



## **North American Fastpitch Association Rules of Softball**

The North American Fastpitch Association (NAFA) gratefully acknowledges it's Rules Committee, State Directors, Managers, Umpires, and others for their contribution to these rules.

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**North American Fastpitch Association**

**<http://nafa.mmfl.net/>**

**&**

**[www.playnafa.com](http://www.playnafa.com)**

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**The North American Fastpitch Association is constantly updating the rules of fastpitch. This on-line rule book is designed with the knowledge that we provide a printed copy of the rules with registrations each year. This provides the general rules, but may not have the latest update of rules for the NAFA Youth 8U to 18U. Several pages are also included for NAFA Adult specific.**



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

**NAFA is the North American Fastpitch Association. We are a very successful Fastpitch Organization that is the fastest growing Fastpitch Association in North America. Due to our success many directors from multiple Fastpitch groups have joined our group giving us an even greater presence throughout North America. We are dedicated to our teams, directors and umpires, this contributes to our success.**

**It is the goal of our Youth Group to put the teams and parents first. We are leading the way with Our Primary Goal that in the coming years we will help control the costs of the sport through offering a National Tournament policy of 4 day tournaments to help reduce the costs of motels. Team gate fees to offer all members of the teams including parents, relatives and friends an opportunity to attend without per day fees, this will save hundreds for each team attending.**

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## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Altered Bat**

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

### **Appeal**

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

### **Backstop**

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

### **Ball**

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

### **Base**

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

### **Base Coaches**

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

### **Base Path**

The traditional path traveled by a runner who is attempting to advance to the next base. It is defined by a direct line between the bases and 3 feet on either side of that line; unless a fielder has the ball in her possession and she is within 3 feet of the runner and prepared to apply a tag. A base runner that attempts to avoid a tag by running more than 3 feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession shall be declared out.

### **Base Runner**

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

### **Batted Ball**

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

### **Batter**

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

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Batter's Box**

The area to which the batter is restricted when batting.

### **Batter-Runner**

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

### **Batting Order**

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

### **Batting Out of Order**

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

### **Blocked Ball**

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

### **Bunt**

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

### **Bunt Attempt**

Any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn – pulled backward and away from the ball.

### **Called Game**

A game that is ended by order of the umpire.

### **Catch**

The act of a fielder who, with their hand(s) and/or glove/mitt, securely gains possession of a batted, pitched or thrown ball. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder must hold the ball long enough to prove that they have control of the ball and that their release of the ball is (or could have been) voluntary and intentional. If the fielder has made the catch but drops the ball either in transferring it to the throwing hand or in making a throw, the ball shall be ruled caught. For a legal catch, a fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before stepping, touching or falling into a dead-ball area. A fielder who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch. A fielder who catches a ball while contacting or stepping on a collapsible fence while the fence is vertical is

## SECTION 1 — Definitions

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credited with a catch. A catch shall not be credited if:

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

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

- F. A collapsible fence is falling to or on the ground when the fielder contacts the ball. *NOTE: In the case, batter is awarded a home run.*
- G. The fielder traps the ball. A batted fly ball or line drive is considered trapped if it hits the ground or a fence on a short hop before being caught. A thrown ball is considered trapped if it is caught but the ball is on the ground and the glove/mitt is over, rather than under, it. A pitched ball is considered trapped if it is a strike but touches the ground on a short hop before being caught by the catcher. A ball prevented from hitting the ground by a player's equipment (providing it is in its proper place) of body shall not be ruled caught until the ball is securely held in the player's hand(s) or glove/mitt.

### **Catcher**

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

### **Catcher's Box**

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

### **Checked Swing**

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

### **Chin Strap**

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

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Coaches' Boxes**

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

### **Conferences**

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

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

### **Courtesy Runner**

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

### **Crow Hop**

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

### **Dead Ball**

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

### **Dead-Ball Territory**

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

### **Defense**

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

### **Delayed Dead Ball**

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

### **Double First Base**

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



## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Dislodged Base**

A base displaced from its proper position.

### **Dugout (Bench)**

The area reserved for team personnel engaged in the game.

### **Ejection**

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

### **Extra Inning**

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

### **Face Mask**

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

### **Fair Ball**

A legally batted ball that touches or bounds over a base, settles on or is touched on or over fair territory. A fair fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted (See Rule 7.3).

### **Fair Territory**

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

### **Fake Tag**

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

### **Field of Play**

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

### **Fielder**

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

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Fly Ball**

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

### **FLEX**

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

### **Force Play**

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

### **Forfeited Game**

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

### **Foul Ball**

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

### **Foul Territory**

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

### **Ground Ball**

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

### **Halted Game**

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

### **Helmet**

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

### **Home Team**

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

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Illegal Bat**

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

### **Illegal Pitch**

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

### **Illegal Player**

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

### **Illegal Re-entry**

A violation of the substitution rules that occurs when an illegal player (one who is not entitled to play) is put back into the game or a legal player returns to the game, but not in their original position in the batting order.

