCHER

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

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

Effect - Section 6B: *A ball on the batter.*

Exception: *Does not apply with runners on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.*

SECTION 7 - QUICK PITCH

The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance.

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

SECTION 8 - WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than three warm-up pitches. Play shall be

suspended during this time. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position as long as the player is legally in the game.
Effect: *For excessive warm-up pitches award a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of three. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities.*

SECTION 9 - NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared:

A. When the pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

B. When the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery or during the back swing.

C. When a player, manager or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.
Effect C: *A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.*
Effect - Section 9A-C: *The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.*

SECTION 10 - ILLEGAL PITCH PENALTY

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

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

SECTION 1 - ON-DECK BATTER

A. The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest the offensive team area.

Exception: *Men's Fast Pitch, Men's Modified Pitch, Women's Fast Pitch and all Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Divisions of Play may take a position within either on-deck circle as long as the on-deck batter is behind the batter and not on the batter's open side.*

B. The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two. Any attachment placed on the bat must be approved by USA Softball.

C. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:

❶ When they become the batter.

❷ When directing runners advancing from third base to home plate.

D. The on-deck batter may not interfere with a defensive player's opportunity to make an out.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.*

③ *If it is with the defensive fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.*

SECTION 2 - BATTING ORDER

A. The batting order shall show the names, first and last, in the order in which the players are scheduled to bat.

B. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is replaced by:

❶ A substitute who must take the place of the removed player in the batting order, **OR**

❷ (Fast Pitch) The FLEX batting for the DP and remaining in the batting order until returning to the 10th position (or the last position in Junior Olympic Play) in the lineup.

C. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows the last player who completed a turn at bat in the previous inning.

Note - Section 2B&C: *Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made by the defensive team only. The appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal, before the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game, until the umpires leave the field of play.*

D. If batting out of order is discovered:

❶ **While the incorrect batter is at bat:**
① *The correct batter must take the batter's position and assume the ball and strike count.*
② *Any runner advanced and runs scored while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal.*
③ *There is no penalty whether discovered by the offense or defense while the incorrect batter is at bat.*

❷ After the incorrect batter has completed a turn at bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal, before the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game until the umpires leave the field of play:
Effect:
① *The incorrect batter's time at bat is negated.*
② *The player who should have batted is out.*
③ *Any advancement or score of a runner as a result of the incorrect batter is negated. Runners not called out must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. Any runner, who is called out prior to the discovery of the infraction, remains out.*
④ *The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.*

❸ After a pitch, legal or illegal, to the next batter, or after the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game, after the umpires leave the field of play:
Effect:
① *The turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal.*
② *All runs scored, runners advanced, and outs made are legal.*
③ *The next batter shall be that player whose name follows that of the incorrect batter.*
④ *No out is called for failure to bat.*
⑤ *Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until their spot in the batting order is reached again.*

❹ Runners shall not be removed from the base occupied, except the batter-runner who has been removed from a base by the umpire as in (2) above to bat in the proper position. The correct batter misses their turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following the correct batter in the batting order becomes the legal batter.
Note - Section 2D[1-4]: *In 16-Inch Slow Pitch an appeal must be made prior to a pitch, legal or illegal, or a hesitation.*

E. The batting order for Coed shall alternate genders. Coed play will use an 11-inch red-stitch ball for female batters and an 12-inch red stitch ball for male batters.
Effect: *When the wrong ball is used, the manager of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter bat again assuming the*

ball and strike count prior to the wrong ball being discovered.

F. Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Pool Play: Nine defensive players will bat or teams have the option of having up to and including all roster players present bat.
Effects: *Rule 1 Definition, Rule 4 Section 1C[1C], Rule 4 Section 1D[2A], Rule 4 Section 3B, Rule 4 Section 4, Rule 4 Section 6D, Rule 8 Section 10C.*

G. When the third out in an inning is made before the batter has completed their turn at bat, that player shall be the first batter in the next inning.

SECTION 3 - BATTING POSITION

A. Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.

B. (JO Girls Slow Pitch, JO Boys 14U, 16U, 18U Slow Pitch, and all adult Slow Pitch Except Seniors) The batter shall assume a one ball, one strike count upon entering the batter's box.

C. The batter must take the batter's position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed to do so by the umpire.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *A strike on the batter.*
Note: *No pitch has to be thrown.*

D. (Junior Olympic) After entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot between pitches and while taking signals and practice swings.
Exceptions: *The batter may leave the box:*
❶ *When the ball is batted fair or foul.*
❷ *On a swing, slap or check swing.*
❸ *When forced out of the box by a pitch.*
❹ *On a wild pitch or passed ball.*
❺ *When a play is attempted.*
❻ *When time has been called.*
❼ *When the pitcher leaves the 8-foot circle or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.*
❽ *When the count reaches three balls and the next pitch is a strike that the batter thinks is a ball.*
Effect: *If the batter leaves the batter's box and delays play, for any other reason than 1-8 above:*
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The umpire may warn the batter or*
③ *Call a strike.*
④ *Any number of warnings and called strikes can be made with each batter.*
Note: *No pitch has to be thrown.*

E. The batter shall not step directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher (FP) is taking the signal or (SP) is in position to pitch, or anytime thereafter prior to the release of the pitch.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter is out.*
③ *Runners may not advance.*

F. After the ball is live, the batter may not step out of the batter's box to stop play unless time has been granted by the umpire.

Effect:

① *All play shall continue.*
② *The pitch will be judged a ball or strike.*

SECTION 4 - A STRIKE ON THE BATTER

A. (Fast Pitch/Slow Pitch with stealing) For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone.

Effect:

① *The ball remains live.*
② *Runners may advance with liability to be put out.*

B. (Slow Pitch) For each legally pitched ball passing through the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing. Any pitched ball that hits the ground or plate cannot be legally swung at by the batter. If the batter swings and misses prior to the ball hitting the ground or plate, it is a strike.

Effect: *The ball is dead.*

C. (Seniors) When the pitch touches home plate or the strike mat.

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

Effect: (Fast Pitch/Slow Pitch with stealing)

① *The ball remains live.*
② *Runners may advance with liability to be put out.*

Effect: (Slow Pitch without stealing) *The ball is dead.*

E. For each foul tip.

Effect: (Fast Pitch/Slow Pitch with stealing)

① *The ball remains live.*
② *Runners may advance with liability to be put out.*
③ *The batter is out if it is the third strike.*

Effect: (Slow Pitch without stealing)

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

Effect: (16-Inch Slow Pitch)

① *The ball remains live.*

② *Runners cannot advance.*

③ *The batter is out if it is the third strike.*

F. (Fast Pitch) For each foul ball when the batter has fewer than two strikes.

G. (Slow Pitch) For each foul ball, including the third strike.

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

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

J. When any part of the batter's person or clothing is hit with a batted ball while the batter is in the batter's box and (FP) has fewer than two strikes.

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

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

Effect - Section 4H-L:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *A strike on the batter.*

③ *Each runner must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

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

N. (Junior Olympic) When, between pitches, the batter leaves the batter's box illegally or does not return to the box after a warning.

Effect - Section 4M&N:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *A strike on the batter.*

SECTION 5 - A BALL ON THE BATTER

A. (Fast Pitch) For each legally pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing.

Effect:

① *The ball remains live.*

② *Runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out.*

B. (Slow Pitch) For each legally pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing. Any pitched ball that hits the ground or plate cannot be legally swung at by the batter. If the batter swings at a pitch after the ball hits the ground or plate:

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *A ball on the batter.*

③ *Runners may not advance.*

Exception: (16-Inch Slow Pitch) *The ball remains live; however, runners cannot advance. If the batter swings at the ball, it would be batter interference.*

C. (Seniors) For each legally pitched ball that does not touch home plate or the strike mat.

D. (Fast Pitch) For each illegally pitched ball not swung at or swung at and missed.
Effect: Illegal Pitch
① Men's and Women's Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch: Ball on the batter and award all runners one base
② Junior Olympic Fast Pitch: Ball on the batter.

E. (Slow Pitch) For each illegally pitched ball not swung at.
Exception: *Slow Pitch with stealing unless the ball hits the ground before reaching home plate, hits the plate or hits the batter.*

F. (Men's & Women's Slow Pitch with stealing) When a pitched ball hits the batter outside the strike zone.

G. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.

H. For each excessive warm-up pitch.
Effect - Section 5E-H:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *Runners may not advance.*

SECTION 6 - THE BATTER IS OUT

A. When the third strike is:
❶ Swung at and the pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person.
❷ Not swung at, and the pitched ball hits the batter while the pitch is in the strike zone.
❸ A pitched ball, in the umpire's judgment, which was prevented from entering the strike zone by any actions of the batter other than hitting the ball.

B. When a batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an Altered or Non-Approved bat.
Effect:
① *The batter is out.*
② *Ejected.*
③ *If in a tournament, may be subject to future penalties by the Tournament Protest Committee.*

C. When discovered using an Altered or Non-Approved bat after completing their turn at bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
Effect:
① *The batter is out.*
② *Ejected.*
③ *If in a tournament, the player may be subject to future penalties by the Tournament Protest Committee.*

④ *All outs stand.*
⑤ *All other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

D. When the batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an Illegal bat.
Effect: *The batter is out.*

E. When discovered using an Illegal bat after completing their turn at bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
Effect:
① *The batter is out.*
② *All outs stand.*
③ *All other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*
Note - Section 6B-E: *If a previous batter has used the same Altered, Non-Approved or Illegal bat and a pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown, the current batter is out.*

F. When an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time the ball makes contact with the bat.

G. When any part of a foot is touching home plate at the time the ball makes contact with the bat.

H. When a batter leaves the batter's box and returns to the box and makes contact with the ball.

I. (Fast Pitch) When the batter bunts foul after the second strike. If the ball is caught before touching the ground, it remains live.

J. (Slow Pitch) When the batter bunts or chops the ball.

K. When members of the team at bat, including those in the team area other than runners, interfere with a player attempting to field a fair or foul fly ball.

L. (16-Inch Slow Pitch) When a batter intentionally hits a pitched ball that first strikes the ground or home plate, to prevent the catcher from executing a pick-off attempt.

M. When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.
Effect - Section 6F-M:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter is out.*
③ *Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*
Exception:
① *When the batter is in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hands.*
Effect: *Foul ball, even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.*
② *When the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the ball.*
Effect: *The ball remains live.*
③ *When contact is made on the follow through after missing the pitch on the initial swing.*
Effect:
A *The ball is dead.*
B *A strike is called.*

N. (Slow Pitch) After a third strike, including a foul ball that is hit after two strikes.
O. (Fast Pitch) When a called or swinging third strike is caught by the catcher.
P. (Fast Pitch) When the batter has three strikes and/or if there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied at the time of the pitch.
Q. Whenever the batter due up has left the game under the Short-Handed Rule.
R. When hindering the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.
S. When actively hindering the catcher while in the batter's box.
T. When intentionally interfering with a thrown ball, in or out of the batter's box.
U. When interfering with a play at home plate.

Effect - Section 6R-U:

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

Exception: *If no play is being made and the batter accidentally makes contact with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher.*

Effect:

A *The ball is dead.*
B *Any advancement of runners shall be nullified.*

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

SECTION 1 - THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER

A. As soon as the batter legally hits a fair ball.

B. (Fast Pitch) When the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground and there are:

❶ Fewer than two outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch, or

❷ Any time there are two outs.

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

Effect:

① *(Fast Pitch and 16-Inch Slow Pitch) the ball is live*

② *(Slow Pitch with stealing) The ball remains live and the batter-runner may not advance past first base unless there is a play on another runner or an errant throw.*

Exception: *The ball is dead if it hits the ground before reaching home plate, hits home plate or the batter.*

③ *(Slow Pitch) The ball is dead, and runners may not advance unless forced*

④ *(Slow Pitch) If the defensive team desires to walk a batter intentionally, they may do so by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base. When two consecutive batters are to be walked intentionally, the second walk may not be administered until the first batter reaches first base. If the umpire mistakenly allows two walks at one time and the first batter fails to touch first base, an appeal shall not be honored on the first batter.*

Effect: *The ball is dead.*

⑤ *(Coed) A walk to a male batter will result in a two base award. The next batter, a female, shall bat.*

Effect

Ⓐ *The ball is dead*

Ⓑ *A male batter-runner advancing to second base without touching first base shall be called out if properly appealed*

Exception: *With two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat. Should the female batter choose to walk and pass a male batter-runner while advancing to first base, no out shall be called during this dead ball period.*

D. When the catcher obstructs a batter's attempt to hit a pitched ball.

Effect: *Delayed dead ball.*

① *If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely or has passed that base and is considered to have reached it, and all other runners have advanced at least one base.*

Effect:

Ⓐ *Obstruction is canceled.*

Ⓑ *All action as a result of the batted ball stands.*

C *No option is given.*

② *If all runners, including the batter-runner, do not advance at least one base.*

Effect:

A *The manager has the option of taking the result of the play,*

or

B *Enforcing obstruction by awarding the batter first base.*

C *Runners are advanced one base if forced.*

③ *The catcher steps on or in front of home plate without the ball and prevents the batter from hitting the ball.*

Effect:

A *The ball is dead.*

B *The batter is awarded first base.*

C *Runners are advanced one base if forced.*

④ *(Fast Pitch) On a swing or attempted bunt, the catcher or any other fielder prevents the batter from hitting the ball, touches the batter or their bat with a runner on third base trying to score on a squeeze play or a steal.*

Effect:

A *The ball is dead.*

B *The runner shall be awarded home plate.*

C *The batter shall be awarded first base.*

D *Runners are advanced one base if forced.*

E. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of an umpire or a runner:

❶ After touching a fielder including the pitcher.

❷ After passing a fielder other than the pitcher and no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out.

Effect - Section 1E [1 & 2]: *The ball remains live.*

❸ Before passing a fielder without being touched.

❹ Before passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher and contacts a runner who is off the base.

❺ After passing a fielder and contacts a runner and another fielder has the opportunity to make an out.

Effect - Section 1E [3-5]:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*

Ⓑ *The runner is out.*

Ⓒ *The batter-runner is awarded first base.*

Ⓓ *Runners are advanced one base if forced.*

❻ While the runner is in contact with a base.

Effect:

Ⓐ *The runner is not out.*

Ⓑ *The ball is live or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.*

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

❼ Or contacts an umpire before passing a fielder other than the pitcher.

Effect:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*

Ⓑ *The batter-runner is awarded first base.*

Ⓒ *Runners are advanced one base if forced.*

F. (Fast Pitch) When a pitched ball, not swung at nor called a strike, touches any part of the batter's person including the hands or clothing. The batter's hands are not part of the bat.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The batter is awarded first base.*

Exception: *If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter will not be awarded first base unless it is ball four.*

SECTION 2 - THE BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT

A. (Fast Pitch) When the catcher drops the third strike and the batter-runner is put out prior to reaching first base. This is in effect if there are two outs or with less than two outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

Effect - Section 2A-C: *The ball remains live.*

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

❶ A batted fair ball.

❷ (Fast Pitch or Slow Pitch with stealing) A base on balls.

❸ (Fast Pitch) A dropped third strike.

❹ Catcher Obstruction.

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

E. When the batter-runner runs outside the three-foot running lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. The batter-runner may run outside the three-foot lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, and if hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference. If intentional interference is ruled, the runner is out.

F. When the batter-runner interferes:

❶ With a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
❷ With a fielder attempting to throw the ball.
❸ With a thrown ball while out of the batter's box.
❹ By making contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base.
❺ By discarding their bat in a manner that prevents the defense from making a play on the ball.
❻ (Fast Pitch) With a dropped third strike.
Note: *If this interference is an attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall be called out.*

G. When the batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an out at home plate.
Effect: *The runner is also out.*

H. When the batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
Effect - Section 2D-H:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter-runner is out.*
③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

I. When an infield fly is declared.

J. When an infield fly is declared and the fair batted ball hits the batter-runner before reaching first base.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The infield fly is invoked.*

K. When an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, including a line drive or a bunt, which can be caught with ordinary effort with first, first and second, first and third or first, second and third bases occupied with fewer than two outs.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter-runner is out.*
③ *Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*
④ *If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.*

L. When the immediate previous runner who is not out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete the play on the batter-runner.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter-runner is out.*
③ *Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

M. (Slow Pitch) For excess over-the-fence home runs.

N. The double base shall be used at first base in all divisions of play. The following rules

should be enforced:

❶ A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair.

❷ A batted ball hitting or bounding over the contrasting color portion is foul.

❸ When a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the contrasting color portion of the base.
Effect: *The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion, providing the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white or contrasting color portion of the base, an appeal shall not be honored.*

❹ On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base the defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or contrasting color portion of the base.

❺ On an errant throw pulling the defense off the white portion of the base into foul ground, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or contrasting color portion.

❻ Once the batter-runner reaches first base, they may start on either the white or contrasting color portion of the entire base.

❼ On balls hit to the outfield with no play on the batter-runner advancing to first base, the batter-runner may touch the white or contrasting color portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner and defense can use the white or contrasting color portion.

❽ When tagging up on a fly ball, the white or contrasting color portion of the base may be used. On an appeal for the runner leaving the base too soon, the defense may use the white or contrasting color of the base.
(Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch with stealing & 16-Inch Slow Pitch) On an attempted pick-off play, the runner may return to the white or contrasting color portion of the base.

❾ (Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch with stealing & 16-Inch Slow Pitch) On an attempted pick-off play, the runner may return to the white or contrasting color portion of the base.

❿ On plays at 1B when the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white portion of the base.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter-runner is out.*
③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of interference.*

O. When a spectator reaches into live ball territory and interferes with a fielder's opportunity to catch a fly ball.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter-runner is out.*

③ *Runners are awarded the bases that in the umpire's judgment would have been reached had the interference not occurred.*

SECTION 3 - TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER

A. When a runner must return to a base while the ball is live or dead, the bases must be touched in reverse order.
Effect: *If properly appealed the runner is out.*
Exception: *On a foul ball.*

B. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, the runner or batter-runner is entitled to hold that base until legally touching the next consecutive base or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner. When a runner passes a base the runner is considered to have touched that base. This also applies to awarded bases.

C. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, that runner and all trailing runners are not required to follow a base out of position.
Effect - Section 3B-C:
① *The ball remains live.*
② *Runners may advance or return with liability to be put out.*

D. A runner shall not run bases in reverse order to confuse the fielders nor to make a travesty of the game.
Effect:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *The runner is out.*

E. Two runners may not occupy the same base at the same time.
Effect:
① *The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to that base, unless forced to advance.*
② *The other runner may be put out by being tagged with the ball.*

F. Failure of a previous runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball, and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no trailing runner may score a run.

G. No runner may return to touch a base missed or one left too soon after a trailing runner has scored or once they leave live ball territory.

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

I. Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.
Exception: *All Adult and Junior Olympic Boys Slow Pitch. On any fair batted ball hit over the fence for a home run or on a four base award, the batter and all runners are credited with a run. The batter and any runners on base are not required to run the*

bases. This eliminates any possible outs called or any appeal on the batter-runner or runners for any base running infractions.

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

A. (Fast/Modified Pitch) When the ball leaves the pitcher's hand on the delivery.
B. On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.
C. On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.
D. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched by a defensive player.
E. If a fair ball:
- ❶ Contacts an umpire or a runner after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or:
- ❷ When a fair batted ball has been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, and the runner did not intentionally interfere with the batted ball or the fielder attempting to field the batted ball.

Effect - Section 4A-E: *The ball remains live.*

F. (Men's & Women's Slow Pitch) Runners may advance when the ball reaches home plate, or:
- ❶ When a pitched ball is batted.
- ❷ Until the pitcher has possession of the ball in the infield and all playing action has ceased.
- ❸ (Slow Pitch with stealing) Runners may advance when a pitched ball, legal or illegal, reaches the front edge of home plate.
- ❹ When a pitched ball that hits behind home plate and strikes the umpire, or a thrown ball by the catcher that strikes the umpire.

Exception: ❸ and ❹ do not apply to Master's, Senior's Coed, Junior Olympic Girls and Junior Olympic Boys 10U, 12U, 14U, and 16U Slow Pitch

G. When a live ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.
H. When a runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base while the ball is live or when bases have been awarded.
I. After overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.
J. After dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.
K. (16-Inch Slow Pitch) A runner may lead off any base with the risk of being picked off by a throw from the pitcher or catcher. If a throw results in an overthrow or blocked ball, no runners may advance. Any runner advancing on a pitch not batted is in jeopardy to be put out if tagged before returning to their original base.
L. When an infield fly is declared and caught runners may tag-up and advance. If the ball is not caught runners may advance at their own risk.

SECTION 5 - RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

A. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.
Effect: *(Fast Pitch)*

① *The ball remains live unless it is blocked.*

② *Any runner forced to advance is entitled to one base and may advance farther with liability to be put out.*

③ *(Slow Pitch) The ball is dead.*

Exception: *In 16-Inch Slow Pitch and all divisions with stealing, the ball remains live.*

B. When a fielder not in possession of the ball or not in the act of fielding a batted ball obstructs the progress of a runner or batter-runner.
Effect: *Delayed dead ball.*

① An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where obstructed.
Exceptions:

A *When an obstructed runner, after the obstruction, safely obtains the base they would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play on a different runner.*

B *An act of interference, or*

C *If passing another runner.*
Effect A-C: *The obstructed runner is no longer protected between the bases where obstructed and may be put out.*

D *Missing a base.*

E *Leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched.*
Effect D-E: *The obstructed runner is out if properly appealed.*

② If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base which would have been reached had there been no obstruction.
Effect:

A *The ball is dead.*

B *The obstructed runner and all other runners shall always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.*

③ If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base which would have been reached had there been no obstruction or advanced beyond the two bases where the obstruction occurred.
Effect:

A *The ball remains live.*

B *The obstructed runner is called out.*

④ When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base:

A *Is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball or*

B *Is attempting to field a batted ball, or*

C *When a fielder fakes a tag without the ball*

Effect:

① *The obstructed runner and all other runners shall always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.*

② *In the umpire's judgment, a defensive player making a fake tag could be ejected from the game.*

Note 1: *Obstructed runners are required to touch all bases in proper order and may be called out if properly appealed.*

Note 2: *Should an act of interference occur following any obstruction, the interference takes precedence.*

C. (Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch with stealing) When a pitched ball that remains live becomes blocked or goes out of live ball territory.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The batter is awarded first base on ball four.*

③ *Runners are awarded one base only.*

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

E. (Fast Pitch) When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, providing the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

Exception: (Junior Olympic) Runners are not entitled to advance.

F. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted, thrown or pitched ball with any part of the uniform or equipment that is detached from its proper place.

Effect: *Delayed dead ball. The batter and runners are entitled to:*

① *Three bases from the time of the pitch on a batted ball.*

② *Two bases from the time of the throw on a thrown ball.*

③ *One base from the time of the pitch on a pitched ball.*

A *In all games with stealing, runners may advance farther with liability to be put out.*

B *A batter is awarded one base only on the third strike in Fast Pitch and Modified.*

④ *If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair batted ball which, in the umpire's judgment, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, the batter-runner shall receive a four base award.*

⑤ *On a pitched ball that eludes the catcher and is retrieved with detached equipment, there is no penalty if:*

A *Runners are not advancing,*

B *No apparent play is possible,*

C *No advantage is gained.*

G. When the ball is live and is overthrown or is blocked:

Effect:

① *All runners shall be awarded two bases.*

② *The award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand.*

Note: *Runners must return to touch a base missed or left too soon. When two runners are between the same two bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner. Once a base runner advances to the next awarded base, the runner may no longer return to touch any base missed or left too soon.*

Exception:

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

Effect:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*

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

② *When the ball becomes dead, runners must return to touch a base missed or left too soon if they have advanced, touched, and are a base beyond the base missed or left too soon.*

Note: *Runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities. A runner shall not be declared out if a fielder deliberately carries or throws the ball into dead ball territory to prevent that runner from returning to a base missed or left too soon. Once a runner leaves live ball territory they cannot return to touch any base missed or left too soon.*

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

Effect:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*

Ⓑ *Runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball.*

Ⓒ *If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is out.*

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

H. When a fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.

Effect: *The batter-runner shall be entitled to a home run, unless it passes out of the grounds at a distance less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate, in which case the batter-runner is entitled to two bases.*

I. When a fair batted ball:

❶ Bounces over, rolls under or through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field.

❷ Deflects off the defensive player and goes out of play.
❸ Hits the fence and then deflects off of the defensive player and goes over the home run fence.
❹ Deflects off a runner or umpire and goes out of play, after passing an infielder, excluding the pitcher and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out.

Effect:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*
Ⓑ *All runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.*

J. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from live ball territory or a fielder carries a live ball into the team area to tag a player.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*
② *Runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder left live ball territory.*

K. When, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball into dead ball territory.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*
② *Runners are awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered or the ball was kicked, pushed or thrown into dead ball territory.*

L. When there is spectator interference with any thrown or fair batted ball.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*
② *The batter and runners are awarded the bases they would have reached had there been no interference.*

M. When a ball gets lodged in an:

❶ Umpire's gear or clothing.
❷ Offensive player's clothing.

Effect:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*
Ⓑ *Runners are awarded the bases they would have reached in the judgment of the umpire.*

SECTION 6 - A RUNNER MUST RETURN TO THEIR BASE

A. When a batted ball is foul.

B. When an illegally batted ball is declared by the umpire.

C. When a batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. All other runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

D. (Fast Pitch) When any part of the batter's person or clothing is touched by a pitched ball that is swung at and missed.

E. (Fast Pitch) When the batter is hit by a pitched ball, unless forced.

Effect - Section 6A-E:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *All runners must return to their base without liability to be put out, except when forced to advance to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner.*

③ *Runners are not required to touch the intervening bases while returning to a base.*

F. (Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch with stealing or 16-Inch Slow Pitch) When the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner who is stealing, or an attempted pick off play.

Effect:

① *Delayed dead ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live.*

② *If the runner is not out, the ball becomes dead. Runners shall be returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

Note: *It is not umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher. The ball remains live.*

G. (Slow Pitch) When base stealing is not allowed.

Effect: *Runners must return to their base after each pitch.*

Exception: *(Slow Pitch with stealing) Runners may advance after the ball reaches the front edge of home plate.*

H. When an intentionally dropped fly ball is ruled.

SECTION 7 - THE RUNNER IS OUT

A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs more than three feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand or glove of a fielder.

B. When the ball is live and while the runner is not in contact with a base, the runner is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.

C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base. If the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base first occupied, the force play is reinstated and the runner may again be put out if the defense tags the runner or the base to which the runner is forced.

Effect - Section A-C: *The ball remains live.*

D. When a runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been called out. If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scored prior to the out for passing a preceding runner count.