### **Illegally Batted Ball**

A pitch contacted by the batter: (1) with an altered bat, (2) with a illegal bat, (3) when any part of either foot is in contact with the plate at the time of bat-ball contact, or (4) when one or both feet are on the ground and entirely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time of bat-ball contact.

### **In Flight**

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

### **In Jeopardy**

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

### **Infield**

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

### **Infield Fly Rule**

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

### **Infielders**

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

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Inning**

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

### **Interference, Offensive**

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

### **Leap**

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

### **Line Drive**

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

### **Lineup Card**

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

### **Media Coverage**

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

### **Offense**

Player or team at bat attempting to score runs.

### **On-Deck Batter**

The offensive player who is next in line to bat.

### **Out**

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

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Outfield**

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

### **Outfielder**

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

### **Overslide**

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

### **Overthrow**

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

### **Penalty**

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

### **Pinch Hitter**

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

### **Pinch Runner**

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

### **Pitch**

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

### **Pitcher**

The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters.

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

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

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

The pitcher's foot (right foot of a right-handed pitcher and left foot of a left-handed pitcher) that maintains contact with the pitcher's plate, absorbs the body's weight and pushes off against the plate during the initial "step"

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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phase of the pitch. This same foot drags along the ground during the final phase of the pitch and is then referred to as the drag or rear foot.

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

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

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

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

### **Protest**

The formal, written inquiry into the decision of an umpire.

### **Quick Pitch**

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

### **Rostered Players (Championship Play)**

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

A. State Directors will have the digression regarding rostered players in qualifying tournaments leading to national play within their state.

### **Run**

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

### **Rundown**

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

### **Safe**

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

### **Slap Hit**

A batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. The two most common types of slap hits are (1) those in which the batter takes a stance as if to bunt but then either drives the ball into the ground with a quick, short swing or punches it over the infield, and

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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2) those in which the batter takes running steps (within the batter's box) toward the pitcher before making contact with the pitch.

### **Starter**

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

### **Strike**

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

### **Strike Zone**

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

### **Substitute**

A player not listed on the lineup and as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first 9 or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game.

### **Tag**

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

### **"Time" or "Timeout"**

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

### **Turn at Bat**

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

### **Umpires**

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

### **Unreported Player**

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

### **Visiting Team**

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

## Section 2 - Field of Play

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

### SECTION 2.1 - Backstop

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

### SECTION 2.2.- Base, Pitching, Fence Distances

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

### SECTION 2.3. - Bases - First (Double), Second and Third

A. The double first base (if used) shall be used at first base. The base is 15"x30", made of canvas or suitable rubberized material, half is white, and half is orange. The white is over fair territory, orange is over foul territory, and securely fastened to the ground.

**For rules pertaining to double base, refer to Section 11.00 (page 94).**

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

B. Second and third bases shall be white canvas bags or suitable rubberized material securely fastened to the ground. Each bag shall be 15 inches square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 3 to 5 inches. Bases may have tapered edges. A release-type base may be used.

### SECTION 2.4. - Batter's Boxes

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



## **Section 2 - Field of Play**

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### **SECTION 2.5. - Catcher's Box**

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

### **SECTION 2.6. - Coaches' Boxes**

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

### **SECTION 2.7 - Dugouts.**

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

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

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

### **SECTION 2.8. - Fences**

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

### **SECTION 2.9 - Field of Play.**

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

### **SECTION 2.10 - Foul Pole**

The foul pole must be a metal or wood pole that extends vertically upward from the foul line, and located OUTSIDE the homerun fence. The pole should extend at least 10 feet from the ground. It is recommended that screening be attached to the fair side of the pole to enhance the visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the pole. The screening width should be at least 6 inches and should extend from the top of the fence to the top of the pole.

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

## **Section 2 - Field of Play**

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### **SECTION 2.11.- Ground Rules**

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

### **SECTION 2.12. - Home Plate**

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

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

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

### **SECTION 2.13 - Infield**

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

### **SECTION 2.14 - Layout**

For the layout of the playing field (page 23a), refer to the drawing showing official dimensions. This section serves as an example for laying out an infield.