Effect:

① *The ball remains live.*

② *The runner who passes the preceding runner is out.*

③ *Fast Pitch Only; On any over the fence home run all base runners and the batter-runner have live ball base running responsibilities. The batter-runner and any runner can be called out for passing a preceding runner. If this is the 3rd out any runs scored prior to the passing would count.*

E. When any offensive team member, other than another runner, physically assists a runner while the ball is live.

Effect:

① *The ball remains live.*

② *The runner being assisted is out.*

Exception – Section E: *After a runner has scored and missed home plate and then is physically assisted back to home plate:*

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The runner is out and the run is nullified.*

③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time the ball became dead.*

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

G. When the runner fails to touch a base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to the infield and properly appealed. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out.

H. When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base

and is legally touched with the ball while not in contact with the base.

I. When running or sliding for any base and the runner fails to touch it, provided the defense properly appeals.

Effect - Section 7F-I:

① *These are appeal plays. The defensive team loses the opportunity of having the runner called out if any of the following occur:*

- **A** *The appeal is not made before the next pitch, legal or illegal, or hesitation in 16-Inch Slow Pitch.*
- **B** *The pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the team area, or*
- **C** *On the last play of the game the umpires have left live ball territory.*

② *(Live Ball Appeal) If properly appealed by any defensive player during a live ball, the runner is out.*

③ *(Dead Ball Appeal) Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time is called, any coach or infielder with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. No runner may leave a base during this period as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.*

- **A** *If the ball leaves live ball territory, a dead ball appeal cannot be made until completion of all legal advancement by base runners.*
- **B** *If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitchers plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.*
- **C** *If "play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire shall call "time" and allow the appeal process.*

J. When a runner interferes:

❶ With a fielder attempting to field a batted fair ball or a foul fly ball, or

❷ With a fielder attempting to throw the ball, or

❸ With a thrown ball.

Effect:

- A *The ball is dead.*
- B *The runner is out.*
- C *The batter-runner is awarded first base.*
- D *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
- E If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner shall also be called out.
- F If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fly ball, fair or foul, with ordinary effort, the batter is also out.

❹ Intentionally with any defensive player having the opportunity to make an out with the deflected batted ball.

Effect:

Ⓐ *The ball is dead.*

Ⓑ *The runner is out.*

Ⓒ *The batter-runner is awarded first base.*

Ⓓ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

K. When a runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, or if it passes an infielder and another fielder has an opportunity to make an out.

L. When a runner intentionally contacts a fair ball that an infielder missed.

Effect - Section 7K & L:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The runner is out.*

③ *The batter-runner is awarded first base.*

④ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

M. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate.

N. When members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

O. When a coach intentionally interferes with:

❶ *A batted ball.*

❷ *A thrown ball.*

❸ *The defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner*.

Note: A batted or thrown ball that unintentionally hits a base coach is not considered interference.

P. When, after being declared out or after scoring, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw may be considered a form of interference. This does not apply to a batter-runner who is entitled to run on the dropped third strike rule.

Effect - Section 7M-P:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The runner closest to home is out.*

③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

Q. When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains upright and crashes into the defensive player.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② The runner is out.

③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

④ *If flagrant, the offender is ejected.*

R. (Slow Pitch) When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which they are entitled until a pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, or reaches home plate.
Exception: *(16-Inch Slow Pitch) A runner may leave a base as soon as the ball is put in play.*

S. (Fast Pitch) When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
Effect - Sections 7R-S:
① *The ball is dead.*
② *"No pitch" is declared.*
③ *The runner is out.*

T. (Fast Pitch) Look Back Rule.
The "Look Back" rule shall be in effect for all runners when:
❶ The ball is live.
❷ The batter-runner has reached first base or has been declared out.
❸ The pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both feet are on or within the lines.
[A] When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius of the pitcher's plate, the runner may stop once then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.
[B] Once the runner stops at a base for any reason the runner will be declared out if leaving the base.
[C] Responsibilities of the batter-runner after reaching first base, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius of the pitcher's plate, including a base on balls or a dropped third strike, are as follows:
1 A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop once, but then must immediately non-stop return to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
2 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
3 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly toward second base and stops, is committed to second base and must attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
4 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base.
5 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base.

Effect - Section 7T[A-C]:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The runner is out.*

③ *When more than one runner is off base, only one runner is called out.*

④ *All other runners are returned to the last base touched.*

Exception - Section 7T[A-C]: The runner will not be declared out if:

① *A play is made on any runner. A fake throw is considered a play,*

② *The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the eight foot radius, or*

③ *The pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.*

U. When a runner abandons a base and enters the team area or leaves live ball territory.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *The runner is out.*

③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the infraction.*

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

Effect:

① *The ball remains live.*

② *The runner is out.*

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

X. Prior to a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, if the runner was discovered having used an Illegal, Altered or Non-Approved Bat.

Effect:

① *The runner is out.*

② *If the bat was Altered or Non-Approved, the runner shall also be ejected.*

③ *If the Illegal, Altered, or Non-Approved Bat is discovered prior to the next pitch, legal or illegal,*

Ⓐ *any runners put out prior to the discovery shall remain out.*

Ⓑ *all other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

Y. When base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied following any conference.

Effect: *Each runner on an improper base shall be declared out. In addition, the manager shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.*

SECTION 8 - THE RUNNER IS NOT OUT

A. When a runner runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the base path in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

B. When a runner does not run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in their possession.

C. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made an out.

D. When a runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out.

E. When a runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball over foul territory that, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had an opportunity to make an out.

F. When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder, including the pitcher, and the runner could not avoid contact with the ball.

G. When a runner off a base:

❶ Is touched with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

❷ Is touched with a hand or glove of a defensive player and the ball is in the other hand.

H. When the defensive team does not appeal:

❶ Until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or

❷ Until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the team area, or

❸ On the last play of the game, until the umpires have left live ball territory.

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

J. When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base.

Effect:

① *The ball is dead.*

② *"No pitch" will be called by the umpire.*

③ *The runner will not be called out for being off a base before the pitcher releases the ball.*

K. When the runner has legally started to advance.

Effect: *The runner may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's plate or by the pitcher stepping on the pitcher's plate with the ball in their possession.*

L. When the runner stays on the base until a fly ball is touched by a fielder and then attempts to advance.

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

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

O. When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove/mitt, and it is discovered by the umpire before:

❶ The next legal or illegal pitch or

❷ The pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal defensive positions and have left fair territory or

❸ On the last play of the game, the umpires have left live ball territory,

Effect: *The manager of the offended team is given two options:*

[A] *Have the entire play nullified with each runner returning to their original base and the batter batting again, assuming the ball and strike count prior to the pitch that was hit or on a steal attempt.*

[B] *Take the result of the play.*

P. When a runner legally returns to a base left too soon or missed prior to an appeal being made, or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

SECTION 9 - ADULT SLOW PITCH

A. Adult Slow Pitch Courtesy Runner.

❶ A courtesy runner is officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.

❷ Any eligible player may be a courtesy runner once per inning for any player other than the pitcher. This player, or any other eligible player, may also be a courtesy runner for the pitcher **providing the pitcher bats for themselves and reaches base safely.**

Effect: *If a courtesy runner is used more than once for a player other than the pitcher they will be called out and removed from the base.*

❸ If a courtesy runner is used, the courtesy runner cannot be replaced by a substitute.

❹ A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury.

❺ A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

Effect - Section 9A[4&5]:

[A] *Violations result in an out.*

[B] *The runner is removed from the base.*

❻ *A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base:*

Effect:

[A] *The player who the courtesy runner is running for will be called out.*

[B] *The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat.*

[C] *A second courtesy runner or a substitute is not permitted at this time.*

❼ Any eligible players that may participate on offense or defense and are on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. In Coed two courtesy runners are allowed for players other than the pitcher, one male and one female. All courtesy runners including those running for the pitcher must be of the same gender as the player they replace.

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

B. Senior Slow Pitch.

❶ Seniors Slow Pitch Courtesy Runner.

[A] A courtesy runner is officially in the game after a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play is made.

[B] A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base:

Effect:

❶ *The player who the courtesy runner is running for will be called out.*

❷ *The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat.*

❸ *A second courtesy runner or a substitute is not permitted at this time.*

[C] Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed per inning. Each player may be a courtesy runner only once an inning.

Effect: *If a courtesy runner is used more than once they will be called out and removed from the base.*

[D] A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury.

[E] A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

Effect - Section 9B [1 D&E]:

❶ *Violations result in an out.*

❷ *The runner is removed from the base.*

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

❷ Seniors Slow Pitch Base Running.

[A] Defensive players can touch only the original home plate and runners can touch only the second home plate.

[B] Runners must touch the second home plate located adjacent to the right-handed batter's box in order to be safe at home.

[C] Runners tagged by a defensive player instead of touching the original home plate will not be out.

[D] Should a defensive player touch the second home plate and still touch the original home plate before the runner reaches the second home plate, the runner is out.

[E] If the runner touches the original home plate, the runner is out and the ball remains live.

[F] Once a runner passes the commitment line, 20 foot marking from a second home plate, the runner cannot return to third base.

Effect:

❶ *The ball remains live.*

❷ *If the runner returns, the runner is out.*

G If the runner has passed the commitment line, 20 foot marking, and continues running on the original foul line, and interferes with the fielder taking a throw at or in contact with the original home plate:

Effect:

❶ *The ball is dead.*

❷ *The runner is out.*

❸ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

SECTION 10 - COURTESY RUNNERS (Fast Pitch / Modified Pitch) AND MASTERS AND SENIORS FAST PITCH

A. The team at bat may use a courtesy runner:

❶ For the pitcher and/or the catcher providing the pitcher or catcher bats for themselves and reaches base safely.

❷ Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances.

❸ The same courtesy runner may not run for both the pitcher and the catcher at any time during the game.

❹ Defensive changes involving the pitcher or catcher must be reported to the umpire to ensure the correct player may have a courtesy runner.

B. In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed on the line-up as the pitcher or catcher. Thereafter, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense. If a substitute enters for the pitcher or catcher in the following offensive half-inning and reaches base safely, should the pitcher or catcher re-enter, the courtesy runner is not permitted for the pitcher or catcher until after their next turn at-bat.

C. Players who are currently in the game or have participated in the game in any playing capacity are not eligible to serve as courtesy runners.

Exception: *Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Pool Play and Masters and Seniors Fast Pitch only, any eligible player can be used as a courtesy runner. However, Rule 8, Section 10A [3] still applies. If this player is on base when it is their time at bat:*

① *The player who the courtesy runner is running for will be called out.*

② *The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat.*

D. A player may not be a substitute for any player in the half inning that they participated as a courtesy runner.

Exception: *Should an injury or disqualification occur and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute and take the place of the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base and is entered as a substitute, the*

pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in their place.

E. If the DP bats for the pitcher or catcher and reaches base safely, a courtesy runner is not permitted to run for the Designated Player (DP), or their substitute, including the pitcher or catcher.

F. Once the courtesy runner is designated for that half-inning, the pitcher or catcher for whom they are running may not return to run while that courtesy runner is on base. A courtesy runner cannot run for a courtesy runner.

Exception: *Should an injury or disqualification occur to any offensive player, and no eligible substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must take the place of the injured or disqualified player. In this case, the courtesy runner enters as a substitute and the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in their place.*

G. A courtesy runner must be reported to the plate umpire.

Effect - Section 10A-G: *If a courtesy runner fails to report or violates the Courtesy Runner Rule, they are considered:*

① *An illegal runner.*
② *Shall be disqualified.*

H. (Masters and Seniors Fast Pitch Only)

❶ Courtesy runners may be used only for the pitcher and the catcher.
❷ The pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense. In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed on the line-up card as pitcher and catcher.
❸ Any eligible players that may participate on offense or defense and are on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. One courtesy runner only may be used per inning.
❹ A Courtesy Runner may also be used for any player other than the pitcher or catcher only once per inning.

SECTION 1 - TYPES OF PROTESTS

There are three types of protests:

A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule - must be made:
- ❶ Before the next pitch legal or illegal,
- ❷ Before the next play
- ❸ Before all infielders have left fair territory,
- ❹ On the last play of the game, before the umpires leave live ball territory

B. Illegal player - must be made while the player in question is in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.

Note A-B: *An umpire cannot reverse a decision after a pitch, legal or illegal.*

C. Ineligible player - can be made any time. Eligibility is the decision of the protest committee.

SECTION 2 - PROTESTS NOT CONSIDERED

Protests will not be considered if based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an umpire.

A. Examples of protests which will not be considered are:
- ❶ Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
- ❷ Whether a runner was safe or out.
- ❸ Whether a pitched ball was a ball or a strike.
- ❹ Whether there is a legal or illegal pitch.
- ❺ Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.
- ❻ Whether a runner did or did not leave a base too soon on a caught fly ball.
- ❼ Whether a fly ball was or was not caught legally.
- ❽ Whether a batted ball was or was not an infield fly.
- ❾ Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.
- ❿ Whether the field is or is not fit to continue or resume play.
- ⓫ Whether there is or is not sufficient light to continue play.
- ⓬ Whether a player or live ball did or did not leave the live ball territory or touch some object or person in a dead ball area.
- ⓭ Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.
- ⓮ Whether a batted ball was or was not touched by a fielder before clearing the fence in flight.

B. Any other matter involving only the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

SECTION 3- PROTESTS ALLOWED

Protests may only involve the interpretation of a rule.

SECTION 4 - PROTEST NOTIFICATION

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

SECTION 5 - PROTESTS OF ELIGIBILITY

Protest of eligibility can be made or appealed at any time. Eligibility protests cannot be waived by the Local Association.

SECTION 6 - WRITTEN PROTESTS

The written protest should contain the following information:

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

SECTION 7 - RESULTS OF PROTEST

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

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

RULE 10 - UMPIRES

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

SECTION 1 - POWER AND DUTIES

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

SECTION 2 - CHANGE OF UMPIRES

Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless incapacitated by injury or illness.

SECTION 3 - UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT

A. There will be no protest on any decision involving accuracy of judgment. No decision rendered by any umpire shall be reversed except when the umpire is convinced it is in violation of one of these rules. In case the manager, acting manager or captain of either team does seek a reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question, will, if in doubt, confer with the other umpire(s) before taking any action. Under no circumstances shall any player or person, other than the manager, acting manager or captain of either team, have the right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.

B. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by an associate, nor shall any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of their associate(s), unless asked to do so.

C. The plate umpire may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one pitch legal or illegal, or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, or after the last play of the game, the umpires have left the field of play.

SECTION 4 - SUSPENSION OF PLAY

A. Umpires may suspend play when, in their judgment, conditions justify such action.

B. An umpire shall call time to perform other duties.

C. The umpire shall suspend play whenever a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.

D. An umpire shall suspend play if a fair batted ball hits the umpire prior to passing an infielder.
Effect: *The batter-runner is awarded a base hit. No runners are advanced unless forced to advance.*

E. An umpire shall not call time while any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
Exception: *During live ball situations, when a player becomes injured and requires immediate attention, an umpire shall call time.*

F. An umpire shall not call time if requested by the offensive team after the pitcher has started the delivery.

G. During live ball situations, when a player becomes injured and in the umpire's judgment requires immediate attention, the umpire shall call "TIME" and award any bases that would have been reached.

H. Umpires shall not suspend play at the request of players, coaches or managers until all action in progress has been completed.

I. (Slow Pitch) When, in the judgment of an umpire, all immediate play is apparently completed, the umpire will call time.

Failure of official scorer to adhere to Rule 11 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for the official scorer.

SECTION 1 - OFFICIAL SCORER

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

SECTION 2 - THE BOX SCORE

A. Each player's name and the position or positions played shall be listed in the order in which the player batted or would have batted had the player not been removed or had the game not ended before the player's turn at bat.

❶ (Fast Pitch) The designated player (DP) is optional, but if one is used it must be made known prior to the start of the game and listed on the score sheet in the regular batting order. Ten names will be listed, with the 10th name (or the last position in Junior Olympic Play) being the FLEX player, playing defense only. The FLEX player may bat only if they move into the DP position in the batting order.

❷ (Slow Pitch or Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Play) The extra player (EP) is optional, but if one is used it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the score sheet in the regular batting order. There will be 11 names for Men's and Women's Slow Pitch and JO Fast Pitch, and 12 names for Coed Slow Pitch on the official batting order and all will bat.

❸ (ADA Slow Pitch) If the physically challenged player is playing defense only (FLEX), they will be listed last on the score sheet.

B. Each player's batting and fielding record must be tabulated.

❶ The first column will show the number of times at bat by each player, but a time at bat will not be charged against the player when:

[A] The player hits a sacrifice fly that scores a runner.

[B] The player is awarded a base on balls.

[C] (Fast Pitch) The player hits a sacrifice bunt.

[D] (Fast Pitch) The player is hit by a pitched ball.

[E] (Fast Pitch) The player hits a sacrifice slap hit.

Note: *A slap hit is defined as a fake bunt followed by a controlled swing and resulting in the runner(s) advancing, as in the case of a sacrifice bunt.*

[F] The third out occurs and the batter is not entitled to run to first base.

Exception: *Third strike foul rule in slow pitch.*

❷ The second column will show the number of runs scored by each player.

❸ The third column will show the number of base hits made by each player. A base hit is a batted ball that permits the batter to reach base safely:

- [A] On a fair ball which settles on the ground, clears the fence or strikes the fence before being touched by a fielder.
- [B] On a fair ball which is hit with such force or such slowness or which takes such an unnatural bounce that it is impossible to field with ordinary effort in time to make an out.
- [C] When a fair ball which has not been touched by a fielder becomes dead because of touching the person or clothing of the umpire.
- [D] When a fielder unsuccessfully attempts to retire a previous runner and in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner would not have been retired at first base by perfect fielding.

❹ The fourth column will show the number of opponents put out by each player.

- [A] A put out is credited to a fielder each time they:
  - **1** Catch a fly ball or line drive.
  - **2** Catch a thrown ball that retires a batter-runner or runner.
  - **3** Touch a runner with the ball when the runner is off the base to which the runner is entitled.
  - **4** Are nearest the ball when a runner is declared out for being struck by a fair batted ball or for interference with a fielder, or when a runner is called out for being in violation of Rule 8, Sections 7E, J, S or T.
  - **5** Are the nearest fielder to an unreported substitute who is declared out in accordance with Rule 4, Section 6C[3]
- [B] A put out is credited to the catcher:
  - **1** When a third strike is called.
  - **2** (Slow Pitch) When the batter bunts or chops the ball.
  - **3** When the batter fails to bat in correct order.
  - **4** When the batter interferes with the catcher.
  - **5** (Slow Pitch) When the batter hits a third strike foul ball.
  - **6** (Slow Pitch) When a batter hits a home run in excess of the limit.

❺ The fifth column shall show the number of assists made by each player. An assist shall be credited:

- [A] To each player who handles the ball in any series of plays which results in the put out of a runner or batter-runner. One assist only shall be given to any player who handles the ball on any put out. The player who makes the put out in a rundown or similar type play shall be credited with both an assist and a put out.
- [B] To each player who handles or throws the ball in such a manner that a put out would have resulted except for an error of a teammate.

[C] To each player who, by deflecting a batted ball, aids in a put out.

[D] To each player who handles the ball on a play which results in a runner or batter-runner being called out for interference or for running out of the base path.

❻ The sixth column will show the number of errors made by each player. Errors are recorded:

[A] For each player who commits a misplay which prolongs the turn at bat of the batter or extends the existence of the runner.

[B] For the fielder who fails to touch a base after receiving a thrown ball to retire a runner on a force out, or when a runner is compelled to return to a base, and provided the thrown ball could be caught by the fielder with ordinary effort.

[C] For the catcher if a batter is awarded first base because of catcher obstruction.

[D] For the fielder who fails to complete a double play because of a dropped ball.

[E] For a fielder if a runner advances a base because of that fielder's failure to catch, stop or try to stop a ball accurately thrown to a base, provided there was occasion for the throw. When more than one player could receive the throw, the scorer must determine which player should receive the error.

SECTION 3 - BASE HITS

A base hit shall not be scored:

A. When a runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.

B. When a player fielding a batted ball retires a preceding runner with ordinary effort.

C. When a fielder fails in an attempt to retire a preceding runner and, in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.

D. When a batter reaches first base safely as a result of a preceding runner being called out for interfering with a batted or thrown ball, or with a defensive player.

SECTION 4 - RUNS BATTED

A run batted in is a run scored because of:

A. A safe hit.

B. A sacrifice bunt (Fast Pitch), a sacrifice slap hit (Fast Pitch) or a sacrifice fly.

C. An infield put out or fielder's choice.

D. A runner forced home because of obstruction, a hit batter or a base on balls.

E. A home run and all runs scored as a result.

F. Subject to the provisions of Rule 11, Section 4G, when the batter ends a game with

a safe hit which drives in as many runs as are necessary to put a team in the lead, the batter shall be credited with only as many bases on the hit as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run, and then only if the batter runs out the hit for as many bases as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run.

G. The batter ends a game with a home run hit out of the playing field and all runners on base are entitled to score.

SECTION 5 - PITCHER CREDITS

A pitcher shall be credited with a win:

A. When a starting pitcher has pitched at least four innings and the pitcher's team is not only in the lead when the pitcher is replaced but remains in the lead for the remainder of the game.

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

SECTION 6 - PITCHER LOSSES

A pitcher will be charged with a loss:

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

SECTION 7 - THE SUMMARY

The summary shall list the following items in this order:

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

K. Number of hits and runs allowed by each pitcher.
L. The name of the winning pitcher.
M. The name of the losing pitcher.
N. The time of the game.
O. The names of the umpires and scorers.
P. (Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch with Stealing) Stolen bases and by whom. This includes a batter advancing to second base on an awarded base on balls.
Q. (Fast Pitch Only) Sacrifice bunts and by whom.
R. (Fast Pitch Only) The names of batters hit by a pitched ball and the names of the pitchers who hit them.
S. (Fast Pitch Only) The number of wild pitches charged to each pitcher.
T. (Fast Pitch Only) The number of passed balls charged to each catcher.

SECTION 8 - STOLEN BASES

(Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch with Stealing) A stolen base is credited to a runner whenever they advance one base unaided by a hit, put out, force out, fielder's choice, passed ball, wild pitch, an error, illegal pitch or obstruction.

SECTION 9 - FORFEITED GAMES

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

SECTION 10 - TIE-BREAKER RULE

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

A. USA Softball Playing Rules shall only apply to USA Softball Championship Play. Provided, however, in accordance with USA Softball Procedural Code, USA Softball Local Associations as well as other organizations may adopt or use all or any part of the USA Softball Playing Rules as they deem appropriate for use in Non-Championship Play. The use of all or any part of such rules is strictly a local matter and such rules may be altered as league officials deem appropriate or necessary to conduct Non-Championship Play.

B. Non-Championship Local League. USA Softball, as National Governing Body for Softball in the United States understands that local city or county leagues may adopt and use USA Softball's official playing rules. The use of any or all of USA Softball's playing rules is strictly a local matter and the rules may be altered as league officials deem necessary to conduct their own league play. USA Softball expressly disclaims any and all liability associated with the use of its official playing rules or any modification of its official playing rules, including its equipment standards, is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. USA Softball's official playing rules, or any modification thereof, should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. As stated in the preamble to the USA Softball Code, there are many risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball and USA Softball disclaims any and all liability associated with the game of softball or the use of its rules or Code. USA Softball does not review, sanction or approve of any modifications to its official playing rules. To the extent USA Softball's official playing rules are modified by local leagues; such modification may increase the potential or likelihood of injury, death or property loss, including the dangers associated with increased batted ball speeds. USA Softball shall not be responsible for any injury (including death) or property loss to any person in connection with any modification of USA Softball's official playing rules or the use of USA Softball's rules or any modified rules at any game or event.

C. Use of USA Softball Official Playing Rules. USA Softball's official playing rules are designed to be used at USA Softball championship events and implemented by USA Softball officials and volunteers. USA Softball shall not be responsible for any injury (including death) or property loss to any person in connection with the use and implementation of USA Softball's official playing rules at any event, whether or not the event is recognized or sanctioned by USA Softball.

APPENDIX - THE PENALTY PAGE

PENALTY	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Altered or non- approved Bat	7	6	B Effect
Appeal plays	8	7	F-I Effect [1-3]
Assisting another runner	8	7	E Effect
Batter-runner stepping back to avoid a tag	8	2	H
Batting out of order	7	2	D [1-4] Effect
Batting position - timing	7	3	C
Blocked ball on an overthrow or batted ball	8	5	G Effect
Blocked ball on a pitch	8	5	C Effect
Catch & carry - Intentionally	8	5	K Effect
Catch & carry - unintentionally	8	5	J Effect
Catcher returning the ball to pitcher after pitch (Fast Pitch)	6A	6	B Effect
Coach leaving the coaches box to communicate with batter	4	7	C [2b] Effect
Coach, unsportsmanlike & communication device	4	7	C [3-5] Effect
Coed use of wrong ball	7	2	E Effect
Coed use of wrong number of male or female players	4	1	C [3E] Effect
Contacting or catching the ball with detached equipment	8	5	F Effect [1-5]
Courtesy runner - unreported	8	10	Effect [a-g]
Courtesy runner - violations	8	9	C [2-5] Effect
Defensive conferences	5	7	B Effect
Defensive player distracts batter	6	5	B Effect
Disqualified participant	4	8	A-D
Double Base violation	8	2	M [1-9] Effect
Dugout conduct	5	12	Effect
Ejected participant	4	8	A-D
E/Rec over the fence HR	8	2	M
Exceeding Home Run limit	8	2	A, B Effect
Fair batted ball strikes a person	8	1	E 4, 5 Effect
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Foreign substance (Slow Pitch)	6C	5	
Illegal bat in the batter's box	7	6	C
Illegal glove	8	8	O Effect A B
Illegal pitch (Fast Pitch / Modified)	6 A/B	1-11	
Illegal pitch (Slow Pitch/16)	6C/D	1-10	
Illegal pitch swung or not swung at in (Fast Pitch)	7	5	D
Illegal pitch swung at or not swung at (Slow Pitch)	7	5	E
Illegal Player / Batter/ Re-Entry/ Runner	4	6	F [2-4]
Illegal player, Pitcher	4	6	F 1
Illegal substitution	4	6	C [1-9] Effect
Infield fly hits the batter-runner	8	2	J
Infield Fly Declared	8	2	I
Intentional crash	8	7	Q
Intentionally dropped fly ball	8	2	K

APPENDIX - THE PENALTY PAGE

PENALTY	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Intentionally kicked ball	8	7	L
Interference by a base coach on a batted ball or thrown ball	8	7	O Effect
Interference by a base coach drawing a throw	8	7	M Effect
Interference by a batter at Home Plate	7	6	R-U
Interference by a batter-runner	8	2	F
Interference by a batter-runner at HP	8	2	G Effect
Interference by batter-runner running outside 3' lane	8	2	E
Interference by an immediate preceding runner	8	2	L Effect
Interference by on-deck batter	7	1	D
Interference by offensive equipment on the field	8	5	G Exception 3
Interference by a runner	8	7	J [1-3] Effect
Interference by a runner struck by an fair untouched batted ball	8	7	K
Interference by a runner on a deflected batted ball	8	7	J4
Interference by a spectator fly ball	8	2	O Effect
Interference by a spectator on a thrown ball or batted ball	8	5	L
Interference by an Umpire	8	6	F
JO players one foot in the box	7	3	D
Look Back Rule violation	8	7	T
Members of the offensive team collect around the same base	8	7	N Effect
Obstruction by catcher	8	1	D
Obstruction on an attempted squeeze	8	1	D4
Obstruction by a fielder	8	5	B 1-4 Effect
Runner discovered using an illegal bat before a pitch	8	7	X Effect
Passing a runner	8	7	D Effect
Possession of a ball that becomes blocked	8	5	G Exception 1
Runner abandons a base	8	7	U
Runner leaving a base too soon (Fast Pitch)	8	7	S Effect
Runner leaving a base too soon (Slow Pitch)	8	7	R Effect
Runner leaves a base under the Short-Handed Rule	8	7	W
Runners on the same base	8	3	E Effect
Runners switch bases	8	7	Y
Running bases in proper order	8	3	A Effect
Running bases in reverse order	8	3	D Effect
Running outside base path to avoid a tag	8	7	A
Senior players interferes with a throw after passing the commitment line	8	9	D [7] Effect
Senior players returning to 3B after passing the commitment line	8	9	D [6] Effect
Short-Handed Rule	4	1	D [1, 2]
Time to release the next pitch	6	3	O, N, J, H Effect
Wearing metal cleats when not allowed	3	6	G Effect

1 - APPEALS

A. Types.

1. Missing a base, forward or backward, or touching the white portion only of the double base when a play is being made on the batter-runner at first base.
   Exception: *A play from foul territory, or an errant or missed throw pulling the defensive player into foul territory.*
2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
3. Attempting to advance to second base after making a turn at first base.
4. Batting out of order.