### **SECTION 2.15 - Lines (Markings)**

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

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

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

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

## **Section 2 - Field of Play**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 2.20 - Runner's Lane**

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

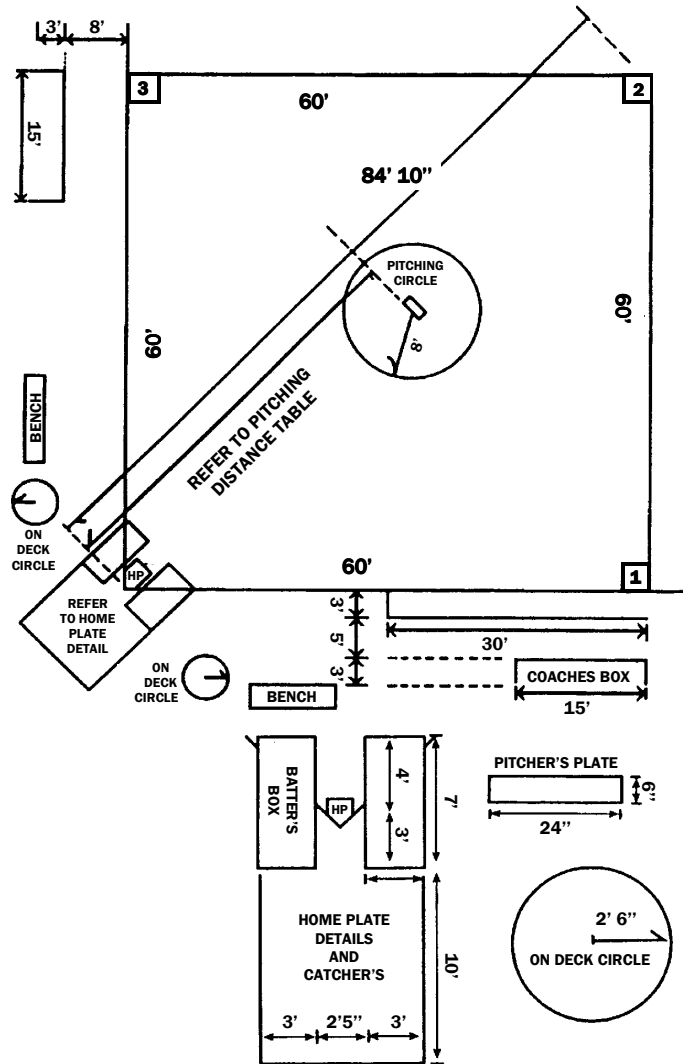
### **SECTION 2.21 - Scoreboard.**

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

### **SECTION 2.22 - Sideline Territory**

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

## SECTION 2 — Field of play



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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 3.1 - Ball**

The yellow optic cover, red-stitch 12-inch ball, with a COR of .47, and 375 lb. Max compression, shall be used in all NAFA play. In 10 and Under, the yellow optic cover, red-stitch 11-inch ball, with a COR of .47, shall be used in all NAFA play.

### **SECTION 3.2 - Bats- Game.**

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

**PENALTY — If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat (one that does not meet the required specifications), upon discovery, the bat shall**

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

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

### **SECTION 3.3. - Bats-Warm-Up**

The warm-up bat must weigh no less than 39 ounces and have a minimum barrel diameter of 2 inches. The bat shall be of one-piece construction and shall have a safety grip 10-15 inches from the knob and securely affixed. No attachments (i.e., fans, donuts, etc.) are allowed on an official bat, except the SwingSock, or, Pow'R Wrap warm-up attachments.

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

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

All casts and splints must be padded. Prostheses may be worn. Braces with exposed hard surfaces must be padded. Any of these items judged by the umpire to be potentially dangerous will not be allowed.

*Note: Any decision by the umpire should be based on whether or not a device worn or used by an individual with a disability changes the fundamental nature of the game or poses a significant risk to the safety of other players.*

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

All catchers must wear a mask with a built in or attachable throat protector, NOCSAC, approved helmet with ear flaps, shin guards which offer protection to at least the foot to knee area, and body protector. An attachable throat guard shall be commercially manufactured, unaltered, and securely attached to the mask.

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

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

## SECTION 3 — Equipment and Uniforms

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### SECTION 3.6. - Gloves/Mitts

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

The catcher may wear a leather glove/mitt of any dimension.

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

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

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

### SECTION 3.7 - Helmets

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

**PENALTY— If an umpire observes a player wearing a damages or illegal helmet before coming to bat, while at bat, or while on base, the umpire shall direct the player to change to a legal helmet without penalty.**

**Failure to wear a legal helmet when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection.**

**Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or intentionally removing the helmet while actively running the bases shall result in the player being declared out but shall not remove a force play. The ball remains live. If no apparent play is obvious, no one shall be called out.**

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

### SECTION 3.8. - Jewelry

Players are prohibited from wearing exposed jewelry. Religious, and medical alert medal, or bracelet may be worn but must be taped, and may be visible.

**PENALTY — If an umpire observes a player wearing jewelry other than what is allowed, the umpire shall direct the player to remove it. Failure to**

## SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms

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remove the jewelry when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection.

### SECTION 3.9 - Shoes.

All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats, metal spikes are allowed at 16U and 18U. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

### SECTION 3.10 - Uniforms.

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

A. Coaches should be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.

B. **Foul-weather wear.** Sweatshirts, sweat pants, nylon windbreakers and jackets may be worn if the weather warrants.

C. **Headgear.** Visors, headbands and caps are optional parts of the uniform and may be mixed. All headgear and must be worn with the brim of the hat facing forward. **EXCEPTION:** The catcher may wear the brim facing backwards.

**Exception:** Plastic visors, bandannas, and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear,.

D. **Jersey.** All uniform jerseys must have a whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back. The number(s) or its outline shall be of contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number. If duplicate numbers exist, only one player may be in the game at a time or one of the players must change her number of jersey.

E. **Knee/shin pads.** Knee or shin pads are permitted, and colors may be mixed. **Exception: Optic Colored shin or knee pads may not be worn.**

F. **Pants/Shorts.** The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, or, a combination of both.

G. **Undershirts/under shorts (Sliders).** It is not required that players wear undershirts or under shorts (sliders), if worn, they must be in solid colors, and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn or slit).

**Penalty (A.) thru (G) – The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not**



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

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**complying with the uniform rule. Any player not correcting the uniform violation shall be ejected.**

### **Section 3.11 - Coaches Responsibility**

Coaches are responsible to ensure that their players are legally equipped and properly attired to reflect a positive image of the game. Uniforms, accessories and equipment must be worn as designed or removed.

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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

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

### **SECTION 4.1.- Scoring of Runs**

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

B. One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches first, second, and third bases and home plate before the third out of an inning.

C. No run shall be scored during a turn at bat if the third out of an inning is the result of:

- 1) A batter-runner being called out before reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
- 2) A runner being put out by a tag or live-ball appeal play before the lead runner touches home plate.
- 3) A preceding runner being declared out on an appeal play.

*Note: An appeal can be made after the third out in order to nullify a run. This is also sometimes referred to as a fourth out.*

### **SECTION 4.2 - 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 home team has scored an equal number or more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.

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

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

### **SECTION 4.3 - Starting the Game.**

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

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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### **SECTION 4.4 - Positions of the Offensive Team**

The offensive team:

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

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

### **SECTION 4.5. - Positions of the Defensive Team**

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

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

**B. Catcher.** The catcher must be in the catcher's box from when the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch.

**C. Infielders/Outfielders.** All infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until they releases the pitch. No part of the fielder's feet may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released.

**PENALTY (A)-(C) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8)**

D. All personnel except the nine defensive players on the field must remain in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is in play.

### **SECTION 4.6 - Team First in Field .**

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

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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### **SECTION 4.7 - Live Ball.**

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

### **SECTION 4.8. - Delayed Dead Ball**

A. A delayed dead ball is a ball that remains live and in play even though a violation has occurred and been recognized by the umpire (through a delayed dead ball signal). At the end of the playing action the umpire shall call “Time/Timeout,” the ball becomes dead, and a decision is made regarding the rules infraction.

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

- 1) An illegal pitch.
- 2) Catcher obstruction.
- 3) Field Obstruction.
- 4) Plate umpire interference.
- 5) Detached equipment interference with a batted or thrown ball.

### **SECTION 4.9 - Dead Ball.**

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

B. While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of acts that occurred while the ball was live (such as, but not limited to, an illegal pitch, interference, obstruction, an overthrow, a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field).

C. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is dead need not touch intervening bases.

### **SECTION 4.10. - Suspension and Resumption of Play**

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

- 1) Umpires must not permit the calling of “Time/Timeout” by players and coaches when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.
- 2) The umpire shall not call “Time/Timeout” until a play has been completed.

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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**exception: When necessary, to protect an injured player, the umpires may suspend play immediately,**

3) After a base on balls, the umpire shall not call “Time/Timeout” until the batter-runner has stopped at first base and each other runner forced to advance has stopped at her next base.

B. “No pitch” shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire is holding play.

C. A runner, who is touching a base when time is called, may not advance during the suspension of play.

D. After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher takes their place on the pitcher’s plate with the ball in their possession and the umpire calls/signals “Play ball”. The umpire shall not put the ball in play until all runners have retouched their bases.

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 4.11. - Conferences**

A. Charged defensive conference.

1) There may be only three-charged defensive conferences per game. The plate umpire shall notify the head coach or acting head coach when a defensive conference has been charged. The plate umpire shall make a note of it on the team's lineup card and shall record the inning in which it occurred. A charged defensive conference ends when the team representative crosses the foul line.