B. Live. In all games an appeal may be made during a live ball by any fielder in possession of the ball touching the base missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner committing the violation if they are still on the playing field.

C. Dead. The dead ball appeal may be made:

1. Once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called. Runners must be given ample opportunity, in the umpire's judgment, to complete their base running responsibilities. Any coach or infielder, with or without the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The pitcher and the catcher are considered infielders for the appeal process. The appropriate umpire should then make a decision on the play.
2. When a ball goes out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities before the dead ball appeal can be made.

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

1. They have left the field of play.
2. A following runner has scored.
3. Once a runner advances to and passes the next base awarded.

Note: *A "dead ball" should be called and runners given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities. Returning to touch a base missed or one left too soon must occur prior to an award; therefore, on an overthrow the umpire should hesitate in making the award while watching what the runner does. If the runner shows no intention of returning to touch a base missed or re-tag a base left too soon, then the umpire should make the award. Once the umpire awards bases, and if a runner reaches the first base of the award, and then for any reason retreats to a previous base missed or left too soon, this is an illegal act. The defense may appeal and the umpire should rule the runner out.*

E. When appeals must be made:

1. Before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
2. At the end of an inning, before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area.

❸ On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.

F. Advance. Runners may advance during a live ball appeal. When the ball is live in fast pitch, each runner may leave their base when:

❶ The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.

❷ The pitcher makes a play on any runner; a fake throwing motion is considered a play. If time out is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant time in Fast Pitch or Slow Pitch and runners may not advance until the next pitch.

G. More Than One Appeal. More than one appeal play may be made, but guessing should not be allowed.

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

H. Awards. An appeal should be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.

I. Plate and Tag Missed. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, the umpire should call the runner safe. If an appeal play is made by tagging the runner or home plate, the umpire should then render a decision.

J. Force Out. When an appeal is the third out and a force out, no runs shall score. The force is reinstated when a forced runner retreats toward the base first occupied and they may be put out if the defense tags the runner or the base to which they are forced. When the batter-runner is put out prior to reaching first base, all force outs are eliminated. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.

K. Tag-Ups. When a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retouch, this is considered a time play and not a force out. When the appeal is the third out, all runs scored in advance of the appealed runner and prior to the legal appeal count.

L. Missing First Base Before the Throw Arrives. When a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless properly appealed. On appeals involving the double base, when the batter-runner touches the white rather than the contrasting color portion and a play is made, the same procedure applies. When an appeal is made in both situations, it must be made prior to the runner returning to first base while the ball is live.

Exception: *If a play is being made from first base foul territory, or an errant or missed throw pulls the defensive player into foul territory, the runner may touch the white or contrasting color portion of the base. This is not considered missing the base.*

M. Fourth-Out Appeal. An appeal may be made after the third out of an inning as long

as it is made properly. The appeal must be made on a runner who has scored but missed a base or left a base too soon. EXAMPLE: One out with runners on first and third base. The batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Both runners leave their base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defense then makes an appeal at third base before all infielders leave the infield. The runner on third base should be called out, and the run does not count.

N. End of Game. When a situation arises that could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should wait until all infielders have crossed the foul line on their way to the dugout before leaving the infield. If teams line up for "high-fives" there is little chance for an appeal even if the infielders have not crossed the foul line. Umpires should leave the field at this time. No appeal can be made once the umpires leave the field.

2 - BALL ROTATION PROCEDURE

Many local associations now use the same ball rotation procedure that is used in championship play. The procedure is as follows:

A. The pitcher has a choice of which ball to use at the start of each half inning. However, if both balls do not get into play in the first half of the first inning, the pitcher in the bottom half of the first inning MUST throw the unused ball. No choice is offered.

B. The current game ball should be used until it goes out of play or becomes unplayable. When the ball goes out of play, the umpire should put another ball in play. The pitcher now MUST pitch with that ball unless the ball is deemed unplayable by the umpire.

C. If the pitcher requests another ball because it is unplayable, give them another ball and remove the unplayable ball from the game. Do NOT give the pitcher a choice of balls when nothing is wrong with the ball.

D. After an inning is completed, the ball should be returned to the vicinity of the pitcher's plate by the team leaving the field. The pitcher taking the field now has a ball with which to start the next half inning. The pitcher may request another ball from the plate umpire, and the umpire should give them another ball after receiving the ball from the pitcher. The pitcher has now made their choice and must pitch that ball.

3 - BAT WITH DENTS, RATTLES, EXCESSIVE WEAR OR DELAMINATIONS. COMPRESSION TESTING PSI REQUIREMENTS

When bats with dents, excessive wear or a rattle are found, that bat shall be removed and held until the Championship is over. When noticeable delamination appears on the Easton style bats designed to show delamination on the barrel area more than an inch in any direction, remove that bat and hold it until the end of the Championship.

Approved bats shall not be rolled, shaved or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer and shall be considered an altered bat.

A. All bats used at National Championships with the exception of Seniors and 16" Slow Pitch, are required to be compression tested.

1. Bats used in Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch games
   - [A] If they bear the 2000, 2004 or the new USA Softball Approved Certification Mark must meet or exceed the compression threshold of 1550PSI.
   - [B] Men's Major and Men's Open Fast Pitch may also use bats with USSSA or WBSC Approved Certification Marks and must meet or exceed the compression threshold of 1550PSI.
   - [C] If they bear the 2013 or new USA Softball Approved Certification Mark (Men's Adult Fast Pitch, JO Boy's Fast Pitch and Men's Modified Only) it must meet or exceed the compression threshold of 1450PSI.
2. Bats used in Slow Pitch games must meet or exceed the compression threshold of 1450PSI.
3. A non-linear bat, a bat whose structure deviates from the traditional design, must meet or exceed the compression thresholds that are listed for that make and model on the USA Softball website under certified equipment, Non Linear Bat Compression Thresholds for divisions of play.

4 - BATTING WITH AN ILLEGAL, ALTERED, OR NON APPROVED BAT

When a batter uses an illegal, altered, or non approved bat and reaches base safely, and the next batter steps into the batter's box with the same bat, the following penalty is in effect:

A. If noticed before a pitch is thrown to the next batter, the umpire should call out the batter who used the bat and is now on base.

B. If the bat is altered or non approved, the player is ejected from the game and subject to future penalties by the tournament protest committee. The bat is removed from the game, runners put out prior to discovering this infraction remain out, and runners not put out return to the base they occupied at the time of the batted ball.

C. After a pitch to the current batter, that batter is called out and there is no penalty to the previous batter for using the illegal or altered bat.

5 - BATTER REMAINS IN BATTER'S BOX (Junior Olympic Fast and Slow Pitch)

This rule is not intended to penalize the player, but is used to speed up the game. The batter can still get a signal with one foot in the box and take practice swings.
If the batter leaves the box illegally, a warning should be given. Any number of warnings on the same batter may be given. A strike should not be called without a warning. One, two or three strikes may be called on the same batter under this ruling.

6 - BATTING ORDER IS OFFICIAL

The batting order is considered official when it is reviewed by the manager and the plate umpire at the Pre-Game Meeting. Once the manager approves the line-up and returns it to the umpire, any changes thereafter are considered a substitution.

7 - BATTING OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX

To call a batter out for batting out of the batter's box, one foot or both feet must be on the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box when contact is made with the ball. The lines of the batter's box are considered inside the batter's box.

A batter should be called out immediately for hitting a pitched ball while out of the batter's box, or for re-entering the batter's box and making contact with the ball. The ball is dead, and the batter is out whether the ball is fair or foul. When there are no batter's box lines, good judgment should be used and the benefit of doubt should go to the batter. If contact is not made with the ball, there is no penalty.

8 - CATCHER'S BOX

The catcher's box is described in Rule 2, Section 3D.

(Slow Pitch) The catcher may not have any part of their body or equipment touching the ground outside the lines of the catcher's box until the ball is batted, touches the ground or plate, hits the batter, or reaches the catcher's box. It is an illegal pitch if the catcher touches the ground outside the lines of the catcher's box. The catcher, even when within the catcher's box, may still obstruct the batter.

(Fast Pitch) Catchers must remain in the catcher's box until the pitch is released. The catcher may move closer to the plate without penalty when the batter is positioned in the

front portion of the batter's box during a pitch. However, the catcher must, at all times, still avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter has the right to the entire batter's box. Obstruction does not require contact between the catcher and the bat or the batter. The umpire's request for the catcher to move farther away from the batter to avoid injury or obstruction should be obeyed. (See catcher obstruction under RS #36.)

9 - CHARGED CONFERENCES

A. Defensive. A defensive charged conference occurs when the defense requests a suspension of play for any reason, and a representative enters the playing field to communicate with any defensive player. Should a defensive player approach the dugout and receive instructions, this is considered a defensive conference. The umpire should advise a team representative when a defensive conference has been charged. A TEAM IS ALLOWED THREE CONFERENCES PER SEVEN INNINGS. It is not a charged conference if the pitcher is removed. They may use all three conferences in one inning or spread them out over a seven inning game. Once the three conferences have been used, the pitcher must be removed for each additional charged conference. In extra inning games, there will be one charged conference allowed in each extra inning. On the second conference in an extra inning of a game, the pitcher must be removed. If the pitcher returns to the pitching position after being removed and one pitch is thrown, the pitcher is disqualified.

B. Offensive. An offensive charged conference occurs when the offensive team requests a suspension of play and is granted time by an umpire to permit a team representative to confer with a batter, a runner(s), or another team representative. Only one such conference is allowed per inning. The umpires should refuse to grant the second conference.

Effect: *If the offensive team insists on holding a second conference in an inning after being informed by the umpire that it is not permitted, the umpire should eject the team representative from the game. It is not an offensive conference when a team representative confers with a batter and / or runner(s) during a defensive charged conference as long as they are ready to play when the defense is ready, or when the pitcher is putting on a warm-up jacket.*

C. Umpires. A conference should not be charged to either team when time-out is called by the umpire for a legitimate reason. EXAMPLE: An injured player, blood rule, scorekeeper problems, field maintenance repairs, etc. A coach may confer with a pitcher, batter, or a runner during an umpire's time-out without penalty, as long as they are ready to continue once the problem is resolved.

10 - CHECK SWING / BUNT STRIKE

Normally, there are four areas which could constitute whether or not a batter swung at the pitched ball or checked their swing.

A. Did the batter roll their wrists?
B. Did the batter swing through the ball and bring back the bat, unless the batter draws the bat back before the pitch arrives?
C. Was the bat out in front of the body?
D. Did the batter make an attempt to hit the pitch?

On a bunt attempt where the batter puts the bat across the plate and the pitched ball is out of the strike zone, a ball should be called unless the batter moves the bat toward the ball. In each of the above situations, the umpire should think in terms of priorities. First, was the pitch in the strike zone? If so, it is simply a strike. Second, did the batter swing at the pitched ball, or, in the case of a bunt attempt, did the batter move the bat toward the pitched ball? In either case, it is the plate umpire's call. If in doubt, or if blocked out, the umpire should call the pitch a ball. If the umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests the umpire to go for help, the plate umpire should ONLY ask for help if there is doubt in their mind as to whether or not the batter swung at the pitched ball. On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third strike rule applies. (Rule 8, Section 1B)

11 - COMMUNICATION / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

A. Communication / electronic devices, including audio / video equipment, used to communicate between coaches or with anyone outside the field of play are not allowed on the playing field. Head phones and ear phones have been used by coaches to communicate from one coaches' box to the other, to communicate between coaches and the dugout, and from the stands to the dugout. Signs and signals have been stolen while outside the field of play, stands or the outfield area and communicated to coaches or players. Therefore, umpires must prohibit any use of such equipment. Electronic scorebooks, however, are permitted for use by base coaches.
B. An exclusively one-way electronic communication device may be used by the defense or offense to relay the pitch or play call from the dugout or field.

12 - COURTESY RUNNER

The Courtesy Runner is a part of all Fast Pitch, Modified and all Adult Slow Pitch divisions of play.

A. In Adult Fast Pitch, Modified, and J.O. play, only players who have not been used in the game can be used as a courtesy runner, but only for the pitcher and catcher. **Exception:** J.O. Pool Play Only, any player can be a courtesy runner.

B. In Master and Seniors Fast Pitch, "courtesy runners" may be ANY player on the line-up card and may be used for the pitcher and catcher. In addition to the pitcher and catcher, a courtesy runner may be used once per inning, for someone other than the pitcher and catcher.

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

D. In Senior Men and Senior Women's Slow Pitch, unlimited courtesy runners may be used and can be ANY player on the line-up card.

E. Any ADA Player, Fast or Slow Pitch may use a courtesy runner once they reach base. Any player may be used for the ADA player. A courtesy runner not reported is disqualified when brought to the umpire's attention by the offended team. See Rule 8, Sections 9 and 10 for other guidelines to follow.

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

In an effort to prevent injury and protect a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, a runner must be called out when they remain on their feet and crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. To prevent the out ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender is ejected. A runner may slide into the fielder.

A. When a runner is called out for crashing into a fielder holding the ball, the ball becomes dead. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the crash as this constitutes interference.

B. When, as in A above, the runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball before being put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate succeeding runner is also called out. (Rule 8, Section 7J)

C. When a crash occurs after the runner is called out, the runner closest to home plate is also out. (Rule 8, Section 7P)

D. When an obstructed runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction is ignored and the runner is out. (Rule 8, Section 7Q) This type of award, Rule 8, Section 5B[2 & 3], does not give the runner the right to violate Rule 8, Section 7Q.

E. When a runner runs outside the three-foot running lane to avoid a crash with a defender holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag, the runner should be called out.

F. When a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or

draws them into the path of the base runner, it is not a crash.

14 - DELAYED DEAD BALL

There are five situations in which a violation of a rule occurs, the umpire recognizes the violation, but the ball remains live until the conclusion of play. These situations are:

A. An illegal pitch. (Rule 6, Section 1-8 Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch) (Rule 6, Section 1-7 Slow Pitch and 16-Inch Slow Pitch)
B. Catcher's obstruction. (Rule 8, Section 1D)
C. Plate umpire interference. (Rule 8, Section 6F)
D. Obstruction. (Rule 8, Section 5B)
E. Batted or thrown ball contacts detached equipment. (Rule 8, Section 5F)

In each situation, once the play is completed, the proper enforcement should be made.

15 - DESIGNATED PLAYER OR DP (Fast Pitch)

The designated player may be listed in any of the nine batting positions in the batting order. The player listed tenth in the batting order plays defense for the DP, but may also play offense for the DP, and is called the FLEX.

A. A designated player (DP) may be used for any defensive player provided it is made known to the plate umpire prior to the start of the game. The DP must be indicated on the line-up card as one of the nine hitters in the batting order.
B. The name of the player for whom the DP is batting, FLEX, must be placed in the tenth position on the line-up card.
C. The DP and any substitutes for the DP must remain in the same position in the batting order throughout the game. The FLEX and all substitutes for the FLEX must enter the game in the tenth position in the line-up card.
D. The DP may be substituted for at any time by a pinch hitter or pinch runner. The substitute becomes the DP and has all the options of the DP position. The starting DP and a substitute for the DP may not be in the game at the same time.
E. The FLEX may be substituted for at any time. The substitute becomes the FLEX and has all the options of the FLEX position. The starting FLEX and a substitute for the FLEX may not be in the game at the same time.
F. The starting DP and their substitute may be replaced by the FLEX as a hitter or as a runner. This reduces the number of players in the game from ten to nine. The DP and the FLEX may not be on offense at the same time.
G. The FLEX may be replaced on defense by the DP. This reduces the number of players in the game from ten to nine. The DP and the FLEX may be on defense at the same time.
H. The starting DP may re-enter the game one time, but only in the original DP position in the batting order. If the DP re-enters and the FLEX is batting in the DP position,

the FLEX must:

❶ Return to the number ten position in the line-up and play defense only. This is not considered to have left the game. Or,

❷ Leave the game.

I. The starting FLEX may re-enter the game one time and must:

❶ Return to the original FLEX position, tenth in the line-up card, or

❷ Take the place of the starting DP in the batting order. If the FLEX re-enters and the DP is playing defense in the FLEX position, the DP must continue to bat in the DP position in the batting order, play offense only or play defense for another player. This is not considered to have left the game.

J. The DP may play defense for any player and at any position. Should the DP play defense for a player other than the FLEX, that position player continues to bat and does not play defense. That player is not considered to have left the game.

K. The role of the DP / FLEX is never terminated. A team may go from ten to nine players and back to ten players any number of times during the game. The game may end with ten or nine players.

L. If the DP replaces the FLEX, or the FLEX replaces the DP, the change must be reported to the umpire. If not reported, the change is treated the same as an unreported substitute.

16 - DUGOUT CONDUCT

This rule reflects on all game participants. Once the game begins, only players involved in the game may be outside the dugout, except when the rule allows or the reason is justified by an umpire. A manager walking on the field for a conference is an example of a rule allowing a coach or player on the field. An example of umpire justification is when a game participant must leave the dugout to go to the restroom. Except for the on-deck batter, players may not be out of the dugout between innings standing near the batter's box observing the pitcher warming up, nor should game participants be allowed to step outside the dugout to observe the game from behind the backstop. Participants may not smoke or use alcoholic beverages inside the dugout or on the playing field.

17 - EQUIPMENT ON THE PLAYING FIELD

Loose equipment, miscellaneous items or a detached part of a player's uniform, other than that being legally used in the game at the time, should not be within live ball territory. Official equipment which may be in live ball territory with no penalty includes the batter's bat, the catcher's mask, umpire paraphernalia, a helmet which has inadvertently fallen off an offensive or defensive player during play or any equipment belonging to a person assigned to the game. Loose equipment, miscellaneous items or detached uniform parts which are in live ball territory and are not being legally used in the game

at the time could cause a blocked ball or interference.

A. Thrown Ball.

1. When a thrown ball hits loose equipment belonging to the team at bat, the ball is dead immediately. If such action interferes with a play, interference should be ruled. The runner being played on at the time of the interference is called out, and each runner must return to the last base touched prior to the interference. If a play is not apparent, a blocked ball should be ruled, no one is called out, and all runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the dead ball.
2. When the loose equipment belongs to the team in the field, it becomes a blocked ball and the overthrow rule applies.

B. Batted Ball.

1. A batted foul ball touching loose equipment is a foul ball.
2. A batted fair ball touching loose equipment belonging to:
   - [A] The offense, it is a dead ball and runners return, unless they are forced to advance when the batter-runner is awarded first base on a base hit, or
   - [B] The defense, it is a dead ball and all runners, including the batter-runner, are awarded two bases from their position at the time of the pitch.

18 - EXTRA PLAYER OR EP (Slow Pitch / JO Fast Pitch)

Slow Pitch

If a team uses the EP, it must be indicated on the line-up card at the start of the game. The team must end the game with 11 players or play using the shorthanded rule.

All 11 players bat, but only ten play defense. Defensive changes may be made at any time; however, the batting order may not change. EXAMPLE: The EP may sit on the bench one inning, play third base one inning, play the outfield one inning, sit on the bench again and then play first base. All these defensive changes are legal as long as the EP remains in the same position in the batting order. This applies to all of the starting 11 players.

Any of the 11 starting players may leave the game once and re-enter. A starting player and their substitute may not be in the game at the same time. If this occurs, the player listed in the wrong position in the batting order is disqualified.

JO Fast Pitch

Any batters in addition to the defensive players and / or DP/FLEX shall be listed as EP's. Defensive changes may be made at any time; however, the batting order may not change.

Pool Play Only: Multiple EP's may be used, they must be indicated on the line-up card at the start of the game. If an injury occurs the line-up is compressed with no penalty. May not continue with less than eight players.

All Other Play: If a team uses the EP, it must be indicated on the line-up card at the start of the game. The team must end the game with 10 players batting or play using the shorthanded rule.

19 - FAKE TAG

A fake tag occurs when a fielder without the ball deceives the runner by impeding their progress; for example, causing a runner to slide, slow down or stop running.

A. Obstruction is called when a fake tag is made as mentioned above. The umpire should signal delayed dead ball and let the play continue to its completion. The obstructed runner, and each runner affected by the obstruction, should always be awarded the base or bases they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred. Again, each runner is awarded only the base or bases that in the judgment of the umpire they would have reached had there not been obstruction.

B. The umpire should rule obstruction on all fake tags. Continued fake tags should result in ejections. In flagrant cases where the sliding player gets hurt, the offending player should be ejected without warning.

C. When a fielder fakes a tag but the runner continues on to the next base without sliding or breaking stride, there is no rule violation since the runner's progress was not impeded. However, a warning should be given.

20 - FALLING OVER THE FENCE ON A CATCH

The fence is an extension of the playing field, which makes it legal for a player to climb the fence and make the catch. When a player catches a ball in the air and their momentum carries them through or over the fence, the catch is legal, the batter-runner is out, the ball is dead, and with fewer than two outs all runners are advanced one base without liability to be put out. Guidelines are as follows:

A. When a player catches the ball before they touch the ground outside the playing area, the catch is legal, or

B. When a player catches the ball after they touch the ground outside the playing area, it is not a catch. When a collapsible, portable fence is used and a defensive player is standing on the fence when the catch is made, it is a legal catch. A defensive player may climb a fence to make a legal catch; therefore a defensive player may also stand on a fence that has fallen or is falling to the ground. As long as the defensive player has not stepped outside the playing area, the other side of fence, the catch is legal.

21 - FORCE OUT

A force out can be made by tagging a runner who is forced to advance to a base as

the result of the batter becoming a batter-runner, or by touching the base to which they are being forced. It is not possible to have a force out on a caught fly ball as the batter-runner is no longer a runner. On an appeal play, the force out is determined at the time the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred.

22 - FOUL BALL / FOUL TIP

The reference of the "height of the batter's head" as it relates to a Foul Ball and Foul Tip no longer applies. This change, instituted in 2006, allows more opportunity for the catcher to obtain "outs" by catching foul batted balls the same as any other fielder who is playing closer to home plate. Umpires only need to judge whether the ball moves from the bat "sharply" and "directly" versus a ball that has a perceptible arc and / or if the catcher moves their glove / mitt to catch the ball after contact with the bat.

The definition of a foul ball has not changed. However, a foul tip is now defined as a batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's glove / mitt or hand and is legally caught by the catcher. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball remains live in Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch with stealing. It is not a catch if the ball rebounds off the catcher, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove / mitt or hand. Again, a foul tip can only be caught by the catcher. Examples of foul ball and foul tip follow:

A. A foul ball with "perceptible" arc goes toward the catcher's left and the catcher moves their glove / mitt to catch the ball. In this situation, the batter is out and the ball remains live just as it would when any other fielder catches a foul fly ball.

B. The foul ball rebounds from the bat with a "perceptible arc" shoulder high and the catcher moves upward with the glove / mitt to make the catch. In this situation, the batter is out and the ball remains live just as it would when any other fielder catches a foul fly ball.

C. The pitcher throws a rise ball and the catcher is moving up as the pitch is on the way to home plate. The batter squares to bunt the ball above their head and the ball goes in a straight line from the bat to the glove / mitt and the catcher catches the ball. In this situation, it is a foul tip. It does not matter that the ball is above the batter's head. The only thing that matters when determining whether it is a foul tip is the fact that the ball goes directly from the bat to the catcher's glove / mitt or hand and then is caught by the catcher.

Umpires must be alert to the fact that runners need to tag-up on a batted foul ball that is caught. This increases the opportunity for more "outs", not only with the catcher catching the ball but the opportunity for more appeal plays with a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. Remember, the runner must wait until "first touch" before breaking contact with a base on a caught fly ball, fair or foul. Runners may leave when the pitch is released in Fast Pitch and when the pitch reaches the front edge of home

plate in Slow Pitch with stealing, if the ball is judged to be a foul tip.

23 - GLOVE / MITT (Using an Illegal Glove / Mitt)

If discovered or brought to the umpire's attention, it should be corrected immediately. If a player refuses to correct the use of an illegal glove / mitt, they may not play.

24 - HITTING THE BALL A SECOND TIME

When considering the act of a batter hitting the pitched ball a second time, umpires should place the act into one of three categories.

A. If the bat is in the hands of the batter when the ball comes in contact with bat, and the batter is in the batter's box, it is a foul ball. If, when the bat contacts the ball a batter's entire foot is completely outside the batter's box, the batter is out. When in doubt, don't guess the batter out. Call a foul ball.

B. If the bat is out of the batter's hands, dropped or thrown, and it hits the ball a second time in fair territory, the ball is dead and the batter-runner is out. However, if the BALL hits the bat on the ground, the batter is not out and the umpire must then determine whether the ball is fair or foul based on the fair / foul rule. If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, the ball remains live. If the ball stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball. If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

C. If a batter swings at and misses the pitched ball but:

❶ Accidentally hits it on the follow-through, or

❷ Intentionally hits it on the second swing, or

❸ Hits the ball after it bounces off the catcher or mitt / glove.

The ball is dead, and all runners must return to the base they occupied prior to the pitch. (FP, SP with Stealing and 16" SP) In (2) and (3), if the act is intentional with runners on base, the batter is called out for interference. If this occurs on strike three in fast pitch, Rule 8, Section 2F has precedence.

25 - HOME RUNS (SLOW PITCH) AND RUNNING BASES

This rule applies only to games involving all Adult and Junior Olympic Boys Slow Pitch. When an over-the-fence home run is hit, the batter and all base runners may go directly to the dugout. Appeals for runners missing a base are not allowed. Also the batter-runner or runners may not be called out for any base running infraction. This speeds up the game as batters and runners do not have to run the bases.

26 - HOME RUNS / FOUR BASE AWARDS / TWO BASE AWARDS

When a ball does not hit the ground and leaves the playing field in fair territory, it is a home run. In Slow Pitch, any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player on either side of the fence that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, should be declared a four-base award and shall not be included in the total of over-the-fence home runs.

A. A batted ball hitting a foul pole above the fence is a home run.

B. A batted ball hitting the top of the fence and bouncing over in fair territory is a home run.

C. A batted ball hitting a defensive player in fair territory, but going over the fence in foul territory is a two base award.

D. A batted ball that leaves the park in fair territory and first touches the ground in foul territory is a home run.

E. A batted ball that touches the fence, then touches a player and goes over the fence in fair territory is a two base award.

27 - IMAGINARY LINE OR DEAD BALL AREA

When a fielder carries a live ball into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead and a base or bases are awarded to all runners. If the act is unintentional, the award is one base. If the act is intentional, the award is two bases. The base award is governed from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became dead.

When a chalk line is used to determine an out-of-play area, the line is in play. If a fielder is touching the line, the fielder is in the field of play and may make a legal catch or throw. If a foot is on the ground completely in dead ball territory, not touching the line, the ball becomes dead and a play may not be made.

When a player has one foot inside the line or touching the line, and another foot in the air at the time the catch is made, the catch is legal and the batter is out. If the fielder then steps into a dead ball area, foot on the ground, the ball becomes dead and all runners are awarded one base from the last base touched when the ball became dead. Defensive players cannot take advantage and intentionally throw or step into a dead ball area in order to prevent a runner who has missed a base or left a base too soon from returning to the base. If it is ruled that the defensive player intentionally threw the ball or stepped into the dead ball area, allow the runner to return to the base.

28 - INFIELDER

An infielder, pitcher, or catcher for purposes of an appeal play or the infield fly rule is any

player who defends the area of the field around first, second, third or shortstop areas. This also assists in placing fielders in the Coed slow pitch game, which requires four players in the outfield and four in the infield.

29 - INJURED PLAYER

During any live ball, when a player becomes injured and, in the umpire's judgment, requires immediate attention, the umpire should call time and allow first aid treatment. If runners are on base when time out is called, those runners should be awarded the bases that the umpire judges they would have reached if time out not been called.

30 - INTENTIONALLY DROPPED BALL

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

31 - INTENTIONAL WALK (Fast Pitch)

The ball is live during an intentional walk in fast pitch. All defensive players must be in fair territory until the pitch is released, except the catcher who must remain in the catcher's box and the pitcher who must be in a legal pitching position at the start of each pitch. If the defensive players do not position themselves in fair territory, an illegal pitch should be called each time a pitch is made while a member of the defense is standing in foul territory. All four pitches must be thrown to the catcher.

32 - INTENTIONAL WALK (Slow Pitch)

An intentional walk is permissible and occurs during a dead ball. A pitch is not required and the intentional walk starts by the defensive team notifying the plate umpire of their intent. The umpire should call time out and award the batter first base without liability to be put out. A possible appeal on a previous play is nullified. When two successive batters are walked intentionally, the second walk may not be administered until the first batter reaches first base.

33 - INTERFERENCE

Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Interference may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction that hinders a fielder in the execution of a play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity

to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered.

A. Runner interference includes:

❶ A runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder executing a play, including the batter-runner touching the white portion of the double base at first base and colliding with the fielder trying to catch a thrown ball from a fielder,

[A] When a runner interferes with a fielder, the umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the appropriate rule. Merely running in front of a batted ball or jumping over a batted ball is not interference, even if it may be distracting to the fielder. In order for a runner to be called out they must commit an act of interference.

[B] When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball, it is interference if it occurred before the ball passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and provided the runner was not in contact with the base. It is interference if the batted ball deflects off one defensive player and the runner intentionally interferes with any defensive player who has an opportunity to make an out.

[C] A runner could be standing on a base and a defensive player bumps the runner while watching the flight of the ball. If the defensive player fails to make a catch on a ball that could have been caught, it is the umpire's judgment whether or not interference should be called. The rule provides that a runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. In this case, the runner should not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional.

[D] If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball not caught but, in the umpire's judgment, could have been caught with ordinary effort had interference not occurred, the runner is out and the batter is also out. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the foul fly ball could not have been caught with ordinary effort, a strike is called, the ball is dead, and the batter remains at bat. (Slow Pitch) If on the third strike, the batter is out.

[E] For crash interference, refer to RS #13.

❷ A runner or batter-runner who is hit by a fair touched or untouched batted ball, or

❸ Interfering with a thrown ball.

B. Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before the ball is batted. It occurs in fast pitch when the batter interferes with the catcher's throw on an attempted steal or when the batter interferes with the catcher on a play at the plate. The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at the plate. Interference could also occur when a batter releases the bat in a manner that it hits the catcher and prevents them from making a play. If the batter merely drops the bat and the catcher trips over it, there is no interference. Batter interference is

also discussed in RS #24B.

C. Offensive players in the dugout may be charged with interference if they interfere with a fielders' opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.

D. On-deck batters may be charged with interference if they interfere with a throw, a possible tag on a runner, or a fielder's opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.

E. Coach's interference occurs when a base coach runs toward home and draws a throw or when they interfere with a fielder attempting to catch or throw a ball. The coach's box is not a sanctuary.

F. Spectator interference occurs when a spectator:

❶ Enters the field and interferes with a play.
Effect: *The batter and runner(s) should be placed at the bases that they would have reached had spectator interference not occurred. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator. Or*

❷ Reaches onto the field from the stands and prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play.
Effect: *A dead ball is ruled and the batter is out. All runners should be placed at the bases they would have reached had the interference not occurred. It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands.*

G. Umpire interference occurs:

❶ When an umpire is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher. The batter-runner is awarded first base. This is an exception to the statement that someone must be called out on interference.

❷ (Fast Pitch & Slow Pitch with Stealing) When an umpire interferes with a catcher's attempt to put out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick-off from the catcher to any base. It is interference only if the runner is not put out; in which case runners are returned to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. Umpire interference may not be called in any other case. When batter, batter-runner, runner, on-deck batter or coach interference occurs, the ball is dead, someone must be called out, and each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

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

I. Batter-Runner interference occurs when the batter-runner steps back while running to first base to avoid a tag by a defensive player, or when running to first base, runs outside the three foot running lane over fair or foul territory and interferes with a thrown ball to first base.

34 - LOOK BACK RULE (Fast Pitch) (Rule 8 Section 7T)

When a runner is legitimately off base after a pitch, or as a result of a batter completing their turn at bat, and is stationary when the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner MUST

immediately attempt to advance to the next base or immediately return to the base left. The responsibility is entirely on the runner. There is no obligation on the pitcher to look, fake or throw.

A. The Look Back rule does not go into effect for any runner until the batter-runner touches first base or is called out, and the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius circle.

B. Failure to immediately proceed to the next base or return to their original base after the pitcher has the ball within the circle results in the runner being called out.

C. Once the runner returns or stops at any base for any reason, the runner is out if they leave that base.

Exception B-C: *A runner will not be declared out when:*

① *A play is made on another runner, or*

② *The pitcher leaves the circle or drops the ball, or*

③ *The pitcher releases the ball to the batter, or*

④ *The pitcher places the ball under their arm or between their legs to free both hands to fix their uniform, hair, etc. The ball is not controlled unless it is held in the glove or hand. Once the pitcher controls the ball again in the glove or hand, the Look Back rule is again in effect.*

D. If multiple runners are off base and more than one umpire calls a runner out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first and return the other runner(s) to the base they left. When a runner is declared out in this situation, the ball is dead. It is impossible to call two outs on the Look Back rule.

E. A pitcher fielding a ball in the circle is an infielder and runners can leave their base. If runners leave their base, the same rule applies while the pitcher holds the ball in the circle: once the runner stops, they must decide which way to continue or be called out.

F. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a batted ball if the batter-runner continues past first base without stopping or stops only once and then immediately moves one way or the other. However, if the runner stops at first base and then steps off the base after the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner is out.

G. Batter-runners overrunning first base can not start back to the base and before reaching first, advance to second base. If a batter-runner commits to first base, moving toward first base, the runner must return to that base. The batter-runner may not change their mind and advance to second base once they have started moving directly to first base following the overrun. If they do so, the runner is out. Umpire's judgment determines what is committing toward a base.

H. If a runner is moving toward a base, other than first base, when the pitcher receives the ball in the circle, that runner may stop once then immediately advance to the next base or return to the previous base. A runner failing to advance to the next base or return to the previous base should be called out. Making an attempt or fake justifies the runner being called out. If, after the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the

runner starts back to their original base or forward to another base and then stops or reverses direction, the runner is out unless the pitcher makes a play on them or another runner. When a play is made on any runner, other runners may also stop or reverse their direction.

I. A runner is out when standing off the base and they do not immediately attempt to advance or return after the pitcher has the ball in the circle.

J. While in the circle and in possession of the ball, any act by the pitcher that, in the umpire's judgment, causes the runner to react is considered making a play.

K. The pitcher must have control of the ball while in the circle. Placing the ball on the ground, holding the ball between their legs or under their arm is not considered having control of the ball.

L. Being in the eight-foot circle is defined as both feet within or partially within the lines. The pitcher is not considered in the circle if either foot is completely outside the lines.

35 - MEDIA COVERAGE

Media authorized by the tournament committee can be on the playing field. All media personnel must be able to move to avoid being hit by an errant throw or by a batted ball. Should the media accidentally be hit, the ball remains live. All photographic equipment must be carried or on the photographer. No equipment can be left on the ground, including tripods. Should an errant throw or batted ball become lodged in the photographer's equipment, the overthrow or out of play rule applies.

36 - OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is the act of a fielder:

A. Not in possession of the ball, or

B. Not in the act of fielding a batted ball, which impedes the progress of a batter-runner or runner who is legally running the bases.

It is obstruction if a defensive player is blocking the base or base path without the ball and the runner or batter-runner is impeded. In past years, coaches taught their players to block the base, catch the ball and make the tag. Now defensive players must catch the ball, block the base and then make the tag.

Whenever obstruction occurs, whether or not a play is being made on a runner, the umpire should declare obstruction and signal a delayed dead ball. The ball remains live. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base they would have reached had obstruction not occurred, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner, and all other runners affected by the obstruction, shall be awarded the base(s) they would have

reached, in the umpire's judgment, had obstruction not occurred. An obstructed runner may be called out between the two bases the runner was obstructed if the runner is properly appealed for missing a base or leaving a base before a fly ball is first touched. If the runner committed an act of interference after the obstruction or passed another runner, this also would overrule the obstruction.

When an obstructed runner is awarded a base that they would have reached had obstruction not occurred and a preceding runner is on that base, the obstructed runner shall be awarded that base and the runner occupying it is entitled to the next base without liability to be put out.

When an obstructed runner safely obtains the base they would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgment, had obstruction not occurred and there is a subsequent play on a different runner, the obstructed runner is no longer protected between the two bases where they were obstructed. That runner may now be put out anywhere on the base paths. It should also be clear that the statement "a runner cannot be called out between the two bases the runner was obstructed" does not apply when the runner committed another violation and that violation is being played upon. EXAMPLE: A runner leaving second base too soon on a fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second base and third base. If the runner would not have made it back to second base prior to the throw arriving, the runner remains out.

Should the obstructed runner be put out after passing the base they would have reached had obstruction not occurred, the runner is advancing at their own risk and, if tagged, should be called out. The ball remains live and other plays may be made.

When the runner is obstructed during a rundown, a delayed dead ball is declared and signaled. If the runner is tagged out after being obstructed, a dead ball is called and the runner is awarded the base they would have made had obstruction not occurred. Should the ball be overthrown after the obstruction, the runner may advance. The runner may not be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed.

Catcher Obstruction is a delayed dead ball call. Should catcher obstruction be called when the batter hits the ball and the batter-runner reaches first base safely and all other runners advance at least one base, the obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. Should the batter not reach first base, or if one of the other runners does not advance at least one base, the manager of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or taking the award. The award is, place the batter at first base and runners are advanced ONLY if forced because of the award to the batter. ***Note:*** *The batter must be given the opportunity to hit the ball. Should the batter delay their swing, and clearly the attempt is no longer to hit the ball but rather to interfere with the catcher's throw on a steal attempt, interference should be called on the batter. (Also*

see RS #8 - Catcher's Box)
(Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch with stealing allowed) Should a catcher reach forward, over or in front of home plate, in an attempt to catch the pitched ball, catcher's obstruction may be ruled.

37 - OVER-RUNNING FIRST BASE

After over-running first base, the batter-runner may legally turn to their left or right when returning to the base. If any attempt is made to advance to second base, regardless of whether the runner is in fair or foul territory, they are liable for an appeal out if tagged with the ball by a defensive player while off the base. Overrunning first base on the look back rule is covered under RS # 34.

When using the double base, the batter-runner may use the white portion any time a play is not being made at first base. If a play is made at first base, but the ball is overthrown or the fielder is pulled off the base by an errant or missed throw, the batter runner is now allowed to use the white portion of the base. Should the batter-runner overrun first base and return to either portion of the base before an appeal, an appeal is not allowed.

38 - OVERTHROWS

Runners are always awarded two bases on balls that are overthrown or become blocked as a result of hitting loose equipment that belongs to the defensive team and should not be on the field (RS #17). Regardless of who made the throw, two bases are awarded from the last base touched at the time the thrown ball was released.

The runner's direction of movement has no effect on the award. When an overthrow is made on a runner returning to a base, the runner is awarded two bases from that base. ***Exception:*** *When the runner is returning to first base and the throw is from the outfield, it leaves the outfielder's hand while the runner is between 2B and 3B, but the runner is between 1B and 2B when the ball goes out of play, the runner is awarded home plate. When two runners are between the same bases at the time of the award, the award is determined by the position of the front runner. Two runners between first base and second base will be awarded second base and third base; however, if two runners are between second base and third base, both will be awarded home plate. Should the umpire err in the award of bases, after one pitch, legal or illegal, the umpire may not change the award. When a fielder loses possession of the ball on an attempted tag and the ball then enters dead ball territory or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one base from the base last touched at the time the ball entered dead ball territory, or became blocked.*

(Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch with Stealing) On pitched balls that go out of play, runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time of the pitch. Should a batter receive a base on balls and the fourth ball gets away from the catcher and goes out of play, the award is first base only.

39 - PASSING A RUNNER

Passing a runner may occur while runners are advancing or returning to a base. Normally it occurs when a lead runner stops to see if a ball will be caught and the trail runner, also watching the ball, does not see the lead runner stopped. The trail runner, the runner doing the passing, is called out and the ball remains live. To pass a runner, the trail runner must pass the entire body of the lead runner, not just an arm or leg ahead of the trail runner.

40 - PITCHING (Fast Pitch)

There are six basic features in the pitching rule. These are:

A. Contact with the Pitcher's Plate. The pitcher must have both feet on the ground within the 24-inch length of the plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third base, with the hands separated, and the ball in the glove or pitching hand. Both the male and female pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot on or behind the pitcher's plate.

B. Signal. A pitcher must take a signal or simulate taking a signal from the catcher while in contact with the pitcher's plate as described in (A) above. The ball must be held in the hand or the glove / mitt while taking the signal. The ball held in one hand may be in front of or behind the body. Taking or simulating taking a signal prevents the pitcher from walking onto the pitcher's plate and putting the batter at a disadvantage by throwing a quick pitch. The actual signal may be taken from the catcher, the dugout or any other location.

C. Preliminary to Delivery. Pitchers shall have one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. After taking or simulating taking the signal, bringing the hands together and keeping them together a minimum of one second and not more than 10 seconds; the pitcher may begin their pitching motion. If the pitcher wants to step back with the non-pivot foot, they may do so prior to separating the hands. No rocking movement which pulls the pivot foot off the pitcher's plate is allowed. If the pivot foot turns or slides in order to push off the pitcher's plate, it is acceptable as long as contact is maintained. It is not considered a step when the pitcher slides their foot across the pitcher's plate.

D. Start of Pitch. The pitch starts when the pitcher takes one hand off the ball after bringing the hands together.

E. Delivery. The delivery may not be two full revolutions. The pitcher's hand may go past the hip twice as long as two full revolutions are not completed. The wrist may not be any farther from the hip than the elbow. The delivery may not have a stop or reversal of the forward motion, and must be made on the throwing arm side of the body. The pitch may not be delivered behind the back or between the legs.

F. Step or Release. A step, only one, must be taken and it must be forward, toward the batter and within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate; however, MALE ADULT and JO BOYS pitchers no longer are required to step forward within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. Dragging or pushing off with the pivot foot from the pitcher's plate is required. Pushing off from a spot other than the pitcher's plate is considered a crow hop and is illegal. The pitcher may push off with the pivot foot and drag the foot in the dirt, or may be airborne with both feet. ADULT MALE and JO BOYS are required to have the pivot foot toes pointing downward toward the ground. Should the pivot foot toes not be pointed downward, an illegal pitch should be called. The release of the ball must be simultaneous with the step.

Much attention and discussion has been given to recognizing the differences between the crow hop and the leap on the pitching delivery:

❶ **A CROW HOP** is defined as a replant of the pivot foot prior to delivering the pitch. This can be done by (1) sliding the foot in front, but not in contact with, the pitcher's plate; (2) lifting the pivot foot and stepping forward; or (3) jumping forward from the pitcher's plate with the pivot foot prior to starting the pitch. Umpires should look at the location of the pivot foot when the hands separate, the start of the pitch. If the pivot foot is off and in front of the pitcher's plate before the hands separate, this would be a crow hop and an illegal pitch should be called.

❷ **LEAPING** occurs when both of the pitcher's feet become airborne on the initial move as the pitcher pushes from the pitcher's plate. In the WOMEN'S and JO Fast Pitch divisions both feet may be airborne. ADULT MALE and JO BOYS pitchers are allowed to have both feet airborne as long as the pivot foot toe is pointed downward toward the ground. If the pivot foot toes are not pointed downward, an illegal pitch should be called. All pitchers can also legally push and drag the pivot foot on the ground during the step.

G. Pitcher returning to pitch. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning shall not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limit as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position as long as the player has not left the batting order, or has not been removed from the pitcher's position by rule.

H. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin and/or an approved manufactured drying agent may be used by the pitcher that is included on the list published by the USA Softball. The resin must be left on the ground and the ap-

proved drying agent in the pitcher's pocket.

41 - PITCHER'S UNIFORM

A pitcher should be dressed identically to the other players on the team. A long-sleeve sweatshirt of any color is acceptable under the jersey. If worn, the sweatshirt sleeves may not extend past the wrist so a clear gap can be seen between the ball and the end of the shirt. If two or more players, including the pitcher, wear sweatshirts, they must be identical in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed or slit sleeves on an exposed undershirt.

A pitcher may wear a batting glove and / or wristband on the glove hand and wrist. A pitcher may wear the pitcher's toe plate on their shoe.
In Fast Pitch, the pitching rule allows a pitcher to wear a band-aid on the finger, or an arm wrap on the arm, as long as the umpire feels neither is distracting to the batter. If a band-aid on the finger or a wrap on the arm is flesh colored, they should be allowed, even if a sweatshirt is not worn. If a design or writing is on the wrap, and the umpire feels it is distracting, the pitcher should be asked to remove the wrap. The pitcher's glove / mitt may be of one solid color or multi-colored as long as the glove / mitt does not contain colors that are the same as the color of the ball being used in the game.

In Slow Pitch, a pitcher may wear a wristband on the pitching arm, may have tape on the pitching fingers and wear any color fielder's glove. A batting glove may not be worn on the pitching hand.

42 - PROTESTED GAME UPHELD AND RESUMED

When the protest of a game is upheld, the game shall be resumed from the point at which it was protested. Although the same line-ups must be used when the game is resumed, there is no penalty for substitutions legally placed into the line-ups. Even if a player was not at the protested game, they are legal for substitution purposes when the game is rescheduled as long as they are on the roster at the time of the rescheduled game. If a player was ejected or disqualified in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because they were legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew suspension for unsportsmanlike conduct.

43 - RUN SCORING ON THE THIRD OUT OF AN INNING

A run can not score when the third out of an inning is a putout of the batter-runner at first base, or at another base if a preceding runner is forced because of the batter becoming a batter-runner.

Bases missed could result in a force out. FOR EXAMPLE, should the runner from first base miss second base on a base hit and, when properly appealed, that is the third out of the inning, any runs scored do not count. Remember, on an appeal play the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.

An appeal play on a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball is a time play, not a force. Any runs scored prior to the runner being appealed count.

44 - RUNNER HIT BY A FAIR BATTED BALL

A. While in Contact With the Base. A runner who is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with the base should not be called out unless the act is intentional. The ball remains live, or becomes immediately dead, depending on the closest defensive player. When the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the runner is in contact with, the ball remains live. However, when the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. Should the ball be ruled dead and the batter awarded a base hit, only runners forced to advance because the batter was placed on first base shall advance one base.

B. While Not in Contact With the Base. A runner who is hit by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base should be called out or ruled safe, depending on the interference rule. (Rule 8, Section 7J & K or Rule 8, Section 8D-F)

45 - RUNNERS SWITCHING POSITIONS ON THE BASE PATH

Following a “Time Out”, should two or more base runners change positions on the base they originally held, the runners involved shall be called out and the manager of the offending team ejected.

46 - SHOES

Shoes in USA Softball do not include sandals or flip flops as they are not allowed. The uppers must be solid and the toe must be closed. Metal cleats are legal in Adult Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch, 14 & Under, 16 & Under and 18 & Under J.O. Fast Pitch play. They are not legal in Adult Coed Slow Pitch, seniors and 10, and 12 & Under J.O. Fast Pitch play. Polyurethane or plastic cleats shaped to look like a metal triangle, toe or heel plate are illegal in youth, seniors, and Coed play. If there are nubbins or round plastic cleats in addition to the triangle plate, the shoe is legal. Cleats that screw onto a post are illegal, but cleats that screw into the shoe are legal. Players wearing metal cleats after being

warned by the umpire that they are not to do so shall be ejected.

47 - SHORTHANDED TEAMS (Starting the Game)

All divisions of play may begin the game one player short, that is Slow Pitch and Coed may start with nine players and Fast Pitch may begin with eight players. When a team plays one short, an out must be recorded in the last position in the batting order. In Coed, the out is in the 9th or tenth position, depending on which gender is missing from the alternate batting order. If a player arrives after the game begins, that player must be placed in the last position in the batting order. If the player brings the team to a full batting order, and a player leaves for any reason other than an ejection, it is permissible to return to one less and continue play shorthanded.

In Slow Pitch, should a team begin the game with nine players, they are not allowed to use the Shorthanded Rule and play with eight.

In Fast Pitch, should a team begin the game with eight players, they are not allowed to use the Shorthanded Rule and play with seven.

48 - SHORTHANDED TEAMS (Continuing after Starting with Full Team)

After beginning the game with a full team, a team may continue a game with one player less than it uses to begin a game as long as the player vacancy is not created by an ejection. This rule is designed to avoid forfeits whenever possible. In all divisions of play, when a team starts with the required number of players, and a player leaves the game for any reason other than an ejection, the following guidelines apply:

A. When a team is short one player due to a player being disqualified, the game continues using the shorthanded rule. If the team is already playing shorthanded and the disqualification occurs, the game is forfeited.

B. When a player leaving the game is a runner, the runner is called out even if the runner reached base safely.

C. Each time the absent player is due to bat, an out is recorded. This is the same in Coed play; therefore, two males or two females may not follow each other in the batting order without an out.

D. When a team plays shorthanded because a player leaves the game, the player may not return to the line-up.
Exception: A player being treated under the blood rule may return. (Rule 4, Section 9)

E. If there is an eligible substitute at the game, or if an eligible substitute arrives before the game is over, the substitute MUST enter the game. Refusal to do so makes the player ineligible for the remainder of the game.

F. A team may not bat less than nine in Slow Pitch or eight in Fast Pitch. The game is forfeited. Should a team have only ten players, one is injured in the third inning, a

substitute arrives in the fifth inning and is entered in the game, and another player becomes injured, the team can continue play with nine players. If the same team does not have a substitute when the second person is injured, this reduces the number of players to eight and the game must be forfeited. The purpose of this rule is to allow all players on a team to play without fear of injury or illness that previously created forfeitures. Playing shorthanded is not a strategic option for a coach.

G. In Women's and Youth Fast Pitch, when a team playing shorthanded is involved in the tiebreaker and the shorthanded spot in the batting order is suppose to begin the half inning at second base, an out should not be called. Instead, place on second base the player who precedes the absent player in the line-up.

49 - SPORTING BEHAVIOR

The values of softball competition are based on good sporting behavior and fair play. The following are examples, although not limited to, of unsporting behavior:

A. Uniforms not worn properly, such as jerseys not tucked in, sleeves rolled under, and caps worn backwards.

B. Exposed undergarments of different colors worn by different teammates on the same team.

C. Coaching tactics that endanger the safety of players.

D. After equipment check, illegal equipment being put back into play.

E. Use of equipment for other than its intended design.

F. The use of artificial noisemakers during championship play is prohibited.

50 - STEALING (Slow Pitch)

Base stealing is not legal in Junior Olympic Girls, Coed, Master, Seniors or Junior Olympic Boys 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U Slow Pitch. Since the ball is dead on balls and strikes, the runner is not out and they are returned to the base held at the time of the pitch. Because a runner may not steal, the runner can not be picked off either. Runners should be called out when they fail to keep contact with a base to which they are entitled until a legally pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, hits the batter, or reaches the front edge of home plate.

Base stealing is legal in Adult Slow Pitch. This does not apply to Men's Master and Senior's play. Stealing is permitted as long as the runner does not leave the base until the ball reaches the front edge of home plate. If the ball either hits the plate or touches the ground prior to reaching the front edge of home plate, the ball is dead and runners may not advance. The ball remains live until the pitcher has possession of the ball in the infield and the completion of all immediate play is apparent. The ball is also dead when the pitched ball hits the batter. During a live ball runners may advance when:

A. A play is made on a runner.

B. The pitcher fails to catch the ball.
C. The catcher hits the batter on a throw to the pitcher or to a base during a play. When a play is made on a runner, the ball is live and runners may advance.

51 - SUBSTITUTIONS

All substitutions must be reported to the plate umpire who, in turn, will report the changes to the official scorer. All substitutes' names and numbers should be listed on the official line-up card that is submitted to the plate umpire at the start of the game; however, should a player not be listed on the card but is on the official roster, the player can be added after the game begins.
A substitute is considered in the game when reported to the plate umpire. An unreported substitute is considered in the game after a pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown or a play has been made.

Should an unreported substitute bat and it is discovered prior to the next pitch, all runners are returned to their original base, any outs recorded stand, the unreported substitute is officially in the game and called out. If the unreported substitute is discovered on the last play of the game and before the umpires leave the field, runners are returned to their previous base and the unreported substitute is officially in the game and called out. Any player may be substituted for or replaced, and re-enter once, providing players occupy the same batting position whenever in the line-up.