**PENALTY – 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.**

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

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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- 1) The following are not charged defensive conferences:
  - a) Shouting instructions from the dugout area to the defense without requesting a suspension of play.
  - b) Requesting a suspension of play in order to remove the pitcher from the pitching position (provided the umpire is informed of the charge before the representative steps over the foul line) or to make a defensive substitution.
  - c) Conferring with the defense during a charged offensive conference and being ready to play once the umpire instructs the offensive team “Play/Play ball”.
  - d) Requesting a suspension of play for an obviously incapacitated player.
  - e) Requesting a suspension of play in order to attend to a potentially sick or injured player. An umpire must supervise the process.
  - f) Requesting a suspension of a play for a defensive player to make an equipment change.
- B. Charged offensive conference.
  - 1) There may be only one charged offensive conference per inning. The plate umpire shall notify the head coach or acting head coach when an offensive conference has been charged. The plate umpire shall make a note of it on the team’s lineup card and shall record the inning in which it occurred.

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

- 2) The following are not charged offensive conferences:
  - a) Shouting instructions to the offense without requesting a suspension of play.
  - b) Requesting a suspension of play in order to make an offensive lineup change.
  - c) Conferring with the offense during a charged defensive conference and being ready to play once the umpire instructs the defensive team “Play/Play ball”.

*Note: The offensive team is in jeopardy of being charged with an offensive conference if not ready to play.*

- d) Requesting a suspension of play for an obviously incapacitated player.
- e) Requesting a suspension of play in order to attend to a potentially sick

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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or injured player. An umpire must supervise the process.

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

### **SECTION 4.12 - Regulation Game**

A. A regulation game shall be seven innings unless:

- 1) The game is extended because of a tied score.
- 2) The game is shortened because: (a) the home team needs none or only part of its half of the seventh inning to score more runs than the visiting team; (b) the umpire calls the game.

B. It is a regulation game when the umpire terminates play by calling, "Game". If, however, a team wishes to lodge an appeal or protest on the final play of the game, it must immediately inform the umpire of that intent.

**Exception:** For tournament play with a time limit, fewer than seven innings may be played, but at least **Three** innings must be played, when the mercy rule is in effect, in order for the game to be considered regulation, **unless the time limit has expired**. The home team need not bat when they are ahead in the last inning and the time limit has expired.

### **SECTION 4.13 - Tie breaker Rule.**

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

A. Starting with the top of the next inning, and each half-inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat last in that half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the No. 5 batter is the lead-off batter, the No. 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). A substitute may be inserted for the runner for scoring.

B. Whether or not the tie breaker procedure will be used, and when it shall be invoked, must be determined at the pre-game meeting. Use of the tie breaker rule also can be determined by tournament policy.

*Note: In Nationals, no tie breaker rule will be used in semi-final and final game. These games will be played out.*

### **SECTION 4.14 - Called Game.**

A. A regulation called game shall be declared by the plate umpire if, after

## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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

- 1) If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in their five offensive half-innings.
- 2) If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.
- 3) If the home team is at bat when the game is called and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs or more runs than the visiting team.
- 4) If a team is ahead by twelve or more runs after three innings, eight or more runs after five innings.

B. After consultation with the tournament official, the game may at any time due to facility problems, crowd behavior or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger.

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

### **SECTION 4.15 - Halted Game.**

A. A halted game shall be declared by the plate umpire if play must be temporarily suspended with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. When play resumes after having been temporarily suspended, it must start at exactly the point of being halted. The lineups and batting orders of both teams must be exactly the same as they were, subject to the rules of substitution, and any player who played or was announced as a substitute before the game was halted must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game.

B. Whether or not the halted game rule will be used must be determined at the pre-game meeting. Use of the halted game rule also can be determined by tournament policy.

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



## **SECTION 4 – The Game**

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### **SECTION 4.16 - Forfeited Game**

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

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

B. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault in the elimination portion of the bracket. See tournament rules for round robin play for the score of a forfeited game in your event.

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

## SECTION 5 — Appeals and Protests

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### SECTION 5.1 - Appeals

- A. The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.
- B. There is no appeal or penalty for submitting an inaccurate line-up card, simply correct the error and continue play.
- C. The following may be appealed:
  - 1. Batting out of order.
  - 2. Missing a base.
  - 3. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
  - 4. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base.
- D. A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
  - 1. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is then made by tagging either the runner or home plate, the umpire should then make a decision of the appeal.
  - 2. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made. The appeal must be made before the runner returns to first.
- E. Appeals may be made when the ball is live (in play) or dead (out of play).
  - 1. A **live-ball appeal** is made by touching the base the runner missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided they are still on the playing field. Runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play. Each runner may leave their base when (a) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (b) the pitcher makes a play on any runner.
  - 2. A **dead-ball appeal** is made verbally. Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called, any infielder (including the pitcher or catcher), with or without the ball, may ask the umpire to make a decision on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire whose responsibility it was to observe the base and runner steps forward and makes the safe or out call. If the appeal is directed toward the wrong umpire, that umpire should refer the question to the responsible umpire. The responsible

## SECTION 5 — Appeals and Protests

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

Notes:

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

F. An appeal must be made:

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

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

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

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

H. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:

- 1) She has left the field of play.
- 2) A following runner has scored.
- 3) They are standing on a base beyond the base they left too soon and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire, or the ball becomes dead.