A game is forfeited to a substitution violation when a player is removed by the umpire returns to the same game as this is use of an illegal player, or if the ejection creates a situation where there are not enough players to continue the game.

52 - THROWING OR CARRYING A BAT

When a player throws the bat intentionally in anger, the player should be ejected. Should the bat slip from the batter's hands, there is no penalty unless the discarded bat prevents the defense from making a play on the ball, and then interference should be ruled. There is no penalty when a player carries a bat to first base or any other base. Should the player use the bat to prevent a defensive player from making a play, then interference should be ruled.

53 - TIE GAMES OR GAMES CALLED WHICH ARE LESS THAN REGULATION

When games that are called with less than the regulation innings completed or tied are rescheduled, the same procedure should be followed as stated in RS #42, PROTESTED

GAME UPHELD AND RESCHEDULED.
In determining tie games after five innings have been played, regulation game, the home team must have had the opportunity to bat and tie the score. If the home team has scored more runs than the visiting team and the game is called in the bottom of the fifth or sixth inning, the home team shall be the winner. If the visiting team has scored more runs than the home team in the sixth or seventh inning and the home team has not had the opportunity to complete its turn at bat, the game reverts to the previous inning. If that score was tied, it is a tie game. If the score is not tied, a winner is declared if one team is ahead and five full innings have been played.
Should a game be called before five full innings are played, four and one-half if the home team is ahead, the game should be resumed at the point it was called.

54 - TIE BREAKER RULE

(Men's Masters 40-0, 50-0, 60-0 Fast Pitch, Women's, Girls' JO Fast Pitch and Men's Senior Slow Pitch).

During each half inning of the inning used to enforce the tiebreaker, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed at second base. For example, if the number five batter is to lead off, the number four batter in the batting order should be placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner.

It is the responsibility of the umpire and scorer to notify the teams involved as to which player starts the half inning at second base. Should the wrong player be placed on second base and it is brought to the umpire's attention, there is no penalty. Correct the error and place the correct person on the base. This should occur even if a pitch has been thrown, or the runner has advanced a base. An unreported substitute would be legally in the game after a pitch has been thrown or a play has been made.

When a team playing shorthanded is involved in the tiebreaker and it is the shorthanded spot in the batting order that should start at second base, do not call an out. Instead place on second base the player who precedes the absent player in the line-up.

In scoring, the run scored by a player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team and not the pitcher. Depending on the judgment of the official scorer, a run scored by any other player should be charged to the pitcher's ERA.
In Junior Olympic "A" and "B" Fast Pitch divisions and 16U/18U Gold Fast Pitch Pool Play only, there will be a time limit of one hour twenty minutes finish the inning then play one additional inning in effect for each game with the following exceptions. The 10U Championship and "IF" game will have a two hour time limit. The last four games of the

12U, 14U, 16U and 18U will not have a time limit. In Junior Olympic Slow Pitch there will be a time limit of one hour and ten minutes. Should a game be tied at the conclusion of the time limit, which includes completion of the additional inning, or the end of seven innings the tie-breaker shall begin with the next full inning.

55 - WHEEL CHAIR USE

Under the American Disability Act ruling of July 25, 1990, known as the ADA ruling, wheel chairs are allowed on the playing field. Players while batting, running bases or playing defense, coaches in coaching boxes and umpires behind the plate or on the bases may use wheel chairs. The ADA ruling for slow pitch is explained under Rule 4, Section 2.

USA
SOFTBALL

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
ALTERED BAT	1		
Bat specifications	3	1	H
Batter is out	7	6	B & C
AMERICAN DISABILITY ACT	4	2	
APPEAL PLAY (R/S #1)	1		
Dead ball appeal	8	7	F- I EFFECT 3
Batting out of order	7	2	D EFFECT (1-4)
May not return	8	3	G
Live Ball Appeal	8	7	F-I EFFECT 2
Team loses the right	8	7	F-I EFFECT 1
ASSISTS	11	2	B (5) (a-d)
AUTOMATIC OUT			
Continue game	4	1	D (2) (a-g)
Start of game	4	1	D (1) (a-c)
Coed	4	1	D (1) (d)
Tie-Breaker Fast Pitch	5	11	B
AWARDED BASES			
Can't return	8	5	G Note
BALL			
Called by umpire	7	5	
Cover	3	3	B
Fair ball	1		
Foul ball	1		
Intentionally Carried (R/S #27)	8	5	K
Official Softball	3	3	
Rotation (R/S # 2)			
Unintentionally carried (R/S # 27)	8	5	J
BASE LINE	1		
BASE ON BALLS	1		
Awarded First Base	8	1	C
BASE PATH	1		

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Runner out	8	7	A
Runner not out	8	8	A, B
BASES	2	3	H
Dimensions	2	3	H
Double base	2	3	H
BAT	3	1	
Carrying bat on bases (R/S # 52)			
Illegal specifications	3	1	A-G & I
Throwing bat (R/S #52)			
Warm up	3	2	
With dents (R/S # 3)	3	1	A
BATTED BALL	1		
BATTER			
Automatic out	4	1	D (1C)(2E)
Becomes a batter-runner	8	1	
Check swing (R/S # 10)			
Chopping down on ball	1		
SP	7	6	J
Continue game	4	1	D (2)
Enters batter's box with altered bat	7	6	B
Feet in the batter's box	7	3	A
Hindering the catcher	7	6	R-U
Hit by pitch	7	4	H, J, K
FP/MP	8	1	F
Hitting a fair ball with the bat a second time (R/S # 24)	7	6	M
Hitting with an illegal bat (R/S # 4)	7	6	E
Intentional walk SP	8	1	C (3)(4)
Not taking position in 10 seconds	7	3	C
	7	4	M
On-Deck Batter	7	1	
Out	7	6	
Start of game	4	1	D (1)
Coed	4	1	D (1) d

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Starting count in Adult Slow Pitch, **JO Girls Slow Pitch** and JO Boys 14U, 16U & 18U....	7	3	B
Stepping across home plate while pitcher is in the pitching position……	7	3	E
Stepping out of the batter's Box (R/S #7)….	7	6	F-H
When third out is made while at bat……...	7	2	G
BATTER'S BOX.....	1		
Dimensions.....	2	3	C
Restrictions (JO Only) (R/S # 5).....	7	3	D
BATTER-RUNNER.....	1		
Batter becomes batter-runner.....	8	1	
Injury prevents running to awarded base.....	4	6	D
Batter-runner is out.....	8	2	
Going directly to first base.....	8	2	D
Home run does not have to run All Adult Slow Pitch.....	8	3	I
Moving back to home.....	8	2	H
Overrunning first base (R/S #37).....	8	7	H
Look Back Rule .....FP/MP…….	8	7	T
Running outside three-foot line.....	8	2	E
BATTER'S ON-DECK CIRCLE.....	1		
.....	2	3	B
BATTING ORDER.....	1		
Extra player.....	1		
.....	4	4	
For designated player.....FP/MP	1		
.....	4	3	
Out of order.....	7	2	
BLOCKED BALL.....	1		
Offensive equipment on field.....	8	5	G Exception(3)
BLOOD RULE.....	1		
.....	4	9	
BOX SCORE.....	11	2	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
BUNT (R/S # 10)	1		
With two strikes on the batter.....FP/MP	7	6	I
.....SP	7	6	J
CAPS			
For coaches	4	7	B
For players	3	6	A
CASTS	3	6	E
CATCH			
Legally caught ball	1	A	
CATCH AND CARRY	1		
Intentionally carried out play	8	5	K
Unintentionally carried out of play	8	5	J
CATCHER'S BOX (R/S # 8)	1		
.....FP/MP	6A-B	7	A EFFECT
.....SP/16"	6C-D	6	A
.....Dimensions	2	3	D
CATCHER'S OBSTRUCTION	8	1	D
CHARGED CONFERENCES (R/S # 9)			
Defensive	1		
	5	7	B
Offensive	1		
	5	7	A
CHANGE OF UMPIRES	10	2	
CHOPPED BALL	1		
..... SP	7	6	J
CLEATS.	3	6	G Exception EFFECT
COACH	1		
	4	7	
Assists runner	8	7	E

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Communications Equipment (Use of)……..	4	7	C (5)
Coach draws throw.....	8	7	M
Coach intentionally interferes.....	8	7	O
Leave the coach's box.....	4	7	C (2)
Removal from the game.....	5	7	A
.....	10	1	
Scorebooks in coach's box.....	4	7	C (1)
Uniform……..	4	7	B
COACH'S BOX.....	1		
Dimensions.....	2	3	E
CODE (Rules from USA Softball Code).....			
Divisions of play.....			
Softball (Approved).....	3	3	
Regulation Games.....	5	3	
Tie-Breaker.....	5	11	
Time Limit	5	10	
Coed RULES.....			
Courtesy Runner.....	8	9	B2
Men's Ball.....	3	3	E (3)
Women's Ball…….	3	3	F (2)
Base distances.....	2	1	
Batting order.....	7	2	E
Defensive positioning.....	4	1	C (3E)
Extra player (EP) Number of.....	4	1	C (3F)
Extra player (EP) Use.....	4	4	E
Male base on balls.....	8	1	C (4)
Outfield distance.....	2	1	
Pitching distance.....	2	1	
Shoes.....	3	6	G
Shorthanded.....	4	1	D(1)(d)(2)(c & g)
Uniform.....	3	6	
Use of the wrong ball.....	7	2	E EFFECT
Use of wrong number of males/females.....	4	1	C (3F) 1-4
CONFERENCES (Offense/Defense)(R/S #9)	5	7	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
COURTESY RUNNER (R/S # 12)	1		
FP/MP	8	10	
Master's & Senior's FP	8	9	A,C
Senior 55 Over SP	8	9	B,D
All Adult Slow Pitch Except Seniors	8	9	B2 & C
CROW HOP (R/S # 40)	FP 1		
DEAD BALL	1		
DEFENSIVE TEAM	1		
Defensive player distracts batter FP/MP	6A/B	5	B
SP/16"	6C/D	4	B
DEFINITIONS	1		
DELAYED DEAD BALL (R/S # 14)			
Illegal pitch FP/MP	6A/B	1-8	
SP/16"	6C/D	1-7	
Illegal Pitch Penalty FP/MP	6A/B	11	
Illegal Pitch Penalty SP/16"	6C/D	10	
Catcher obstruction	8	1	D (1&2)
Detached equipment hitting ball	8	5	F
Obstruction	8	5	B
Plate umpire interference	8	6	F
DESIGNATED PLAYER (DP) (R/S # 15)	1		
FP	4	3	
Scoring	11	2	A (1)
DETACHED EQUIPMENT	8	5	F
DIAMOND DIMENSIONS	2	1	
DELIBERATE CRASH (Runner) (R/S # 13)	8	7	Q
DISABLED PLAYER OR COACH (ADA)	4	2	
DISLODGED BASE	1		
Following a base	8	3	C
Not out if off dislodged base	8	8	N
Runner attempts to continue	8	4	J

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
DISQUALIFIED PLAYER.....	1		
.....	4	6	E Effect
Altered / Non Approved bat.....	7	6	A & D
Batter.....	4	6	C (1-4)
Pitcher.....	4	6	C (7-8)
Re-entry.....	4	5	
Re-entry.....	4	6	F4
Runner.....	4	6	F3
DOUBLE BASE.....	2	3	H
Batter-runner interference.....	8	2	N
Batter runner touching white portion during play.....	8	2	N 3 & 9
Errant or missed throw.....	8	2	N (5)
DOUBLE PLAY.....	1		
DROPPED BALL DURING WIND UP .....FP	6A	3	P
.....MP	6B	3	O
.....SP	6C	9	D
.....16”	6D	9	B
DROPPED THIRD STRIKE.....FP	8	1	B
DUGOUT.....	1		
Conduct (R/S # 16).....	5	12	
EJECTED PARTICIPANT.....	1		
.....	4	8	B & C
EJECTION FROM GAME.....	4	8	B-D
Crash.....	8	7	Q
Second offense after warning.....	4	8	C
Second offensive conference (Coach).....	5	7	A EFFECT
Violation of the rules.....	10	1	
EQUIPMENT......	3	1-7	
Left on field (R/S # 17).....	8	5	G Exception (3)
ERROR.....	11	2	B (6)
EXTRA PLAYER (EP) (R/S # 18).....	1		
.....SP and JO Fast Pitch	4	4	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Minimum number of players	4	1	C (3) (b,c,d,f)
Penalty	4	4	A EFFECT
Substitute	4	5	A
Scoring	11	2	A (2)
Two (Senior SP)	4	1	C3 (C&D)
FAIR BALL	1		
FAIR TERRITORY	1		
FAKE TAG (R/S # 19)	1		
FIELDER	1		
FITNESS OF THE GROUNDS	5	2	
FLEX PLAYER (R/S #15)	1		
	4	3	B, D, E-I
FLY BALL	1		
Carried into dead ball area	8	5	J-K
FORCE OUT (R/S # 21)	1		
	8	7	G
FOREIGN SUBSTANCE ON PITCHING HAND FP/MP	6A/B	6	
SP/16”	6C/D	5	
FORFEITED GAME	5	4	
Records	11	9	
Score of	5	6	C
FOUL BALL	1		
FOUL TIP	1		
	7	4	E
FOUR BASE AWARDS…(R/S #26)	5	8	A Note a

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
GAME CALLED	5	3	C
GLOVES	3	4	
Illegal glove usage (R/S #23)	8	8	O Effect
Softball glove specifications	3	4	
GROUND RULE DOUBLE	8	5	H & I
GROUND RULES	2	2	
HEADWEAR	3	6	A
Mixed headwear	3	6	A (2)
HEIGHT OF PITCH ...SP	6C	3	H
...16”	6D	3	D
HELMET			
Cracked, broken, altered	3	5	E
Defensive	3	5	E
Usage	3	5	E
HESITATION PITCH ...16”	6D	3	F
HIT BATTER AFTER SWING	7	6	A
In the strike zone	7	6	A
HOME PLATE			
Dimensions	2	3	G
Second home plate (Senior SP)	2	3	G
HOME RUN (R/S #26)	8	5	H
Home run rule ...SP	5	8	
Running bases (all Adult Slow Pitch) (R/S # 25)	8	3	I EXCEPT.
HOME TEAM	1		
ILLEGAL BAT	1		
Legal bat	3	1	
ILLEGAL BATTER	4	6	F (2)

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
ILLEGAL PITCH.....FP/MP	6A/B	1-8	
.....SP/16"	6C/D	1-7	
Illegal Pitch Penalty…….....…..FP/MP	6A/B	11	
Illegal Pitch Penalty…….....SP/16"	6C/D	10	
ILLEGAL PITCHER.....	4	6	F (1)
Removed from position.....	4	6	F (1) EFFECT
ILLEGAL PLAYER.....	1		
.....	4	6	F
ILLEGAL RE ENTRY.....	4	6	F (4)
ILLEGAL RUNNER.....	4	6	F (3)
ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL.....	1		
Runner must return.....	8	6	B
Batter is out.....	7	6	D-J, M
ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL.....			
Detached equipment.....	8	5	F
Illegal glove/mitt.....	8	8	O
INCOMPLETE GAME.....	5	3	D, F
INELIGIBLE PLAYER.....	1		
INFIELD.....	1		
INFIELD FLY.....	1		
.....	8	2	I-J
INFIELDER (R/S #28).....	1		
IN FLIGHT.....	1		
IN JEOPARDY.....	1		
INJURED PLAYER (R/S #29).....	4	10	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
INJURED RUNNER	4	6	D
Blood rule	4	9	
INNINGS	1		
Regulation games	5	3	
INSULTING REMARKS TOWARD PLAYERS OR UMPIRES	4	7	C (3)
INTENTIONALLY CARRIED/THROWN BALL (R/S #27)	8	5	K
INTENTIONALLY DROPPED FLY BALL (R/S # 30)	8	2	K
INTENTIONAL WALK (R/S # 31 & 32)			
SP	8	1	C (2-5)
INTERFERENCE (R/S #33)	1		
Aiding a runner	8	7	E
By base coach	8	7	M, O
By base umpire	8	1	E (7)
By batter	7	6	R-U
By batter-runner	8	2	E-H
By on-deck batter	7	1	D
By plate umpire FP/MP/SP	8	6	F
By runner	8	7	J, K, L, P, Q
Crash by runner (R/S # 13)	8	7	Q
Offensive equipment on field	8	5	G Exception 3
Runners return	8	6	C
	8	7	J-Q EFFECT
Spectator	8	2	O
	8	5	L
While fielding foul ball	7	6	K
With a bat	7	6	M
JEWELRY	3	6	F
Medical alert bracelets / necklaces	3	6	F

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
JUNIOR OLYMPIC.....			
Ball.....	3	3	
Base distances.....	2	1	
Batter's box violation.....	7	3	D
Catchers .....FP	3	5	C
Catchers.....SP	3	5	B
Courtesy runner (Girls/Boys FP Only) (R/S #12)……	8	10	
Extra Player.....	4	4	A-D
Field dimensions.....	2	1	
FP pitching.....	6A	3	H, I, K, L
Helmets.....	3	5	E
Metal cleats.....	3	6	G
Pitching distances.....	2	1	
Strike called by umpire.....	7	4	N
Tie breaker (Girls FP Only).....	5	11	
Warm-Up.....	3	5	C
LEAPING (R/S #40).....FP	1		
LEAVE GAME (Re entry).....	4	5	
Substitutes.....	4	6	
LEGAL DELIVERY OR PITCH..... FP/MP	6A/B	3	
.....SP/16"	6C/D	3	
LEGALLY CAUGHT BALL (CATCH).....	1		
LEGAL TAG.....	1		
LINE DRIVE.....	1		
LINE-UP CARD.....	4	1	
LINE-UP TO START GAME.....	4	1	A
LOOK BACK RULE (R/S # 34).....FP/MP	8	7	T
LOSS, CHARGED TO PITCHER.....	11	6	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
MASKS AND THROAT PROTECTORS.....	3	5	
Catchers.....FP	3	5	A-C
Face masks.....	3	5	D
MAXIMUM/MINIMUM ARC.....SP	6C	3	H
.....16”	6D	3	D
MEDIA COVERAGE (R/S # 35).....			
MITTS (R/S # 23).....	3	4	
Illegal glove penalty.....	8	8	O
MODIFIED PITCHING RULES.....	6B	1-11	
Ball.....	3	3	E2
Legal delivery.....	6B	3	
9-Man delivery.....	6B	3	F(1), I(1), K(1)
10 Man delivery.....	6B	3	F(2), I(2), K(2)
MULTI COLORED GLOVES......	FP 3	4	
NO PITCH.....FP/MP	6A/B	10	
.....SP	6C	9	
.....16”	6D	9	
NUMBERS.....	3	6	D
OBSTRUCTION (R/S # 36).....	1		
.....	8	5	B
Catcher obstruction.....	8	1	D
Catcher with batter on attempted squeeze play.....FP/MP	8	1	D (4)
OFFENSIVE TEAM.....	1		
OFFENSIVE TEAM CONFERENCE (R/S #9B).....	5	7	A
OFFICIAL BALL 10”, 11”, 12” 14” & 16”.....	3	3	
OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPER.....	11	1	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
ON-DECK BATTER	1		
	7	1	
ON-DECK CIRCLE			
Dimensions	2	3	B
Violation	7	1	D EFFECT
OUTFIELD	1		
OVERRUN FIRST BASE (R/S # 37)	8	8	I
	8	7	T
OVERSLIDE	1		
Runner is out	8	7	B
OVERTHROW (R/S # 38)	1		
	8	5	G Exception
From pitching plate...FP/MP/SP w/Stealing	8	5	C
PASSED BALL	1		
PICK OFF.....16"	6D	3	F,G
PINE TAR	3	1	D
PITCH (FP AND MODIFIED PITCH)			
Delivered with catcher out of catcher's box..	6A/B	7	A
Illegal Pitch	6A/B	1-8	EFFECT
Illegal Pitch Penalty	6A/B	11	
Legal Delivery	6A/B	3	
No pitch declared	6A/B	10	A-E
Quick return pitch	6A/B	10	B
Returned by catcher	6A/B	7	B
Slips from pitcher's hand .....FP	6A	3	P
Slips from pitcher's hand.....MP	6B	3	O
Warm up pitches allowed	6A/B	9	
PITCH (SLOW PITCH)			
Delivered with catcher out of catcher's box..	6C	6	A
Height of pitch	6C	3	H

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Illegal Pitch	6C	1-7	
Illegal Pitch Penalty	6C	10	
Legal Delivery	6C	3	
No pitch declared	6C	9	
Quick return pitch	6C	7	
Returned by catcher	6C	6	B
Slips from pitcher's hand	6C	9	D
Warm-up pitches	6C	8	
PITCH (16-INCH)			
Delivered with catcher out of catcher's box	6D	6	A
Height of pitch	6D	3	D
Illegal Pitch	6D	1-7	EFFECT
Illegal Pitch Penalty	6D	10	
Legal Delivery	6D	3	
No pitch declared	6D	9	
Quick return pitch	6D	7	
Returned by catcher	6D	6	B
Slips from pitcher's hand	6D	9	B
PITCHER (FAST PITCH)			
Allotted time	6A	1	E
Batting glove on pitching hand	6A	6	B
Charged with loss	11	6	
Credited with win	11	5	
Defensive conference	5	7	B
Deliberately dropped or rolled ball	6A	3	N
Substance on ball	6A	6	A
Illegal pitch penalty	6A	1-8	EFFECT
	6A	11	
Legal delivery	6A	3	
Playing runners back to base from			
Eight foot circle	8	7	T
Position of feet (Male and Female)	6A	1	C & E
Re enter	4	5	
Removal after conference with manager	5	7	B EFFECT
Starting pitcher	8	10	B
Step and push delivery Male	6A	3	H & L

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Step and push delivery.....Female	6A	3	I & K
Tape on finger (R/S # 41).....	6A	6	A
Uniform (R/S # 41).....	3	6	
Warm up pitches allowed between innings..	6A	9	
Wristbands.....	6A	6	B
PITCHER (MODIFIED PITCH).....			
Allotted time.....	6B	3	N
Batting glove on pitching hand.....	6B	6	B
Credited with loss.....	11	6	
Credited with win.....	11	5	
Defensive conference.....	5	7B	
Deliberately dropped or rolled ball.....	6B	3	M
Foreign substance on ball.....	6B	6	A
Illegal pitch penalty.....	6B	1-8	EFFECT
.....	6B	11	
Legal delivery.....	6B	3	
Nine Player.....	6B	3	F(1),I(1),K(1)
Ten Player.....	6B	3	F(2),I(2),K(2)
Playing runners back to base from			
Eight-foot circle.....	8	7	T
Position of feet (Male and Female).....	6B	1	C & E
Re-enter.....	4	5	
Removal after conference with manager.....	5	7	B
Starting pitcher.....	8	10	B
Step during delivery.....	6B	3	K
Tape on fingers (R/S # 41).....	6B	6	
Uniform (R/S # 41).....	3	6	
Warm-up pitches allowed between innings.	6B	9	
Wristbands.....	6B	6	B
PITCHER (SLOW PITCH).....			
Allotted time.....	6C	3	J
Batting glove on pitching hand.....	6C	5	
Charged with loss.....	11	6	
Credited with win.....	11	5	A, B
Defensive conference.....	1		
Foreign substance on ball.....	6C	5	
Illegal pitch penalty.....	6C	1-7	EFFECT
.....	6C	10	E

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Legal delivery	6C	3	
Position of feet	6C	3	E
Re-enter	4	5	
Removal after conference with manager	5	7	B EFFECT
Starting pitcher	4	1	C (3)
Tape on fingers (R/S # 41)	6C	5	
Uniforms (R/S # 41)	3	6	
Warm-up pitches allowed between innings	6C	8	
Wristbands	6C	5	
PITCHER (16"SP)			
Allotted time	6D	3	H
Batting glove on pitching hand	6D	5	
Charged with loss	11	6	
Credited with win	11	5	
Defensive conference	1		
Foreign substance on ball	6D	5	
Hesitation throws	6D	3	G (1-5)
Illegal pitch	6D	1-7	EFFECT
Legal delivery	6D	3	
Penalty for illegal pitch	6D	1-7	EFFECT
	6D	10	
Pick-off attempts	6D	3	G (5C)
Position of feet	6D	3	A
Re-enter	4	5	
Removal after conference with manager	5	7	B EFFECT
Starting pitcher	4	1	C (3)
Tape on fingers (R/S #41)	6D	5	
Uniform (R/S #41)	3	6	
Warm-up pitches allowed between innings.	6D	8	
Wristbands	6D	5	
PITCHER'S PLATE	2	3	F
Contact at delivery....FP	6A	3	J
....MP	6B	3	L
....SP	6C	3	E
....16"	6D	3	A
Eight foot circle	2	3	F
Pitcher throws while in contact with FP/MP	6A/B	8	
....SP/16"	6C/D	1	E/F

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
PITCHER'S SIGNALS.....FP/MP	6A/B	1	D
PITCHING DISTANCES.....	2	1	
PITCHING POSITION.....FP/MP	6A/B	1	A-E
.....SP	6C	1	A-E
.....16"	6D	1	A-F
PIVOT FOOT.....	1		
PLAY BALL.....	1		
Fail to resume play in two minutes.....	5	4	D
PLAY MADE BY UNANNOUNCED SUBSTITUTE.....	4	6	C (7-9)
PLAYERS.....	4	1	
Disabled (ADA Rule).....	4	2	
Minimum number to play.....	4	1	C
Officially entering the game.....	4	6	A, B
Positions.....	4	1	C (1–3)
Short-handed rule.....	4	1	D
PLAYING FIELD.....	2	1-3	
Fitness for play.....	5	2	
PROSTHESIS USAGE.....	3	6	E
PROTESTS (R/S #42).....	1		
.....	9	1- 7	
Correcting errors.....	9	1	A
Decisions.....	9	7	
Examples	9	2	A,B
Information needed.....	9	6	
Notification of intent.....	9	4	
Time limit	9	5	
Types.....	9	1	
QUICK RETURN PITCH.....	1		
.....FP/MP	6A/B	10	B
.....SP/16"	6C/D	7	
RE ENTER GAME.....	4	5	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
RE ENTRY, PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL.....	4	5	A-C EFFECT
.....	4	6	F (4)
REFUSING TO PLAY.....	5	4	B-D
REGULATION GAME.....	5	3	
REMOVAL FROM GAME.....	5	4	G, H
Batter using altered bat.....	7	6	B & C
Manager or coach.....	5	7	A EFFECT
Re entry.....	4	5	
Substitute not announced.....	4	6	C
RESIN.....FP/MP	6A/B	6	A
.....SP/16"	6C/D	5	
RETURN OF PITCH TO PITCHER...FP/MP	6A/B	7	B
.....SP/16"	6C/D	6	B
REVERSAL OF UMPIRE'S DECISION.....	10	3	B, C
ROSTERS (Male and Female).....	4	1	B
RUNNER.....	1		
Abandons base.....	8	7	U
Aiding a runner who misses home plate.....	8	7	E EXCEPT.
Assisted by anyone.....	8	7	E
Award of bases on overthrow of ball out of play.....	8	5	G
Base stealing.....	8	4	A
.....SP	8	4	F
Bases touched in legal order.....	8	3	
Coach draws throw at home.....	8	7	M
Comes into contact with fielder attempting to field ball.....	8	7	J
Comes into contact with fielder who could not have made an out.....	8	8	C
Correcting errors on awards.....	8	5	G (4)
.....	9	2	A
Courtesy runner…….....Senior SP Only)	8	9	B1

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
.....(Adult SP except Seniors)	8	9	B2
.....(J.O. Girls/Boys FP Only)	8	10	A-G
Deliberate contact with a fielder with the ball.....	8	7	Q
Enters team area.....	8	7	U
Entitled to advance with liability to be put out.....	8	4	
Entitled to advance without liability to be put out.....	8	5	
Fails to keep contact with base until pitched ball reaches home plate.....SP	8	7	R
Fails to keep contact with base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.....FP	8	7	S
Fails to return to base or proceed to next base when ball is in the eight foot circle..... .....FP	8	7	T
Hit by batted ball (R/S #44).....	8	8	D-F
Homerun does not have to run Men's Class "A" .....SP	8	3	I
Illegal bat.....	8	7	X
Illegal pitch.....FP/MP	8	5	E
Illegal runner.....	4	6	F(3)
Intentionally contacting ball.....	8	7	L
Interferes with play after being declared out	8	7	P
Interferes with play before being declared out.....	8	7	J
Leading off.....FP	8	7	S EFFECT
.....SP	8	7	R EFFECT
.....16"	8	4	K
Leaving base after returning.....FP	8	7	T (3B)
Leaving base on an appeal.....	8	7	F-I EFFECT
Leaving base too soon.....	8	3	H
.....	8	8	L
Misses home plate.....	8	7	I
Must return to his base.....	8	6	
Not out.....	8	8	
Obstructed.....	8	5	B
Offensive team collecting to confuse the defense.....	8	7	N
Out.....	8	7	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Overruns first base and attempts to go to second	8	7	H
Passes another runner (R/S # 39)	8	7	D
Return after thrown ball goes out-of-play	8	5	G
Running the bases in reverse order	8	3	D
Running out of baseline	8	7	A
Running start	8	7	V
Struck by fair ball while off base	8	7	K
Struck by fair ball while on base	8	8	M
Switching positions on base after a time out. (R/S # 45)	8	7	Y
Two occupying a base at the same time	8	3	E
RUN AHEAD RULE	5	9	A
RUNS BATTED IN	11	4	
RUNS NOT SCORED	5	5	B-C
	8	3	F
Force out	5	5	B (1)
RUNS SCORED ON THIRD OUT (R/S # 43)	5	5	B
SACRIFICE FLY	1		
SCOREKEEPER'S SUMMARY	11	7	
SCORING	11		
Excessive home runs	11	2	B (4) (b) (6)
Forfeited game records	11	9	
Base hit	11	3	
Runs	5	5	
Tie breaker	5	11	
	11	10	
SENIOR SLOW PITCH RULES			
Ball	3	3	E (3)
Bats	3	1	A
Commitment Line	8	9	D (6)
Courtesy runner.....SP	8	9	B(1)

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Courtesy runner out.....	8	9	B (1 [B,C&E])
Double first base.....	2	3	H
Double home plate.....Senior SP	2	3	G
.....	8	9	D
Extra player .....SP	4	4	F
Home run rule.....SP	5	8	B
Metal cleats.....Senior SP	3	6	G EFFECT
No return line.....SP	8	9	D (6,7)
SHOES (R/S # 46).....	3	6	G
SHORT HANDED TEAMS (PR/S #47-48)...	4	1	D
Continuing a game……..	4	1	D (2)
Forfeit.....	5	4	J
In tie breaker.....	5	11	B
Starting less that ten.....SP	4	1	D (1)
.....Coed	4	1	D 1 (d)
Starting less than nine.....FP	4	1	D (1)
Continuing a game.....	4	1	D (2)
SIXTEEN INCH SLOW PITCH RULES			
Ball.....	3	3	A-C
Base distance.....	2	1	Distance Table
Foul tip.....	7	4	E (2)
Lead off.....	8	4	K
Pick off.....	6D	3	F,G (5) (c)
.....	8	4	K
Pitching.....	6D		
Pitching distance.....	2	1	Distance Table
Pitching hesitation.....	6D	3	G (1-5)
Outfield distance.....	2	1	Distance Table
Runner is not out.....	8	7	R EXCEPT.
SOFTBALL – 10", 11",12" 14,, & 16".....	3	3	
SPECTATORS, ABUSIVE LANGUAGE.....			
Attacking umpire.....	5	4	A
SPEED OF PITCH.....SP	6C	3	G
.....16"	6D	3	C
SPIKES.....	3	6	G

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Youth, Seniors & Coed	3	6	G EXCEPT.
STARTING LINE-UP	4	1	A
Number of players	4	1	C
Positions	4	1	C
Re enter	4	5	
STARTING PLAYER	1		
STEALING (R/S # 50)	1		
SP	8	6	F, G
Base runner out FP/MP	8	7	T
Leaving bases too soon FP/MP	8	7	S
Scoring FP	11	8	
Not allowed SP	8	6	G
When allowed to leave FP/MP	8	4	A
When allowed to leave SP	8	4	F3
STEP TAKEN BY PITCHER FP	6A	3	H-L
MP	6B	3	K
SP	6C	3	E
16”	6D	3	A
STEPPING OUT OF BATTER’S BOX	7	6	F-H
	7	3	E & F
STRIKE	7	4	
Ball hitting batter on third strike	7	4	H, J, K
Dropped third strike	8	1	B
STRIKE ZONE FP	1		
SP	1		
Seniors	1		
SUBSTITUTIONS (R/S # 51)	1		
Courtesy runner FP/MP	8	10	
Masters/Seniors FP	8	9	A
Seniors/Masters/Women’s SP	8	9	B
No substitute available	5	4	H
	4	1	C & D
Notify umpire	4	6	A

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Officially in game	4	6	B
Re enter	4	5	
Unreported	4	6	C
SUBSTITUTE RUNNER			
Automatic out	4	1	D (1c)
Injury to runner	4	6	D
SUSPENSION OF PLAY	5	4	D
	7	3	E
	10	4	
TAPE ON PITCHING HAND FP/MP	6A/B	6	
SP/16”	6C/D	5	
TEAM	4	1	
Delay or hasten game	5	4	E
Home team	5	1	
Refusing to play	5	4	B-D
To continue playing	4	1	D(2)
To start a game	4	1	A,D (1)
THIRD STRIKE RULE FP/MP	8	1	B
FP	7	6	I, P
SP	7	6	G
FP, SP with stealing	7	4	E
SP	7	4	G
THREE FOOT RUNNING LINE			
Dimensions	2	3	A
Violation	8	2	E
THROAT PROTECTORS (Masks)	3	5	A C
THROWING BAT (R/S # 52)			
THROWING GLOVE AT BALL	8	5	F
THROWING TO A BASE WHILE FOOT IS IN CONTACT WITH THE PITCHER’S PLATE FP/MP	6A/B	8	
16”	6D	3	G(4) (a)
TIE GAMES (R/S # 53).	5	3	B, E, F

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Regulation tie	5	3	B, E, F
Tie breaker (R/S # 54)	5	11	
TIME	1		
By umpire	10	4	
Player, manager, coach....FP/MP	6A/B	10	E
....SP	6C	9	E
....16”	6D	9	C
TIME LIMIT RULE	5	10	
TRIPLE PLAY	1		
TURN AT BAT	1		
UMPIRES	10	1-4	
Hit by thrown ball	10	4	E
Interference	8	1	E
....	10	4	D
Interference (plate umpire)....FP	8	6	F
Judgment	10	3	
Reversal of decision	10	3	B
UNIFORMS			
For players	3	6	
Mixed long/short pants....SP	3	6	B
Numbers on uniform	3	6	D
Straps on uniform tops	3	6	
WARM UP BATS	3	2	
WHEEL CHAIR USAGE (R/S # 55) (ADA)	4	2	
WILD PITCH	1		
Goes out of play....FP/MP	8	5	C
WIN CREDITED TO PITCHER	11	5	A, B
WINNING TEAM	5	6	

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Each of the following is a trademark, trade name, service mark, certification mark and/or collective membership mark of USA Softball.

Mark	U.S. Registration or Serial Number
1. Balls & Strikes (Stylized)	570,786
2. A.S.A.	1,102,423
3. USA Softball	1,417,048
4. USA Softball	1,443,350
5. Amateur Softball Association of America	1,443,630
6. USA Softball	1,858,966
7. USA Softball	2,319,625
8. USA Softball (with flag design)	2,319,626
9. Certified by Amateur Softball Association 2000 conforms to Standard USA Softball 2000	2,341,661
10. USA Softball	2,457,961
11. Certified USA Softball Softball and Ball Design	2,640,413
12. Certified USA Softball Softball and Diamond Design	2,643,763
13. SOFTBALL...THE GAME AMERICA PLAYS!	2,891,178
14. USA Softball CERTIFIED	3,077,373
15. USA Softball SOFTBALL (word mark)	3,133,750
16. USA Softball and Design	3,133,749
17. Road to Oklahoma City	3,139,961
18. USA Softball Umpire	3,479,184
19. USA Softball and Shield Logo	4,404,192
20. Softball Capital of the World	86/963,757
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WARNING, DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER

Use of the techniques in this Softball Safety Awareness Guide should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm while participating in the sport of amateur softball. There are risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball, including specifically (but not limited to) the danger of being injured by thrown bats, thrown balls, batted balls or other objects softball poses a risk to its participants, spectators and other persons at or near USA Softball events or practices. Softball is a vigorous team sport at times involving severe cardiovascular stress and violent physical contact. Softball involves certain risk, including but not limited to death, heat-stroke, serious neck and spinal injuries resulting in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage and serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, muscles and internal organs, and equipment provided for the protection of the participants may be inadequate to prevent serious injury. It is further disclosed that softball involves a particularly high risk of ankle, knee, head, and neck injury. In addition, participation in USA Softball events may involve activities incidental thereto, including but not limited to, travel to and from the site activity, participation at sites that may be remote from available medical assistance, and possible reckless conduct of other participants. Participants engaging in softball and activities incidental to softball do so with knowledge of the danger involved and agree to accept any and all inherent risks of property damage, personal injury, or death. Parents, family, guests, participants and spectators assume all risk and danger of personal injury, losses, damages to person or property and all hazards arising from, incidental to or related in any way to the game of softball.

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PREAMBLE

Use of the techniques in this Softball Safety Awareness Guide should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm while participating in the contact sport of amateur softball. Please read the entire document, including the Warning, Disclosure and Disclaimer at page 176.

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has played softball, or any other contact sport, knows that there are inherent risks. Many of these risks are listed in the Warning Disclosure and Disclaimer found in this Guide. While no contact sport can ever be free from risk, many times risks can be minimized. The participants in contact sports must take ownership of these issues and make it their personal responsibility to be aware of their surroundings and take steps to minimize these risks.

This guide, and our dedicated on-line library of documents contained in this guide, are formulated to assist you in educating yourself to minimize risks and prevent unnecessary injuries.

Over the years, USA Softball has educated its participants in the area of safety awareness. The USA Softball web site, USASoftball.com, and USA Softball's insurance agent's web site, RPSBollinger.com, have made these documents available. With this Safety Awareness Guide, USA Softball is launching an aggressive campaign designed to educate its members.

This guide is designed to help you minimize and/or prevent injuries and accidents. We hope you find the information useful.

Also, please keep in mind that it is always best to be insured in the event that something does happen. If your USA Softball team or league is not already insured, USA Softball has made both accident and liability insurance easy, affordable and available to you. The accident insurance will help pay the cost of medical bills, while the liability insurance will protect you if you are ever sued in your capacity as an USA Softball coach, player or volunteer. For information on how to insure yourself or your team, please contact your local USA Softball JO or Adult Commissioner.

Topics addressed in this Guide include:

- Softball Safety Recommendations
  - Equipment
  - First Aid
  - Youth-Specific Considerations
  - Adult-Specific Considerations
  - Field Condition Issues
- Lightning Safety Guidelines
- Physical and Sexual Abuse Information and Prevention
- US Center for SafeSport Requirements and Resources
- Mandatory Minor Abuse Prevention Policies
- Medical Condition Issues
- Crisis Management Plan
- CDC Concussion Awareness
- Air Quality Awareness

Never hesitate to contact us if you think we can help with an issue.

- Your friends at USA Softball!

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USA SOFTBALL AND THE HISTORY OF ITS RULE MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES

ASA was founded in 1933. In 2013, ASA Softball celebrated its 80th year as an organization promoting the sport of softball. In 2017, ASA/USA Softball was rebranded to USA Softball.

USA Softball's longstanding support and promotion of amateur softball was one of the primary reasons that the copyright to the Official Rules of Softball were assigned by the International Joint Rules Committee on Softball to ASA Softball on May 31, 1980. Those Official Playing Rules were adopted by ASA Softball's Council on October 10, 1980, and became effective January 1, 1981. The Official Rules have been revised almost every year since. Amendments to the Rules are proposed, voted upon and enacted at an annual legislative session of USA Softball's Council, a legislative body consisting of over two hundred USA Softball volunteers and staff from across the United States.

USA Softball's Official Rules include certain equipment standards and mandatory equipment requirements for USA Softball Championship Play. USA Softball's rule mak- ing authority and official playing rules govern only USA Softball's championship play. Participants playing in non-championship play are not governed by USA Softball's Of- ficial Playing Rules and, as explained below, are free to modify USA Softball's Official Playing Rules as appropriate.

The Official Playing Rules set forth mandatory equipment requirements, such as batting helmet requirements in USA Softball's youth program. This section explains the type of mandatory equipment and for which events the equipment is required to be used under USA Softball's official playing rules. This section also sets forth various 'recommended' types of protective equipment. Please note that USA Softball's official playing rules generally describe mandatory equipment and prohibited equipment. USA Softball's official rules do not contain references to 'recommended' protective equipment. Therefore, the below 'recommendations' are not the official playing rules of USA Softball or official USA Softball policy. Instead, these recommendations are merely provided in this Guide for the reader's consideration. The recommendations are also not exhaustive. Participants are encouraged to use all available protective equipment. Please note that USA Softball does have an official policy and rule that promotes and gives each player the right to the use of additional protective equipment beyond that which is required under its official playing rules. Rule 3, Section 5(F) of USA Softball's Official Playing Rules states that any defensive or offensive player has the right to wear any non-mandated additional protective equipment he/she desires.

USA Softball's official playing rules are designed to be used at USA Softball championship events and implemented by USA Softball officials and volunteers. USA Softball is

aware that its Official Playing Rules, or modifications of its Official Playing Rules, are used by leagues and organizations participating in non-championship play. Please be aware that because USA Softball's official playing rules (including its mandatory equip- ment) are designed for USA Softball championship play, the Official Playing Rules have built-in assumptions concerning the competition. For instance, there is a heightened risk of injury where games are played among players with a wide disparity in skill levels (i.e. 12 year old team playing against an 18 year old team or Coed teams with highly skilled and lesser skilled players). To attempt to address the disparity among participants in USA Softball champi- onship play, USA Softball has implemented a classification system that classifies teams or players according to their respective age or skill level. For instance, youth players are classified by USA Softball by age, such as 18-U (18 and under), 16-U (16 and under), 14-U (14 and under) and 12-U (12 and under) for USA Softball championship play. Adult players are classified for USA Softball championship play under Class A, Class B, Class C or some other designation. USA Softball maintains rules concerning eligibility and movement between classification levels. All USA Softball championship play is governed by this classification system. USA Softball's classification system for USA Softball cham- pionship play minimizes players participating against each other with a wide disparity in skill levels. In the event a participant elects to play in a higher classification level, or in the event a youth player elects to play with adult players, there may be a heightened risk of harm or injury due to a disparity in size, weight, skill level and/or other factors.

To the extent a local league uses USA Softball's official playing rules for non-championship play and does not maintain a classification system, that local league may want to implement more restrictive equipment standards and/or require certain additional protective equipment than is already contained in USA Softball's official playing rules.

One of the primary purposes of USA Softball is to promote the sport of softball. One of the purposes of USA Softball's official playing rules, including its equipment standards and classification system, is to promote softball, promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport. USA Softball recognizes that every year, at varying levels, all different types of softball games are played, including youth, Coed, recreational, league, tournament and national championships. Please recognize that USA Softball's official playing rules are not designed to fit every situation. No set of rules can effectively address such a wide array of situations. USA Softball recognizes that the imposition of mandates requiring the use of cutting-edge, expensive or over-extensive equipment during play will not promote the game of amateur softball but instead hinder it. An exhaustive list of mandatory equipment in its rules to fit all players and all situations would be counterproductive to the sport. Such rules would also likely hinder the widespread participation in amateur softball. Therefore, although not mandatory, players are encouraged to consider and wear additional protective equipment. No protective

equipment can make the game entirely safe or free from injury, but additional equipment can lessen the risks of injury.

USE OF USA SOFTBALL'S OFFICIAL RULES OUTSIDE THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE

USA Softball, as National Governing Body for Softball in the United States understands that local, recreational, city or county leagues may adopt and use USA Softball's official playing rules. The use of any or all of USA Softball's playing rules is strictly a local matter and the rules may be altered as league officials deem necessary to conduct their own non-championship league play. USA Softball's official playing rules, or any modification thereof, should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. To the extent USA Softball's official playing rules are modified by local leagues; such modification may increase the potential or likelihood of injury, death or property loss, including the dangers associated with increased batted ball speeds. USA Softball expressly disclaims any and all liability associated with the use of its official playing rules or any modification of its official playing rules.

BASIC SOFTBALL EQUIPMENT INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Proper fitting softball equipment is just as important to your team's success as learning proper softball fundamentals and skills. To see if your equipment is legal for USA Softball Championship Play look in the equipment section of the latest USA Softball Participant Manual/Rule Book or on the USA Softball website at USASoftball.com under "Approved Equipment." The following provides a general outline of USA Softball's official playing rules concerning mandatory equipment to be used in USA Softball championship play. As explained above, this section also contains some recommendations concerning equipment.

Balls: Softballs generally come in three sizes 11", 12", and 16" and are used in both Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch depending on the age group. To give you a better idea of just how big that is—a baseball is nine inches. Keep in mind that the word softball doesn't mean that the balls are "soft." In fact, they are similar to a baseball in overall hardness. So whether you are coaching a group of inexperienced kids or whether you are participating in a Coed adult game with players possessing a wide disparity of softball skills you should consider using a softer ball, safety ball or a lower COR/compression softball available from many of the ball manufacturers. All manu- factures that are licensed to manufacture balls that meet USA Softball's certifications for championship play can be found by visiting the certified equipment section of USA Softballsoftball.com. You can also find a list of balls that have been previously certified that are no longer approved for USA Softball Championship play.

Bats: USA Softball publishes a list of approved bats along with a list of Non-approved bats with 2000 or 2004 certification marks and can found at USASoftball.com. The Non-approved bats with 2000 or 2004 Certification marks contain bats previously approved that have been found to no longer meet our equipment testing and certification standards. Therefore these bats are no longer approved for USA Softball Championship play. Bats used in USA Softball Championship play must appear on the approved Bat list, have a 2000, 2004, or 2013 ASA certification mark, or the new USA Softball Approved Certification marks and not be on the Non-approved list with2000 or 2004 certification marks list.

We encourage all coaches, parents, players and league directors to check for USA Softball's certification logo and to check the non approved list often as it changes on a reoccurring basis. If skill disparity among the players or local conditions warrant, the USA Softball has provided bat descriptions allowing league directors and tournament directors to specify certain specifications.

Note: *Sections 1 and 3 of Rule 3 of USA Softball's official rules discusses USA Softball's certification of balls and bats for use in USA Softball Championship Play. The preamble to Rule 3 states: Rule 3 governs the equipment to be used in USA Softball Championship Play. Equipment bearing USA Softball's approved certification mark(s) should not be construed as a warranty or guarantee that the equipment is safe or will safeguard participants or spectators from injury. Instead, USA Softball's certification marks merely indicate that the equipment model has been tested and complies with USA Softball's rules for Championship Play. The primary purpose of Rule 3 and USA Softball's equipment standards is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. The use of USA Softball approved equipment in Championship Play or otherwise should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. There are risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball, including specifically (but not limited to) the danger of being injured by thrown bats, thrown balls, batted balls or other objects.*

Catcher's Mask: Catcher's masks protect the catcher's face. Catcher's masks are mandated by USA Softball's Official Playing Rules in all games except for Adult Women's slow pitch, Adult Men's slow pitch and Adult Coed. The masks come in different weights depending upon the thickness of the material. One important part of the catcher's mask is the throat protector. It can be either a large piece of plastic connected to the mask by two strips of leather, or a metal extension at the bottom of the mask. The throat protector is as important to the catcher's safety as the mask itself, we recommend you make sure your catcher's mask includes one. Make sure your catcher's face mask fits properly. Adjustable straps on the back of the mask allow the mask to be adjusted for a proper fit. Also, if your catcher is using the adjustable throat protector, make sure that it fits properly (it should completely cover the throat). It should dangle just enough to be flexible,

but it should not be too loose or too low. Catcher's Masks are required for all fast pitch (i.e. youth and adult fast pitch) and for youth slow pitch. Throat protectors are required for all fast pitch (i.e. youth and adult fast pitch) and are recommended for all catchers.

Catcher Masks and Throat Protectors for Adult Fast Pitch: Catchers must wear masks with throat protectors. An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of an attached throat protector. Helmets are optional by fast pitch catchers, and if worn any style is approved. In adult fast pitch, a plastic face mask/guard by itself is not an acceptable substitute for a catcher's mask.

Catcher Masks and Throat Protectors for Junior Olympic Fast Pitch: Catchers must wear a mask with throat protector, approved helmet with ear flaps. An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of an attached throat protector. Any player warming up a Junior Olympic pitcher must wear a mask with throat protector and approved helmet with ear flaps. FP catchers cannot nearly wear the plastic face mask/guard. NOTE: (Section A-B-C) The ice hockey goalie style face mask is approved for use by catchers. If the throat protection built into the mask is inadequate, in the judgement of the umpire, a throat attachment must be added to the mask before using.

Catcher Masks for Junior Olympic Slow Pitch: Catchers must wear an approved batter's helmet with ear flaps, the catcher's helmet and mask, or an approved plastic face mask/guard with catcher's helmet. A throat protector for Junior Olympic Slow Pitch catchers is not mandatory but recommended.

Catcher's Chest Protector: The chest protector protects the catcher's chest. It has adjustable straps on the back. Chest protectors come in different sizes, so your catcher should have one that covers the chest without being too bulky to prevent quick movement. This is required only for fast pitch youth catchers, but is recommended for all catchers (adult and youth, fast pitch and slow pitch).

Catcher's Shin Guards: Shin guards protect the catcher's legs from foul balls and from runners sliding into home plate. They fit over the front portion of the catcher's legs with small extensions going over the top of the foot and knee. Shin guards have adjustable straps in the back to make them fit snugly. Make sure your catcher selects a set of shin guards that are the same length as his or her legs. They come in youth and adult sizes so be aware of this when buying shin guards for your catcher. Shin Guards are required for J.O./Youth Fast Pitch catchers but are recommended for all catchers.

Fielder's Glove: A glove has individual fingers and can be worn by all defensive players. Gloves come in adult and youth sizes, and in outfield and infield lengths. The outfielder's

glove is longer than an infielder's glove, but either type may be worn by infielders and outfielders. Do not think that the more expensive the glove, the better it is. When choosing a glove, the player should be able to control it (not too big), and it should be comfortable.

The USA Softball glove rule now allows any player to wear a mitt or glove at any position. We only regulate the glove's size and colors. The USA Softball glove rule is as follows: A Glove/Mitt may be worn by any player. The dimensions of any glove/mitt used by any fielder shall not exceed the specifications set forth below (see drawing and specifications [in Rule 3, Section 4]). (Fast Pitch) The Pitcher's glove may be of one solid color or multicolored as long as the color(s) are not the color of the ball being used in the game.

Helmets: All batters in fast pitch softball must wear batting helmets. Not just while they are batting, but also while they are base runners. All Junior Olympic players acting as coaches in the coach's box must properly wear double ear flap helmets. Please note: A NOCSAE-approved face guard is mandatory on all fast pitch youth batting helmets.

Helmets also come in different sizes, usually Small, Medium and Large, so make sure you have enough helmets in the different sizes for everyone on your team. Helmets must be NOCSAE approved in order to be legal and safe. Don't buy helmets without the NOCSAE seal. Helmets must also be equipped with a securely fastened NOCSAE certified mask or guard. The mask must bear the NOCSAE seal on it also. If the mask and helmet are molded as one piece only one NOCSAE seal is required.

In addition, any defensive or offensive player may wear a helmet at any time. It is recommended that offensive players (not batting) wear a helmet even though it may not be mandatory under USA Softball's rules. For instance, base runners often have their backs to the fielders so their heads may be more vulnerable to thrown balls than defensive players. It is recommended that all coaches and other persons on the playing field wear helmets.

Home Plate: There is only one home plate on each softball field, with the exception of Senior Slow pitch which has two, and its shape is totally different from the other three bases. It gets its unusual shape because the two foul lines (first base and third base) come together at the point of home plate. Home plate is in fair territory, with the point facing away from the pitcher.

Double First Base: A base is normally 15" x 15" in size. A double first base is either two separate bases or one base 15" x 30" in size, half inside and half outside the foul line. The inside base is white and the outside base is of a contrasting color. A double first base is mandatory in all levels of USA Softball championship play.

Bases: There are three bases on a softball field (first, second and third). When running the bases, there are various risks of injury. These risks include injuries from sliding, being hit by a thrown ball and/or collision with other players. Certain injuries from sliding may be heightened or mitigated by the type of bases used. There are a variety of different types of bases (i.e. hard or soft, moveable or permanent). When participating in softball, make yourself aware of the type of bases used during each game so that you can employ base running techniques the minimize risk of injury to your hands, wrists, arms, feet, ankles, legs or other areas.

Summary of USA Softball-Mandated Protective Equipment For USA Softball Championship Play:

The below chart, dated as of October 1, 2008, details which USA Softball Championship Play games require which mandatory protective equipment. The last column indicates that, although not required in all situations, protective equipment is permitted to be worn by any player in any game at any time under Rule 3 of USA Softball's Official Playing Rules.