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

## SECTION 5 — Appeals and Protests

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I. With regard to the scoring of runs:

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

Notes:

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

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

### Section 5.2 - Protests.

A. Protests shall be allowed in the following cases:

1. Misapplication of a playing rule.
2. Failure to apply the correct rule to a situation or impose the correct Effect for a violation.
3. Illegal player.
4. ineligible player

B. Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a Decision involving the accuracy of judgment of an umpire.

C. The coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team must immediately inform the umpire of its intent to protest. The plate umpire shall in turn

## **SECTION 5 – Appeals and Protests**

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notify the opposing head coach, official scorer.

**Exception:** protest may be made at any time if the protest involved participation by an ineligible player.

- D. The official scorekeeper, plate umpire and opposing coaches shall each make note of the information, details and conditions surrounding the decision to protest. If the protest occurs in a tournament, which has a process for on-site protest resolution, the protest shall be ruled on before play resumes. In all other circumstances, play shall be resumed from the point of protest.
- E. The written protest should contain all relevant information, including:
  - 1) The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
  - 2) The names of the umpires and official scorekeeper.
  - 3) The rule and section of the official rules or a copy of the ground rule under which the protest is made.
  - 4) The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.
- F. The head coach must file the written protest within a reasonable time. In the absence of a tournament rule establishing a shorter time limit for filing protest, protest shall be considered filed in a reasonable amount of time if it is within 72 hours of the event.
- G. The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:
  - 1) The protest is considered to be invalid and the game score stands as played.
  - 2) The protest is considered valid, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.
  - 3) The protest for participation by an ineligible player is determined to be valid, and the offending team shall forfeit the game(s) played.
- H. When protest is upheld and a game is rescheduled:
  - 1) The same lineup card must be used when the game is resumed and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.
  - 2) If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because she was legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew suspension for unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **Section 6 - Players and Substitutes**

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### **SECTION 6.1. - Players on a Team**

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

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

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

B. A defensive player is entitled to change to a different defensive position at any time. The plate umpire and official scorekeeper need not be notified.

C. After starting with nine players, a team can play shorthanded down to eight players, for any reason, other than an ejection. A shorthanded position in the lineup is a automatic out.

D. A game may begin with 8 players, but when and if another player arrives, that player must be inserted into the lineup at the ninth bating position. Whenever a team is playing with only eight players, an out will be taken when the last position in the batting order appears. Under no circumstances shall a team be permitted to continue a game, offensively or defensively, with less than eight players.

### **SECTION 6.2 - Designated Player (DP) and Defense Only (FLEX)**

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

A. The DP's name, uniform number must be placed in one of the first 9 batting positions In the line up. The FLEX's name and uniform number must be placed in the 10th position on the line-up.

B. The DP must remain in the same position in the batting order throughout the game and only bat/run for the FLEX-NO ONE ELSE.

C. When the FLEX goes into bat in the DP position, it counts as a substitute for the DP because she has left the game for the time being. If the DP replaces the FLEX on defense, the line-up goes from 10 to 9 and if the FLEX re-enters, it counts as a charged substitution for the FLEX and the line-up goes back to 10.

D. The DP and FLEX may not be in the batting order at the same time!!

E. The DP and the FLEX can be on defense at the same time. As follows:  
The DP is still considered to be playing offense for the FLEX, but, can

## **Section 6 - Players and Substitutes**

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play defense for another batter in the order. That other batter is just batting now, and is not considered a DP.

### **SECTION 6.3. - Ejected Player/Coach/Personnel**

A. Umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for just cause.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 6.4. - Starting Player**

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

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

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

### **SECTION 6.5. - Substitute Player**

## **Section 6 - Players and Substitutes**

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A. **Player Substitutions.** Player substitutions shall be governed by the following:

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

**B. Pitcher substitutions.** Substitutions shall be governed by the following:

- 1) The pitcher may be removed from the pitching position before having delivered a pitch, whether or not the first batter facing them has completed their turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
- 2) The umpire must remove the pitcher from the pitching position if the defensive team has already used its allotted three defensive conference in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one per inning in an extra inning game. The removed pitcher may not pitch again for the remainder of the game but may otherwise participate in the game. If the pitcher returns to the pitching position after being removed, and one pitch has been thrown, the pitcher is ejected from the game



## **Section 6 - Players and Substitutes**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**D. Unreported substitutions.** The following regulations govern unreported substitutions:

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

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

- b) The unreported player has completed their turn at bat, but the next pitch (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, or the pitcher and all infielders

## **Section 6 - Players and Substitutes**

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clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Section 6 - Players and Substitutes

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Notes:

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

### **E. Illegal Player(s).**

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the illegal player is reported by the offense before the defensive coach

## Section 6 - Players and Substitutes

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in violation informs the umpire and:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### SECTION 6.6 - Re-entry

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

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

*Notes:*

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

B. A starting player removed from the pitching position as a consequence of a 4th charged defensive conference in a game may re-enter the game at another position but cannot return to the pitching position.

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

## **Section 6 - Players and Substitutes**

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### **SECTION 6.7. - CR (Courtesy Runners)**

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

A. The CR may:

- 1) run for either the pitcher or the catcher anytime during the same game.
- 2) run for the DP if the DP was physically pitching or catching at the end of the previous half-inning.

B. The CR may not:

- 1) run for both the pitcher and the catcher during the same game.
- 2) have participated in the game previously as a player.
- 3) be a substitute for any player during the half inning she ran as a CR.
- 4) run for the DP if the DP is batting for the pitcher or the catcher.
- 5) when on base, be replaced by another CR nor by the pitcher or catcher for whom she is running.

**EXCEPTION:** should an injury occur, another CR or the pitcher or catcher may run.

- 6) be used during the inning a substitute entered to bat for the pitcher, even if she re-entered.
- 7) be used during the inning a substitute entered to bat for the catcher, even if she re-entered.

**EXCEPTION:** Should any offensive player be injured or unable to continue for any reason, with no substitutes available, the CR must be used to replace that player and enters the game as a substitute. If the CR is still on base, the pitcher or catcher for whom she is running must now return as a base runner.

- C. The coach of the team at bat must report each use of the CR to the plate umpire, otherwise, they are an unreported substitute. A player who is not eligible or violates the CR rule is considered to be an illegal substitute.

## **SECTION 7 — Blocked Ball**

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### **Blocked Ball**

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

#### **SECTION 7.1. - Equipment Blocked Ball**

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

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

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

*Notes:*

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

#### **SECTION 7.2 - Foul Batted Blocked Ball.**

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

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

#### **SECTION 7.3 - Fair Batted Blocked Ball .**

A fair-batted ball becomes blocked:

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

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

**If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, interference**

## **SECTION 7 — Blocked Ball**

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**Is ruled. The runner closest to home at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and the other runners must return to the last base legally touched before the batted ball hit the loose equipment.**

B. When it contacts loose equipment belonging to the defense.

C. When it bounces over, wedges under, or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field; or lodges in the fence, in shrubbery or in the vines on the fence.

D. When it deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory; or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a chance to make a play.

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

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

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

### **SECTION 7.4 - Live Thrown Blocked Ball**

A live thrown ball becomes blocked:

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

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

*Notes:*

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

## **SECTION 7 — Blocked Ball**

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 7.5 - Pitched Blocked Ball**

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

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

### **SECTION 7.6 - Catch and Carry Blocked Ball**

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

### **SECTION 7.7 - Game Personnel in Unauthorized Areas —**

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

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

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. If no apparent play is obvious, no one is called**



## **SECTION 7 — Blocked Ball**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **Interference (Offensive)**

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

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

### **SECTION 8.1 - Batter Interference**

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

- a. The batter shall not step from one batter's box, directly in front of the catcher, to the other batter's box once the pitcher has started her delivery.

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

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

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

**Exceptions:**

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the batter is out. The ball is dead, and runner(s) return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference.
2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 8.2. - Batter-Runner Interference**

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

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

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

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

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

**Exceptions:**

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

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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**If the batter, after hitting/slapping/bunting a fair ball, is still holding the bat in their hand(s) and is still in the batter's box when they contact the ball a second time in fair territory, a foul ball is ruled; the ball is dead; and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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

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

*Notes:*

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

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PENALTY – The ball is dead. The batter-runner is out, and all runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

### **SECTION 8.3. - Coach Interference**

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

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

- b. With a runner in scoring position, the coach near third base shall not run in the direction of home plate (on or near the baseline) while a fielder is attempting to make a play, thereby, drawing a throw to home plate.
- c. A coach, while in or out of the coach's box, shall not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball, or interfere with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 8.4 - Non-game Authorized Personnel Interference**

If a live batted or thrown ball accidentally hits non-game personnel (e.g.,

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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

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

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

### **SECTION 8.5 - On-Deck Batter Interference**

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

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

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

### **SECTION 8.6 - Runner Interference**

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

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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intentional. A runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. This is an exception to the rule that defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field without being hindered.

- b) It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to obtain an out, and the runner contacts the fielder. **Exception:** If the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact.
- c) If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball, and that fielder only is entitled to protection.
- d) If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make an out, the runner will only be ruled out if the act is intentional.