EQUIPMENT:	JO/Youth Slow Pitch Program (Male & Female)	JO/Youth Fast pitch Program (Male & Female)	Adult Women Slow Pitch	Adult Men Slow Pitch	Coed	Adult Women Fast Pitch	Adult Men Fast Pitch	Permitted to be worn if participant so desires
Double First Base	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Catcher's Mask	X	X				X	X	X
Catcher's Throat Protector		X				X	X	X
Catcher's Chest Protector		X						X
Catcher's Shin Guards		X						X
Batting Helmet	X	X				X	X	X
Chin Strap for Batting Helmet								X
Face Mask (usually for pitchers)								X
Other Protective Equipment								X

The above rules are shown as of the date this chart was prepared. Please consult the latest version of the rules for any updated requirements.

*In addition, all offensive youth players acting as coaches or otherwise must wear a helmet when standing anywhere outside the dugouts. Examples include but are not limited to coaching, bat girl/boy, etc.

SOFTBALL AND YOUTH SAFETY AWARENESS

Safety is and has always been a concern of USA Softball, and the organization has implemented many safety initiatives over the years. Safety issues are thoughtfully considered along with other factors such as competitive balance and preserving the integrity of the sport of softball. USA Softball was the first association to require all of its youth batters and base runners to wear helmets; to require catchers to wear a mask with a throat protector and an approved helmet with ear flaps; to allow the use of a double-base system at first base; and to recommend the use of safety balls and bats for players at the 10-under levels. USA Softball created a nationwide coaching education program to assist volunteer coaches in better educating, training and preparing young players to participate in the sport.

The USA Softball JO program is dedicated to building healthy, productive, confident children. Sometimes adults fail to realize just how difficult the skills of softball can be for youngsters. Therefore, we encourage coaches and parents to allow children to learn at their own rate, and to praise players as they progress in their development.

Everyone wants to be a winner. USA Softball's purpose is to create a team of winners - winners not only on the softball field, but in life.

Foremost, the USA Softball Junior Olympic Youth program is about children - it's about creating a positive environment where they can grow and develop, and learn a sport they can enjoy for a lifetime. Most importantly, it's about making sure they come away from their softball experience feeling confident about themselves and who they are.

SOFTBALL AND ADULT SAFETY

As adults, we play softball for many of the same reasons that children do. We like to compete, have fun, and continue to share the excitement of playing a sport we love with friends. However, just as youth players play against others in their own age group to achieve a relatively fair and safe playing field, adults have to make certain considerations regarding fair and safe play. While it is common sense that an "A" player should not bat against a novice pitcher, some leagues form in ways that could produce just such a situation. Coed leagues often bring together a wide range of skill levels. And while it is nice to try to accommodate everyone, it is wise to keep players of widely different ability levels from playing against each other in the same game or league. There is a greater likelihood of injury in games where players having a wide disparity of skill levels are playing in the same game.

As a general rule, adults are going to hit the ball faster and harder and therefore there is often a greater risk of injury. The game of softball is played with bats and balls. Although termed a 'softball', a softball is a hard object that can cause serious injury or even death. As such, at all levels of the game, especially adults, horseplay with bats and balls should never be tolerated.

Adults should also ensure that they do not participate in softball while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication, as doing so creates a greater risk of injury to the person under the influence and those around him/her. Playing under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that causes reaction times to slow down is very dangerous. Most people are keenly aware of the dangers of driving while intoxicated. Driving while intoxicated is dangerous, in part, because of slowed reaction times. For these same reasons, participating in softball while intoxicated is likewise dangerous and should never be undertaken.

COACHES

While players have a responsibility for their own safety, a coach also must be aware of safety issues and use common sense and safety practices. This includes a concern for the mental as well as physical well-being of the participants.

Overlooking a safe environment can seriously affect how your players learn softball skills and fundamentals. How many of your players pull their heads on ground balls, catch fly balls off to one side, or jump out of the way as soon as the pitcher pitches the ball? These are the results of an unsafe learning experience, or to put it in coachspeak, "fear of the ball."

Keep in mind that what might be safe to you is not necessarily safe to your players. To a child who is just learning to play softball and who knows that he or she cannot throw or field a ball, the last thing they want to do is stand in front of or underneath a hard hit ball. They fear they cannot catch it, and they know that if they miss they are liable to get hurt. Although this may not be good thinking for a ballplayer, it is a perfectly logical train of thought. Would you want to do something that you know will cause you great pain? How do you "make it all safe?" Instead of using regular softballs, use a softer, safety ball. You will be pleasantly surprised at the tremendous amount of improvement you see in your players in a short period of time. Once your players realize that the ball will not hurt them, they will get down in front of the ground ball and correctly position themselves underneath the fly ball.

Using a safety ball is not "sissy," or just for little children. It is an important tool to your softball success if it helps your players improve and learn in a safe environment.

FIRST AID

During a typical softball season, in spite of the very best injury prevention plan, some injuries will occur. Most of these will be during practice, and you or another competent adult must provide care as best you can. You want to know as much as you can about treating injuries to keep the damage from an injury to a minimum. Consider enrolling in a first aid class and taking a CPR course. You should have a first aid kit at your practices and games (suggested contents below), and know the telephone numbers of emergency personnel. Do you have medical release forms? As a coach, you should make every effort to expand your knowledge of first aid so that you can minimize the damage from injuries received in practices and games.

AIDS and Injuries: You should not let a fear of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) from stopping you from helping a player. If you are aiding an injured player, you are at risk if you allow contaminated blood to come in contact with an open wound. That is why you should always have a pair of rubber gloves with you. The rubber gloves will protect you from AIDS should one of your players carry this disease. Check with your league director or a medical professional for more information on how to protect yourself from AIDS.

Suggested First Aid Kit Supplies

Ice or Impact Ice Bags	Splint Material	Plastic Bags
Scissors	Band Aids	Sun Screen
Athletic Tape	Gauze	Antibiotic Tape
Q-Tips/Cotton Swabs	Antibiotic Ointment	Sting Kill
Safety Pins	Tweezers	Bug Spray
Cell Phone	4 Pairs of Rubber Gloves	Medical Release Form
	Towel	

R.I.C.E. Principles: You may have heard of the R.I.C.E. Principles for injuries. Below is an overview of the R.I.C.E. Principles for treating injuries:

R-est: Activity should be discontinued as soon as the pain or injury is noticed. Continued exercise may further aggravate the injury. The concept of “no pain, no gain” is replaced with “train, don’t strain; if stressed, get rest.” The rest should continue until symptoms of pain and injury subside.

I-ce: An ice pack should be applied immediately to a new injury. Ice decompresses swelling and blood flow and reduces pain. Where there is swelling, application should be continued intermittently for 72 hours. Ice should never be applied directly to the skin

and the maximum time for each pack application is 20 minutes. Using ice at bedtime is not necessary unless the pain interferes with sleeping.

C-ompression: Initially, a wet wrap can be applied to give compression. Start distal (i.e. farthest from a point of reference) to the injury and wrap toward the heart. Later, an elastic bandage can be used. It should be wrapped firmly, but not tightly enough to cut off circulation around the injured area. During the early stages when swelling is severe, the wrap should be loosened every half hour, then reapplied. Compression reduces swelling and blood pooling. Compression at bedtime is not necessary unless the pain interferes with sleeping.

E-levation: Elevate the injured part so that it is higher than the heart at all times initially (including during sleep) and whenever possible until swelling has subsided. In this way, gravity prevents pooling of blood and other fluids. See a physician immediately following any major injury.

Heat Related Injuries: When playing summer outdoor sports such as softball, precautions should be taken to avoid heat injuries. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are two summer afflictions to be aware of. Be aware that athletes are sensitive to the heat. Every player will have a different tolerance level so one person may be fine and the others may require attention even in the same conditions.

Heat Exhaustion: Heat related injuries like heat exhaustion and heat stroke are very serious and can be life-threatening. Softball is played outside during the heat of the summer and heat related injuries are always possible. Be alert to this.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion:
- Moist and clammy skin
- Pale skin color
- Normal body temperature
- Profuse sweating
- Dizziness, nausea, weakness and fainting

Do:
- Get the athlete out of the heat into a cool, shady area
- Loosen or remove clothing and take off helmet and/or hat
- Lie the athlete down and elevate feet
- Cool down the athlete with wet towels, ice water, air-conditioning
- Transport athlete to emergency room if athlete does not recover after a short rest

Do Not:
- Give athlete any more fluids if they vomit
- Allow athlete to become chilled
- Allow athlete back into the game or practice
- Take this problem lightly; call for help immediately if you are unsure

Heat Stroke: Heat stroke is life-threatening! The athlete's entire system is shutting down because of extreme heat, and death is possible if immediate action is not taken.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke:
- Hot, dry skin and body temperature is very high (104-105F)
- Rapid pulse and breathing
- Behavior may be irrational
- Athlete may lose consciousness
- Eye pupils are constricted (very small)
- Weak, loose muscles

Do:
- Cool athlete immediately and as fast as possible
- Call emergency help immediately
- Remove athlete from heat
- Put athlete in cold water, if possible

Do Not:
- Give the athletes fluids
- Leave the athlete
- Allow athlete back in the game or practice

Do not underestimate the dangers associated with heat and/or humidity. These dangers are recognizable and preventable. Be aware that each of your athletes has different heat tolerance levels, and be sensitive to these differences.

The Most Important Nutrient - Water: Water loss for an athlete can be critical and, in severe cases, can lead to death. Maintaining an adequate level of water in the body can be easy if the athlete understands the importance of water.

The body cools itself much like the cooling system of an automobile. As muscles produce the energy needed for training and competition, they generate heat. This heat, in turn, causes body temperature to rise. Blood picks up heat from the muscles and carries it to the skin's surface where it is lost as sweat evaporates. Sweat is the body's main method of cooling itself.

As you sweat, you lose water - water which must be replaced if you want to perform at your best. Losing as little as two or three percent of your weight via sweat can cause a decrease in concentration, coordination, strength and stamina. More importantly, if lost water is not replaced, your body begins to conserve water by slowing the sweating and thus, the cooling process. You must replace lost water.

Do not give your athletes salt tablets. Water will be pulled from the body to dilute the salt. If the team physician or trainer feels that additional salt is needed, it should be added to foods at meals or eaten in salty foods such as ham, chips or other snack foods.

ALWAYS BE AWARE OF FIELD CONDITIONS

All participants in softball should be aware of their surroundings at all times. This includes both on and off the playing field. Prior to participating, each individual should review the playing field and surrounding area to be sure he/she is aware of hazards or dangers so he/she can avoid them. For instance, each participant should follow these general principles:

1 Make yourself aware of any holes, depressions, raised sprinkler heads and other hazards.
2 Clear the infield of stones, pieces of glass, foreign objects and debris.
3 Check the field for equipment from other sports – football tackling sleds, portable soccer goals, little league baseball pegs, etc.
4 Position backstop to be sure it is the proper distance from home plate. Ensure that screening is secure with no sharp protruding edges.
5 Be sure all fences are in good repair and free of protruding hazards or sharp edges.
6 Be sure dugout areas are properly positioned and set back from the field of play.
7 Be aware of your property. If you park your car near a field, be aware of the risks of a foul ball or home run possibly doing damage to your car.

While events such as USA Softball National Championships are mostly played on well-manicured fields, recreational players often do not have such privileges. Therefore, you should always be aware that there will likely be various hazards present at local parks or playing fields. To prevent injury, make yourself aware of these hazards from the outset so you can avoid them. You should also make other participants aware of any hazards you observe.

Also, please be aware that non-hazardous field conditions may vary from field to field or from location to location. For instance, the types of bases used, warning track diameter, wall distance, wall material, heat, humidity storm activity, weather conditions, type of grass, sunken or level dugouts, on deck-circle location, obstructions and protrusions in or around the field of play (i.e. light poles, standpipes), fence height, etc. cetera. Be aware of your surroundings at all times by familiarizing yourself with your surroundings prior to play.

USA SOFTBALL GUIDELINES FOR LIGHTNING SAFETY

All individuals participating in or observing an outdoor softball event are responsible for their own safety and should monitor threatening weather conditions. Umpires are responsible for monitoring weather conditions with respect to games and will make the call to stop play, remove individuals from the field, and announce a warning to the spectators.

The umpire should keep an eye on weather conditions, including observing weather conditions. Storm watches or warnings known to the umpire should be heeded.
When the weather becomes dangerous, the umpire will announce that all play activities are suspended and all individuals, including players and spectators, should seek appropriate shelter. In instances where there is more than one umpire, any umpire may suspend a game when weather becomes dangerous. No place is absolutely safe from lightning threat; however, some places are safer than others. Large, enclosed structures (substantially constructed buildings) tend to be safer than smaller structures or open structures. In general, a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows rolled up tends to be safer than being outside so long as contact with metal surfaces inside and outside the vehicle is avoided.

The following areas are not appropriate shelter and should be avoided: Any area of higher elevation; wide-open areas such as sports fields, tall isolated objects such as flag poles, light poles, or trees; metal fences and metal bleachers, unprotected open buildings like dugouts, picnic pavilions, rain shelters and bus stops.

When determining whether or not to suspend play, the umpire should use his/her common sense and good judgment. If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger. This may mean the appropriate decision is to suspend activities even before the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder.

All individuals should have the right to leave an athletic site or activity in order to seek a safer structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lighting activity. Lightning Safety is the number one consideration. The activity, the completion of the game or the outcome of the game are all secondary.

Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, if activity has been suspended due to lightning, the umpire should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum

30-minute waiting period should be reset. A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play. Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, the minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30 minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remain in the area or if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.
NO LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES CAN GUARANTEE ABSOLUTE SAFETY. THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE STATES THAT EACH YEAR MORE THAN 400 PEOPLE ARE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING AND, ON AVERAGE, SEVENTY PEOPLE ARE KILLED EACH YEAR BY LIGHTNING. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PERSON TO BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO PREVENT OR MITIGATE THE RISKS OF WEATHER RELATED INJURIES. PLEASE USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGMENT. PLAN AHEAD AND REMAIN AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS.

Lightning Safety At-A-Glance:

- Lightning safety is the number one consideration; the activity can be made up later.
- The umpire(s) should monitor weather conditions and determine whether or not to suspend play.
- Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger.
- When determining whether or not to suspend play, the umpire should use his/her common sense and good judgment.
- If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed.
- No place is absolutely safe from lightning threat; however, some places are safer than others. Large, enclosed structures (substantially constructed buildings) tend to be safer than smaller structures or open structures.
- Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, if activity has been suspended due to lightning, the umpire should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset. A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play.

- Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, the minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened.

Depending on the particular area in which you are located, there may be other weather-related risks such as tornado, earthquake, hurricane, flooding or other conditions. For more information about severe weather threats and tips, see publications available from the NOAA National Weather Service website (www.nws.noaa.gov/om) or visit the National Severe Storm Laboratory website (http://www.nssl.noaa.gov).

SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE

The sexual and physical abuse of children remains a societal problem that requires attention. While not specific to the sport of amateur softball, the threat of abuse in sports programs does exist. USA Softball is committed to creating and upholding traditions of excellence in softball by building and maintaining a supportive and nurturing environment in which children and youth may grow, develop, and prosper. To ensure such an environment, USA Softball seeks to attract the most qualified and enthusiastic staff and volunteers to assist in USA Softball programs. Whether the children involved in USA Softball programs are our own, or the children of others, each of us has a responsibility to protect them. It is the policy of USA Softball that there shall be no abuse, either physical, mental, emotional or sexual, of any participant involved in any of USA Softball's programs. USA Softball will not tolerate any abuse.

There is no such thing as a so-called "'consensual' sexual relationship with a minor." Neither applicable law nor USA Softball recognize such relationships as 'consensual' relationships. All such relations with a minor constitute sexual abuse under the law and, therefore, will be treated by USA Softball and law enforcement authorities as sexual abuse. If you are aware of a 'consensual' sexual relationship between a minor and an adult, you must report it immediately to your local Child Protective Services (CPS) office. USA Softball takes all allegations of abuse very seriously, and USA Softball refers all allegations to the local or state law enforcement authorities for investigation in which USA Softball will fully cooperate.

Reporting: Local law enforcement authorities and other state agencies, including those responsible for Child Protective Services (CPS), have the primary responsibility in the field of child protection. Child Protective Services (CPS) is a program mandated by individual states for the protection of children who are alleged to be abused or neglected. The function of this program is to screen and investigate allegations, perform assessments of the children's safety and risk of harm, and evaluate the conditions that support or refute the allegations and need for intervention.

USA Softball is an amateur softball organization. USA Softball does not possess the expertise, power, authority or resources to investigate claims of abuse. Child Protective Services and local law enforcement are best suited and trained to investigate and pursue claims of abuse.

Those who believe they have identified an instance of child abuse or neglect shall report it to their local Child Protective Services (CPS) office, which will investigate the matter. A list of states with toll-free (800, 866, 877 or 888) phone numbers for reporting child abuse or neglect is available at www.childwelfare.gov. You may also report abuse and contact local authorities by calling the 24-hour Childhelp® USA National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453). Urgent or life threatening situations shall be reported immediately by calling "911."

Additionally, persons known or believed to be a threat to USA Softball participants or youth should be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and/or USA Softball so USA Softball can determine whether such persons should continue to be eligible to participate in USA Softball on a going forward basis. Please refer to the USA Softball Bylaws, available at USASoftball.com, for the procedure by which such a complaint may be reported. Filing a complaint pursuant to the USA Softball Bylaws or pursuant to the SafeSport Code is not a substitute for notifying local authorities of an instance of child abuse or neglect. Those persons who believe they have identified an instance of child abuse or neglect must immediately report it to their local Child Protective Service (CPS) office or to local law enforcement authorities.

Resources: At http://www.nsopr.gov/, the U.S. Department of Justice maintains the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website in which the public can search various sex offender registries.

Please note that the regular use of background checks is not a guarantee of a child's safety or that children will be free from harm. For instance, a background check will not detect a first time offender or a person using a false identity. Background checks may also not detect persons who have prior convictions in jurisdictions that do not maintain searchable databases or whose records contain typographical or other errors. As a result, background checks can not replace the need for all persons to be diligent, to be attentive, to take all abuse allegations seriously and/or to refer all allegations of abuse to law enforcement authorities.

The best source of information on the registered sex offenders in your community is quite often your local law enforcement authorities. Additional information and resources are available at https://uscenterforsafesport.org/

Zero Tolerance Policy Against Abuse: We are committed to providing a safe environment for our members and participants, and to prevent abusive conduct in any form. Every member of this organization is responsible for protecting our participants and ensuring their safety and well-being while involved in sponsored activities.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (M.A.A.P.P. policies)

To that end, USA Softball has adopted the following Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (M.A.A.P.P. policies), which are mandatory policies that its members are required to adhere to. They include the following:

1. One-on-One Interactions Policy, including meetings and individual training sessions (Covered Organizations are required to establish reasonable procedures to limit one on-one interactions, as set forth in federal law).

2. Massages and rubdowns Policy /athletic training modalities

3. Locker rooms and changing areas Policy

4. Social media and electronic communications Policy

5. Local travel Policy

6. Team travel Policy

USA Softball's mandatory M.A.A.P.P. policies are available for download or printing at https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/SafeSport

Additionally, we have established the following guidelines of behavior and procedures for our staff, volunteers and participants. All members of this organization, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees are expected to observe and adhere to these guidelines.

1 Abuse of any kind is not permitted within our organization. This means we do not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or spectators.

2 Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within our organization.

3 Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. These include, but are not limited to such forms of abuse as: yelling, insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior, or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age.

4 Every member of this organization is responsible for reporting any cases of questionable conduct or alleged mistreatment toward our members by any coach, official, volunteer, player, parent, sibling or spectator.

5 Buddy System for Players: We recommend that every activity sponsored by our program put a Buddy System in place. Each youth participant should be assigned a buddy during sponsored activities. No child should go anywhere – to the bathrooms, locker rooms, or other location – without his or her buddy.

6 Buddy System for Adults: To further protect our youth participants, as well as our coaches, officials and volunteers, two adults should always be present at every activity. In particular, we recommend that.

- No adult person should allow him/herself to be alone with a child.
- Do not drive alone with a child participant in the car.
- Do not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room
- Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching only with the assistance of another adult.
- If you must have a private conversation with a youth participant, do it within view of others, in the gym or on the field, not in a private office.
- Coaches and other adult members of this organization should not socialize individually with participants outside of sponsored activities. This would include one-on- one social networking, emailing and texting. Coaches and other adult members of the organization should not nurture one-on-one relationships and/or participate in one-on-one texting, emailing or social networking relationships with individual participants. This would not include team-wide or group communications.

7 Supervision/Chaperone ratio: We recommend that for any sponsored activity, the ratio of adults to youth participants be 1:8 – one (or more) adults for every eight children, with a minimum of two adults for every activity.

8 When traveling overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of same gender and similar age group, with chaperones in separate but nearby rooms.

9 We encourage parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, games, practices and other events. The more the parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.

10 Empower our children to trust their feelings and let them know that their concerns, fears and hopes are important by listening to them. Open communication between children and parents, or between children and other adults in the organization may help early warning signs of abuse to surface.

11 We will respond quickly to any and all allegations of abuse within this organization. This information will be communicated to the authorities for investigation and will be reviewed by the organization. The alleged offender will be notified of such allegations promptly.

12 Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended on an interim basis until the matter is resolved. In each case, the person accused will have an opportunity to be heard before a final decision concerning eligibility to participate is made by the organization. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges, may apply to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his/her former position.

13 We promote good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourage qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all participants, coaches, officials and volunteers. We advocate building a strong self-image among the youth participants. Children with a strong self-image may be less likely targets for abuse; similarly, they may be less likely to abuse or bully others around them.

Traveling teams present an opportunity for abuse or an opportunity for a credible accusation of abuse to be made. We require local associations, leagues and teams to adopt and follow the M.A.A.P.P. policies concerning travel. These policies are designed to assist with the protection of adults and children and to clearly outline the conduct expected of participants. For further information, please consult the USOC SafeSport policies and informational materials at https://uscenterforsafesport.org/

Signs and Symptoms of Possible Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises

- Unexplained cuts or scrapes
- Unexplained stomach injuries
- Fear of adults
- Withdrawn behavior
- Fear of parents
- Fear of going home

Physical Neglect
- Underfed or constant hunger
- Unattended medical needs
- Constantly tired
- Constantly unclean

Sexual Abuse
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Poor peer relationships
- Stomachaches
- Sudden onset of behavior problems

Emotional/psychological Abuse
- Speech problems
- Antisocial behavior
- Habit of sucking, biting or rocking
- Loss of appetite
- Learning difficulties

Sex Offender Facts
- Sex offenders come from all walks of life, and from all socio-economic groups. They can be male or female, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, religious or non-religious, highly educated or uneducated or from any race.
- Usually non-violent and have few problems with the law (pedophiles are frequently respected community members).
- The suspect is known to the victim in over 80% of sex crimes. In other words, the suspect is a parent, relative, caregiver, neighbor, co-worker, or significant other.
- May seek employment or volunteer with programs involving children of the age of their preference.
- Strangers can be “good guys” or “bad guys” (this includes females). Persons known to you or your children can be “good guys” or “bad guys” (again, this includes females).
- Sex offenders have great social skills. This is what enables them to gain the confidence and trust of not only the children but the parent.

- Sex crimes flourish in secrecy. Sex offenders have secretive lifestyles, and many of their sexual assaults are so well planned that they appear to occur without forethought. Many sex offenders are otherwise highly functioning people who use their social skills to commit their crimes.
- Many pedophiles seek out mothers or single parent families for the purpose of victimizing their children. They offer food, money and baby-sitting services – anything to be helpful and put them in a position to gain confidence and trust.
- Most sex offenders "groom" their victims prior to any sexual abuse. They play games with the children, take them to fun restaurants, to get ice cream, etc. They do whatever the child wants in order to gain confidence and trust.
- The single most effective means of protecting your child is communicating with your child. They have to feel comfortable discussing sensitive matters with you. If they don't feel they can talk with you about their true feelings or that they will be "put down" for it, then you can't expect they will tell you when they are put in an uncomfortable situation by a child molester.
- Teach your child that they should not be asked to touch anyone in the bathing suit areas of their body, or allow anyone to touch them in those areas. Teach them types of situations to avoid. It's not good enough to tell a child to avoid strangers.
- Most child molestations are committed by someone known to or related to the child.

INFORMATION RE: MANDATORY REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

RE: PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE AND SAFE SPORT AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017 [FEDERAL LAW SIGNED ON FEB 14, 2018]

On February 14, 2018, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 was signed into law (the "Act"). The Act extended various mandatory child abuse reporting obligations to persons associated with national governing bodies ("NGB"s) and amateur sports organizations, as that term is defined in the Act. 34 U.S.C § 20341.

As a result of the Act, certain persons associated with amateur sports organizations or NGBs now have mandatory child abuse reporting obligations under federal law. In summary, if such persons learn "of facts that give reason to suspect that a child has suffered an incident of child abuse" (as 'child abuse' is defined in the Act), then that person must file a report with governmental authorities within 24 hours. A failure to do so may result in criminal liability under federal law, including imprisonment for up to one (1) year and/or a fine.

The website https://www.childwelfare.gov/ contains a web page that explains "How to Report". It is found here: https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how/ That webpage maintains a list of agencies authorized to receive reports in each State. These appear to be the child protective services agencies for each state. A recent link to the list is as follows: https://www.childwelfare.gov/orga nizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rols:main.dspList&rolType=Custom&RS_ID=%205
All state agencies have a hotline telephone number for reporting. Some permit online reporting through a website interface.

Again, whether mandatory reporting applies to you or not, please immediately report all suspicions of child abuse to governmental authorities for investigation and follow up by those authorities. That should be your first step. Other steps you may and should take include reporting your suspicions to the U.S. Center for SafeSport (https://uscenterfor-safesport.org/) and/or USA Softball for discipline or a determination of future eligibility to participate in USA Softball programs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING SAFESPORT AND THE USA SOFTBALL COMPLAINT AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES.

What types of conduct might subject a USA Softball Member to discipline and ineligibility?

- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Physical violence, such as an attack on an umpire, tournament official or participant immediately preceding, during or immediately following a game or arising out of USA Softball Activities.
- Commission of fraud, such as playing under an assumed name, falsifying an affidavit or roster or giving false information to tournament officials.
- Participating when they do not meet the eligibility requirements of USA Softball.
- Knowingly competing with or against individuals or teams which are suspended from USA Softball play.
- Commission of any act while participating in USA Softball activities such as: failure to pay indebtedness, destruction of property, violation of state or local laws or any other acts that are contrary to the objectives and purposes of USA Softball or arising out of USA Softball Activities.
- Violation of USA Softball substance abuse policies and procedures.
- Forfeiting a game in championship play.
- Bullying, hazing, harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse and sexual harassment) as defined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport's SafeSport program at https://uscenterforsafesport.org/.
- Interference with any USA Softball Hearing Process as cited in the Bylaws.

- Other misconduct that reasonably calls into question the participants suitability to participate in the applicable activity. (as of Nov 2017)

What is the U.S. Center for SafeSport?
The U.S. Center for SafeSport is an initiative started by the United States Olympic Committee whose mission is to make athlete well-being the centerpiece of sports participation. SafeSport requires that athletes participate in sports free from bullying, hazing, sexual misconduct or any form of physical or emotional abuse. The Center is headquartered in Denver, Colorado and administers complaints and imposes discipline on behalf of each National Governing Body of the United States Olympic Committee.

Who specifically is subject to the Jurisdiction of the Center for SafeSport?
Any person who qualifies under the definition of a "Participant" is subject to the jurisdiction of the Center for SafeSport.

"Participant" is defined in the SafeSport Code as follows:

Any individual who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of the alleged SafeSport Code violation:
a. A member or license holder of an NGB [national governing body], LAO [Local Affiliated Organization] or USOC [United States Olympic Committee]
b. An employee of an NGB, LAO, or USOC
c. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of an NGB, LAO or USOC
d. Authorized approved, or appointed by an NGB, LAO, or USOC to ahe regular contact with Minor Athletes.

(SafeSport Code, eff. 4/15/2019, notes omitted). The USOC is now known as the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). NGB is defined as a National Governing Body of the USOC, of which USA Softball is a national governing body for the sport of amateur softball.
LAO is defined in the SafeSport Code as a Local Affiliated Organization, which is defined as a regional, state or local club or organization that is directly affiliated with an NGB or that is affiliated with an NGB by its direct affiliation with a regional or state affiliate of said NGB. LAO does not include a regional state or local club or organization that is only a member of a National Member Organization of an NGB.

What types of disciplinary complaints are administered by the Center for SafeSport and what types of disciplinary complaints are administered by USA Softball?
The Center for SafeSport has the exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations that a Participant has engaged in one or more of the following:

1. Sexual Misconduct;
2. Criminal Charges or Dispositions involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct;
3. Misconduct related to reporting, where the underlying allegation involves child abuse or sexual misconduct;
4. Aiding and Abetting, when it relates to the Center for SafeSport's process;
5. Misconduct related to the Center for SafeSport's process; and
6. Other Inappropriate Conduct (as defined in the SafeSport Code, and including)

Unless specifically instructed otherwise by the Center for SafeSport, USA Softball will generally investigate, administer and resolve allegations that a member engaged in one or more of the following:

1. Non-Sexual Child Abuse;
2. Emotional and physical misconduct
3. Bullying
4. Hazing
5. Non-Sexual Harassment;
6. Criminal Charges or Dispositions not involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct;
7. Violations of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies, or other proactive policy violations.

How does a person file a Disciplinary Complaint with the Center for SafeSport?
Form and Manner of SafeSport Sexual Misconduct Disciplinary Complaints. For Disciplinary Complaints involving "Sexual Misconduct or "Other Inappropriate Conduct" against by a "Participant" (as those term is defined in the SafeSport Code), Complaints shall be made directly to SafeSport pursuant to the SafeSport rules and procedures at https://uscenterforsafesport.org/. To the extent a Disciplinary Complaint alleges any form of "Sexual Misconduct" or "Other Inappropriate Conduct", it will be administered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport of Denver, Colorado (https://uscenterforsafesport.org/) and, in lieu of reporting to USA Softball, should be reported directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport by calling (720) 524-5640 (M-F 8am-5pm MT) or online at https://uscenterforsafesport.org/. The U.S. Center For SafeSport administers its investigations, complaints and discipline pursuant to its own procedures and SafeSport Code, which can be found at https://uscenterforsafesport.org/

Is Reporting Mandatory? Yes, Adult Participants are REQUIRED to report suspected sexual misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and also may be required under

federal law to report such suspicions to law enforcement or child protective services. A failure to timely report may result in being charged under federal criminal statutes and/or subject the person to discipline by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

What procedures govern Complaints and Discipline not administered by the Center for SafeSport?
All non-SafeSport disciplinary complaints (including non-sexual hazing, harassment bullying, physical misconduct, emotional misconduct) will be administered by the USA Softball Local Association Commissioner for the area in which the offending conduct occurred, in accordance with the procedures and rules outlined in Article 15 of the By-laws of USA Softball at https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/about-usa-sb/governance

USA Softball requires all persons to immediately report any suspicions of child abuse to local law enforcement, Child Protective Services agencies, and/or the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Additional information and resources, including Awareness and Prevention Resources are available at: https://uscenterforsafesport.org/

Requirements	USAS Board of Directors and Staff	Adults in J.O. Youth Program	Adult Participants
Background Check Through PYS	X	X	
Background Check Through NCSI	X		
SafeSport Training and Regular Refresher	X	X	
Adherence to M.A.A.P.P.	X	X	
Centralized US Center for SafeSport Disciplinary Complaint Adjudication for Sexual Misconduct and Other Inappropriate Conduct	X	X	X

CARDIOPULMONARY RESCUSITATION (CPR)

CPR is a specialized skill to endeavor to revive victims of cardiac arrest (no breathing, no pulse). CPR training is regularly available by certified instructors trained by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association and other organizations. Traditionally, CPR includes clearing the air passage, mouth-to-mouth breathing and chest-compressions. Recent studies and advisories suggest that untrained bystander-rescuers should be

encouraged to provide compression-only CPR (a/k/a hands-only CPR) if they are unable or unwilling to provide mouth-to-mouth breathing, although the best method of CPR is still compressions coordinated with mouth-to-mouth breathing.

Being trained in CPR is an invaluable skill not only in connection with softball but also in connection with your workplace environment, your family, and your everyday life. USA Softball has no particular expertise in this area but everyone is encouraged to become familiar with these issues and/or certified in CPR. For more information:

- Please visit www.americanheart.org/handsonlycpr to learn more about Hands-Only CPR.
- Please visit: www.americanheart.org/cpr to learn more about conventional CPR or to find a CPR class near you.

[1] Source: Sayre, M.R., et al. "Hands-Only (Compression-Only) Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation: A Call to Action for Bystander Response to Adults Who Experience Out-of-Hospital Sudden Cardiac Arrest. A Science Advisory for the Public From the American Heart Association Emergency Cardiovascular, March 31, 2008 © 2008 American Heart Association, Inc. http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/117/16/2162

A GUIDE TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT FOR USA SOFTBALL

The headlines seem to come with increasing frequency. Child severely injured sliding into home plate...lightning strikes player in the outfield...fight breaks out after game. As a youth-serving professional, would you and your staff know what to do if something terrible were to happen? How would you and your staff react to an unexpected life-threatening, chaotic and emotionally charged situation?

While it is impossible to anticipate every event, you can develop a framework for responding to crises that may increase the likelihood of a good outcome.

The purpose of this section is to provide you with the tools and critical thinking skills which you can use to help you make the best decisions when you are challenged by circumstances beyond your immediate control.

If you already have a crisis plan in place, use this guide to refine or reaffirm what you have developed. If you don't have a plan, we hope that you will use this outline as a starting point. In either instance, share your plan and crisis management information with your coaches. Educate them. Practice.

Just don't wait for a crisis to happen before you begin figuring out what to do.

What is a crisis? When asked to define "crisis," most people would respond by describing a cataclysmic event, like a tornado, hurricane, medical emergency or an emotionally trying situation. Because the experience of a crisis is highly individualized, what represents a crisis for one person may not be experienced as a crisis by someone else.

When a crisis has occurred, we are faced with incomprehensible uncertainty. We don't know what lies ahead. The aftermath might include serious injury, loss of life, damage to property and reputation, or litigation.

No two people will define "crisis" in the same way. It may help, however, to keep the following in mind:

- A crisis is an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs, an emotionally significant event, a radical change in the status of a person's life due to bodily injury or death, or a serious endangerment to property in which a decisive change for better or worse is impending.
- In crisis situations, it is obvious or highly likely that a third party (such as the police, medical personnel, or an insurance company) will be involved in some way.

Before the Crisis: Preparation is the key to effective crisis management. The best time to think about how to handle a potential situation is well before it happens. Setting aside "Think Time" now to outline a crisis management plan may increase the likelihood of a positive outcome and minimize "Response Time" after a crisis has occurred. We urge you to put together a kit that contains these guidelines and other materials you may need in a crisis.

Call your local emergency management agency (EMA) to identify potential natural and man-made disasters that may affect your area. Once you have identified potential exposures, arrange a meeting with your EMA for additional suggestions that will help make your crisis management responses more specific to the disasters that may occur in your area.

Remember, in addition to preserving life and health, your crisis management plan should also protect your organizational structure and operations, personnel, and services you provide. Consider storing duplicate business records in a secured, offsite location. Review your plan at least once a year with your coaches and volunteers, so it is practiced and current.

Responding to a Crisis: As you develop your crisis management plan, design your communications strategy. You may need to communicate while the crisis is happening. For example, you have just become aware of an allegation of molestation in the locker room. Developing a code word or signal ahead of time and using it when a crisis occurs will let your coaches know it's time to implement the crisis management plan.

Immediately following the event, the steps you take should be responsive in nature. Planned, practiced actions can help you avoid chaos and lower the risk of additional negative consequences.

During the first few minutes, concentrate on gathering accurate, concise information. This information will help you respond immediately and eliminate confusion later.

Realize that things are likely to happen rapidly and often simultaneously. Stay focused, but flexible when carrying out the first steps of your plan. You may need to change the order of the following actions.

Action Steps

1 **Find Out:** Find out and record exactly what happened; which individuals were involved; and their current location, present condition, and immediate needs. Note any actions that have been taken so far. Ascertain who was in charge or supervising when the incident occurred, and determine who is in charge now. Assess which resources you now have available, which outside resources may be called in, and how such assistance will be delivered. Document the facts as you learn them. Keep a notebook and pen or pencil in your crisis response kit.

Essential facts checklist

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Where are they now?
- What is their present condition?
- What action has been taken so far?
- Who was supervising/coaching?
- Who is in charge?
- What internal resources are available?
- What outside resources are needed?
- How will assistance be delivered?
- When did the incident occur?

As you get the facts about what happened or is still happening, it's important to determine if the crisis is life threatening or not. If you are faced with an encroachment of a life-threatening situation, you may need to take immediate action before you contact emergency services.

2 **Call Emergency Services:** Equipped with facts, call 911 or the appropriate emergency services. Telephone numbers to emergency services should be prominently

maintained in your coaching manuals, and kept in cell phones so that they can be accessed quickly and easily. Always carry directions to the ball field where you are playing. In a crisis, it may be difficult to provide precise directions to emergency personnel. Consider adding a fully-charged cellular telephone, with telephone number clearly posted on it, to your crisis response kit. This way, if no telephone services are available, you may still be able to communicate.

Calls made at this time should be kept to an absolute minimum. Limit your calls to the following:

Emergency Medical Services: DDescribe the situation accurately and quickly. The facts you have gathered will help you to respond to the dispatcher's questions and increase the likelihood of a prompt and proper response. Remember to ask relevant questions. For example, if children or adults have been injured, find out what actions should be taken before the emergency medical personnel arrive.
We recommend having one or more coaches certified in CPR and First Aid on the premises at all times.

Fire Department: You may need to alert the fire department, even if there is no evidence of fire. There may be unknown hazards present—gas leaks, hazardous chemical spills, for example—that the fire department can identify and remedy.

Police Department: If a crime has occurred, notify the police immediately. The police can also be helpful in securing and controlling access to the area.

Special circumstances may require calls to other authorities or agencies. For instance, call the Poison Control Center if you suspect that a child or adult has ingested a harmful substance. If you suspect that a child is missing, immediately call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Center can mobilize resources and coordinate a search with the FBI and local authorities. Keep in mind that the first minutes and hours after a child is suspected missing are often the most important in obtaining a successful recovery.

3 **Stabilize the Situation:** With help on the way, your attention can be directed to stabilizing the situation. You can accomplish this by accounting for those involved, assessing their condition, removing everyone from further harm, and controlling the activity at the scene.

When you develop your plan, identify individuals who can act as "greeters." Greeters help monitor the flow of traffic, keep unauthorized individuals out of the crisis area, and direct press inquiries to a designated spokesperson. The individuals you select

for this role should be diplomatic but authoritative, articulate, and level-headed. Greeters also need to be well versed on your crisis management plan. Provide them with brief, bullet points of information about how the media can contact the designated spokesperson, as well as how, when, and where parents can retrieve their children.

As soon as possible, disperse these greeters to strategic areas (entrances, exits) with appropriate instructions. When something terrible happens, people who want to help, onlookers, media and less well-intentioned people often flock to the site.

Account for all individuals involved. In the confusion of the moment, it may be difficult to remember everyone's name. A current roster and list of players and volunteers should be placed in your crisis response kit. Consider making a duplicate of your sign in sheet, and periodically placing the duplicate in your crisis response kit.

Checklist for Stabilization

- Deal with hazards in the area.
- Disperse greeters.
- Account for individuals; gather in a central location.
- Attend to the needs of the injured.
- Look for additional injuries.
- Attend to the needs of the non-injured.
- Assign a coach or trusted parent volunteer to care for the uninjured children.
- Preserve everything involved in the incident.

Immediately attend to the needs of those people who are obviously injured, and search for others who may have been injured. Administer care following the instructions you receive from Emergency Services. After injured individuals have been cared for or placed in the care of a qualified person such as an EMT, turn your attention to the non-injured individuals who may have witnessed the event.

If possible, gather the non-injured individuals in a centralized location. This area should be free from hazards and access should be restricted. Use barriers if they are available, and station a greeter at the entrance and exit to the area.

Assign an adequate number of staff members to care for the uninjured children. It is important to maintain a balance between the demands of the crisis and the need for continuity of everyday activities. Children should be closely observed. Some children may seem to be okay, even though they may be hurt or deeply affected by the incident. Sometimes the crisis will elicit memories of earlier trauma. Watch for these "silent sufferers," and make sure that they receive appropriate care and attention.

In your crisis planning, consider using a, child care center, school, church or synagogue as a possible evacuation site. Make arrangements to use these facilities in advance, and store emergency supplies at these locations. If necessary, plan ahead for the safe transportation of the children in your care to these alternative emergency facilities.

Finally, preserve the integrity of the scene to the best of your ability. Some items can provide important forensic evidence for police, medical personnel, insurance companies and others. Restrict as much of the affected area and objects as circumstances allow.

4 **Establish Crisis Headquarters:** Once the immediate pressure of the crisis has abated and the situation has been stabilized, organize crisis headquarters. Look for an area that is reasonably quiet and secluded. A calm atmosphere will allow for clear thinking and an opportunity to make phone calls without distraction. Scout possible locations in advance, and find at least one alternative that fits the bill.

Store emergency equipment and supplies in a pre-designated area or backpack so that they can be easily and rapidly moved into crisis headquarters. When headquarters is functional, take some time to think about a protocol for the phone calls you will make. A telephone protocol is a statement or script that you and designated staff can use to impart information about the crisis accurately and consistently. This procedure can help reduce speculation and contain the “emotional temperature.”

Set up a log for incoming and outgoing telephone calls. It’s extremely important that you maintain a record of what has been communicated, with whom you spoke and when the conversation occurred. This log should be maintained until the crisis is completely resolved.

5 **Contact Parents/Guardians of Children Involved:** Your first communication with the parents and guardians of children involved in the incident can be a very difficult task. At this point, take some time to think about what you want to communicate. Put yourself in a parent’s place. How would you want someone to deliver this kind of news? What would you want to know? How might you react?

For now, focus on informing the parents and guardians of the children who have been directly involved — injured, harmed or adversely affected — in the crisis. Carefully compose a script for these conversations that provides the facts of the situation, and reflects your concern for the well-being of parents, guardians, and children.

Offer to make arrangements for parents or guardians to travel to the hospital, your facility or emergency location. Coordinate their arrival and arrange for suitable accommodations once they have arrived.

6 **Mobilize the Crisis Team:** Your professional and business advisors, as well as community leaders and agencies, may be able to offer you assistance in responding to the aftermath of a crisis. Activate these resources now.

In assessing the range of care and supervision needed, consider the crisis' impact on each of the following groups:

- Individuals directly involved in the incident;
- those closely affected by the incident; and
- your community — other children, parents, guardians, volunteers, and others with whom you regularly interact.

Once you have an understanding of the kind of care you need, begin to plan the level of intervention that the situation requires. There are three levels of intervention to consider: the team's crisis response team; local community resources; and outside resources. Identify the areas in which you will need assistance. Seek clergy and mental health providers who have experience in responding to crises.

Each member of your team should have a clearly defined role. During implementation, coordinate the flow of information between team members.

Realize that children, other coaches and volunteers may show secondary effects of involvement in or having witnessed an incident. Keep track of everyone involved in the event, even if they withdraw from your program. Unexpressed anger, for example, can lead to an accumulation of resentment. Follow up with those involved and find out how they are doing.

7 **Call Emergency Resources:** Contact the appropriate emergency resources to help with cleanup, repair, and continued management of the crisis. Your crisis response kit should contain a list of these resources, contact names and their office and emergency phone numbers. For your convenience, we have prepared a list of emergency resources and have supplied phone numbers for national resources such as the American Red Cross, the Center for Disease Control, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Suggested Emergency Resources:

National:	Community:	Facility Specific:
American Red Cross 1-800-REDCROSS	Animal Control Agency	Electrician
Centers for Disease Control 800-CDC-INFO Emergency Hotline 770-488-7100	Hospitals, local and regional	Equipment Rental Services
Environmental Protection Agency National Response Center 1-800-424-8802	Gas and Electric Company	Fire Equipment Service Company
Child Protective Services/ Childhelp® USA National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)	Health Departments, local and state	Food Service Vendors
Poison Control Center Hotline 800-222-1222	Telephone Company	Plumber
FEMA/Department of Homeland Security 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) DHS Citizen Line: 202-282-8000	Water Company	Transportation Services
	Family or Women's Shelter	Tree Care Specialist

8 **Call Support Resources:** Establish relationships with advisors and community resources well in advance of a crisis so that they can be quickly mobilized if a crisis occurs. Identify people who have had specific experience in crisis response. When you solicit the assistance of these individuals, ask whether there will be a fee associated with their participation. Note this in your crisis response files, along with the day and after-hours telephone numbers for your contacts.

Suggested support resources:

- Insurance agent/company
- Appropriate USA Softball Officials
- Business partners/Board of Directors
- Attorney/law firm
- Neighboring schools, child care centers, camps
- Clergy
- Mental health professionals
- Physicians
- Professional associations
- Public relations advisors

9 **Contact Other Parents/Guardians:** Contact the parents and guardians of those who were not directly involved in the incident, and tell them what has occurred. You can do this by telephone or letter, depending on the level of urgency required by the situation.

Begin your message by acknowledging that an incident has occurred. Assure parents that their child was not involved in the incident. Provide basic facts about the incident, but do not discuss details or identify individuals who were involved in the incident. Inform parents about the level of support that was or will be provided to their child.

Close by thanking the parents for their patience and understanding, and encourage them to contact you if they have any questions or concerns.

We suggest having your attorney review the notice prior to its release. Whether you communicate by phone or mail, keep a log of all telephone calls and correspondence received in response to your message. Maintain the log until the issue has been fully resolved.

10 **Manage the Media:** Crises which involve children seem to attract a large amount of media attention. If your program experiences a ¬crisis, you should expect that the media will become involved. How you handle the media can have a significant impact on your personal, your team and your organization's reputation.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take that may alleviate "bad press." Consider notifying media contacts after a crisis has occurred — before they contact you. Review all of the information that you plan to provide the media with your attorney before releasing it. Consider asking your attorney to be present when you speak with media representatives.

Make arrangements to meet with the press in one place, at one time. During this meeting, try to place the incident in a historical perspective. Describe your program, your overall safety record and business practices. Ask the media for balanced, not sensational, reporting of the incident. Provide them with the basic facts of the incident, avoid speculation and assigning blame. Do not release the names or any other personal information about the people involved in the event. Also, keep in mind that when meeting with the media, nothing is "off the record."

Post Incident Follow-Up

11 **Post Incident Actions:** In the weeks and months following the incident, carry out status checks with those persons involved, their families and others affected by the incident. Similarly, contact members of your crisis response team. Ask them to help

evaluate your response. Focus on what you could do better, and update your crisis response plan accordingly. Periodically check your crisis response supplies and kit, so that they are complete and up-to-date.

Crisis Response Kit

- Notebooks, pencils, pens
- A cell phone/charged/extra battery/with number posted on phone
- Emergency services telephone numbers
- Current roster with medications & special needs
- Child profile kits
- List of coaches and volunteers
- List of emergency contact numbers for children & coaches
- List of emergency resources and telephone numbers
- List of support resources and telephone numbers
- List of media contacts
- Copy of crisis response plan
- Flashlight
- National Oceanograhic & Atmospheric Administration weather radio (battery-operated)
- Blankets
- First aid kit
- Batteries
- Bottled water—at least a 24-hour supply
- Snacks
- Permission to treat/health forms
- Disposable camera with flash
- Current phone book
- Change for pay phones
- Whistles

12 **Organize Files and Prepare Reports:** During the course of the crisis, you will have compiled a great deal of information. Shortly afterward, you should organize the data you have collected. Make copies of your incident notes, telephone logs, prepared statements, etc., so that you can use this material in compiling reports you write or file.

Reports should be prepared and preserved in consultation with your attorney and insurance agent. These reports should be factual in content and should contain a description of everything that happened and how you and others responded. Do not release reports to anyone who is not specifically authorized by your attorney or others representing your interests. If you can, arrange face-to-face meetings with investigators or confirm their identity with a third party.

Be sure to file all claims and incident reports with the appropriate authorities in a timely manner. These include medical, property, liability and workers' compensation insurance claims, reports to child welfare authorities, OSHA and other state/local regulatory agencies. Cooperate fully with any ongoing investigations conducted by the authorities.

File and reports checklist

- Incident notes
- Telephone logs
- Scripts and statements
- Correspondence
- Insurance claims
  - Accident Medical Insurance
  - Worker's Compensation
  - Liability
  - Property
- Reports
  - Child welfare agencies
  - OSHA
  - Health Department
  - State and local agencies
- Press clippings and videos of television coverage

THE IMPORTANCE OF "PLAN B"

You awaken in the morning and discover that a power outage during the night has reset your alarm clock, causing you to oversleep.

- You're driving to a meeting and find yourself hopelessly stuck in traffic.
- Your plane arrives in Denver as planned, but your baggage is sent to Atlanta. It's midnight and you have a 10 am meeting with an important client.

What do you do? When confronted with obstacles or "what ifs," we're often challenged to come up with "Plan Bs."

In dealing with crisis, "Plan Bs" take on additional importance. People may not be able to perform the tasks they've been assigned; services expected may not be available; the situation may have aspects that were unanticipated.

When you review your crisis response plan, take time to develop and document "Plan Bs." Help your coaches and parent volunteers understand the multiple tasks or duties they may be asked to perform.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Throughout this process you have been attending to the needs of everyone. Do not neglect your own care. There are sources of support for you "inside" and "outside" your facility. Spend time with your staff and children in your care. Reconnect with your core beliefs (why and how you started coaching).

Take time for physical exercise and relaxation. Give yourself permission to participate in and enjoy everyday routines, as well as special events. Treat yourself with kindness. Be aware of, appreciate, and generate humor. Maintain involvement in professional and community activities.

Remember, none of us is alone. Avoid isolation. Spend time with friends. Don't hesitate to develop a relationship with a mental health professional who can help you work through this difficult experience.

ISSUES CONCERNING SOFTBALL PARTICIPATION WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS, INCLUDING PREGNANCY

Participants who have certain medical conditions, including pregnancy, may have heightened risks or may be susceptible to additional risks of injury from softball activities.

USA Softball has no particular medical expertise and therefore cannot advise participants as to the risks associated with their participation in softball with a particular medical condition or while pregnant.
Before deciding to proceed with participation in softball, (if the participant has not already done so), the participant should consult with a qualified medical professional concerning whether it is safe for him/her (and/or her unborn child) to continue participating in softball while pregnant or with said medical condition and, if so, the participant should consult with their doctor concerning how he/she should continue to participate and/or how long he/she should continue to participate.

Please be aware that there are risks and dangers associated with participation in softball while having a medical condition or while you are pregnant. Continued participation in softball during pregnancy poses risks to your health and well being and the health and well being of your unborn child. This Guide contains a copy of the Warning, Disclosure and Disclaimer contained in our organization's governing documentation. As a result of your medical condition or pregnancy, there may be additional risks and dangers associated with your participation in softball activities and/or the existing risks and dangers may be heightened while your medical condition exists. For those who are pregnant, the existing, heightened and/or additional risks and dangers will apply not only to you but also to your unborn child.

Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to present a signed authorization from a qualified medical professional before being able to continue to participate.

To the extent you choose to take a temporary leave of absence from participation while you are pregnant or have a medical condition, upon your return, you will not be penalized in any manner by USA Softball as a result of your temporary leave of absence.

Please consider the above information and consult with your medical professionals concerning your continued participation in softball activities.

CONCUSSIONS AWARENESS

CDC Concussions Awareness — The Facts:

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

A bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

Recognizing A Possible Concussion: To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for and ask others to report the following two things among your athletes:

- A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.

and

- Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

Signs Observed By Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent

- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported By Athlete
- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

Danger Signs: In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:
- One pupil larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

When A Concussion Is Suspected: If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, implement your four-step action plan:

1 Remove the athlete from play. Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. When in doubt, sit them out.

2 Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
- Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
- Any memory loss immediately following the injury
- Any seizures immediately following the injury
- Number of previous concussions (if any)

3 Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them CDC's fact sheet on concussion. This fact sheet can help parents monitor the athlete for sign or symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to school.

4 Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

Get more information and educational resources on concussion, at: https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/index.html
Please also familiarize yourself with and comply with any State or Local laws that govern concussion awareness, concussion education and training, concussion protocols and/or other legal requirements which may apply in your jurisdiction.

The above information was provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Also, please note that concussion awareness disclosures, protocols and requirements may be mandated by state or local law. Consult applicable laws for legal requirements. Also, take a free online training course on Concussion in Sports at www.nfhslearn.com.

AIR QUALITY AWARENESS

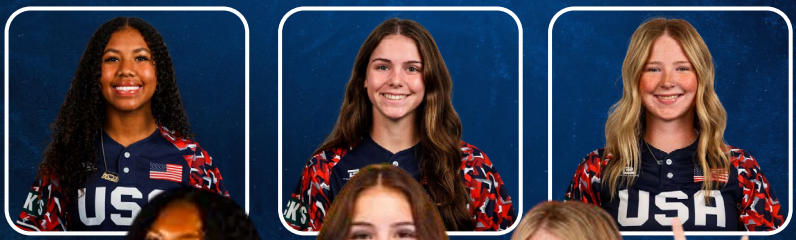
All persons, especially children, are at risk for health effects from exposure to wildfire smoke or poor air quality conditions. When participating in outdoor events, please be aware of air quality conditions that may adversely affect participants and take necessary precautions to minimize such risks.

A Wildfire Smoke Fact Sheet is available from the U.S. E.P.A. at: https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/smoke_fires/protecting-children-from-wildfire-smoke-and-ash.pdf

Current Air Quality information (Current AQI) is available online from the website www.airnow.gov or your State's air quality agency website.

USA SOFTBALL™

THE PIPELINE TO THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM PROGRAM



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