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

**Exceptions:**

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

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

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

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the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner also shall be called out.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Exceptions:**

- 1. If the runner deliberately crashes into a defensive player holding the ball before she (the runner) is put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it is an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate trailing runner also shall be declared out.**
- 2. If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner is called out, the runner closest to home plate also shall be declared out. If, in the umpire's judgment, the collision is flagrant the runner shall be declared out and also ejected from the contest. The ball is dead, and each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Notes:**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **SECTION 8.7 - Spectator Interference.**

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

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

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

### **SECTION 8.8 - Team (Offensive) Interference.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 8.9. - Umpire Interference**

Umpire interference occurs:

- a. When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of an umpire before passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), or after passing an infielder (including the pitcher) but

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

- b. When a fair untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

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

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

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

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

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

### **Obstruction (Defensive)**

#### **SECTION 8.10 - Obstruction**

Obstruction is the act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball, or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, or in the act of fielding a batted ball. Rule c. Exception 2 on page 70.

*Notes:*

- a. The defensive player must have possession of the ball. When a play is imminent, a defensive player may not block a base or the base line without possession of the ball. If the defensive player has the ball, it is the runner's responsibility to avoid the fielder. If the defensive player does not have the ball, it is the responsibility of the fielder to avoid and not impede the runner's progress.
  - 1) The act may be intentional or unintentional.
- b. Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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or not, the umpire will declare obstruction and signal a delayed dead ball. The ball remains live until the conclusion of the play at which time the umpire will notify the offensive head coach of his/her options, if any.

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

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

### **SECTION 8.11 - Types of Obstruction**

Obstruction includes:

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

#### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

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

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **b. Catcher Obstruction**

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

#### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base they would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player shall be awarded the base they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player, and each other runner forced to advance.

## **SECTION 8 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **Exceptions:**

- 1. A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner rounding or returning to a base. A fielder who is waiting to receive a throw may not impede the progress or return of a runner if there is no immediate play or the throw is not made.**
- 2. A fielder shall not take a position in the runner's line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit them from seeing the release of the pitch.**

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

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

### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

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

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

### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

### **5. Illegal Pitch:**

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

### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

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

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

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

## **SECTION 9 – Pitching**

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### **SECTION 9.1 - Defensive Positioning Required for a Legal Pitch**

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

**PENALTY (a)-(c) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

#### **Pitching Procedure**

### **SECTION 9.2. - Taking the Signal from the Catcher**

- a. Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following:
  - 1) Both feet must be on the ground and in contact with the pitcher's plate, and, all, or part of her pivot foot must be on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
  - 2) Shoulders must be in line with first and third base.
  - 3) Hands must be separated.
  - 4) The ball must be held in one hand, either bare or gloved.
  - 5) The ball may be held in front of, at the side of or behind the body.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher must take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.
- c. After receiving the catcher's signal, the pitcher's hands must come together for no more than 10 seconds before starting the pitch.

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

**PENALTY (a)-(c) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

### **SECTION 9.3. - Start of the Pitch**

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

## **SECTION 9 – Pitching**

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### **Pitching**

#### **SECTION 9.4 - Step/Stride**

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

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

**PENALTY (a)-(c) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8)**

#### **SECTION 9.5 - The Windup**

The pitcher may use any windup desired providing they do not, after having taken the signal and brought their hands together:

- a. Make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. Separate their hands and then return the ball to both hands.
- c. Stop and change direction more than twice.

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

**PENALTY (a)-(c) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

#### **SECTION 9.6 - Delivery**

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

- a. Once the hands have separated, the pitcher may not make two complete revolution of the arm in the windmill motion.



## **SECTION 9 – Pitching**

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- b. The step/stride and delivery of the ball to the batter must take place simultaneously.
  - c. The pitched ball must be released underhand.
    - 1) The hand must be below the hip.
    - 2) The wrist must not be farther from the hip than the elbow.
  - d. The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
  - e. The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.
- PENALTY (a)-(d) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

### **The Pitch**

#### **SECTION 9.7 - Dropped During Pitch.**

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

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

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

**PENALTY – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

#### **SECTION 9.8 - Illegal Pitch**

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

- a. The plate umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for the catcher and batter to hear. The base umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for nearby players to hear. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.
- b. Simultaneously, the umpire gives the delayed dead ball signal and waits to call "Time/Timeout" until the pitch has reached the plate, or the play on a batted ball has been completed.
  - 1) If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner advances at least one base on the batted ball, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled.
  - 2) If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any runner fails to advance at least one base the coach of the offensive team may choose the result of the play or the standard penalty for an illegal pitch, which is that a ball is awarded to the batter, and no runner advances.
  - 3) If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and

## **SECTION 9 – Pitching**

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each runner advances one base.

- 4) If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
- c. The umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to both the pitcher and her coach.

### **SECTION 9.9. - Quick Pitch**

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

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

### **SECTION 9.10 - No Pitch**

“No pitch” shall be declared when:

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

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

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

**PENALTY — No pitch (see Rule 9-8) and warning. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the offender(s) being ejected from the game.**

### **Regulations Governing Pitching Situations**

#### **SECTION 9.11 - Aborting a Pitch/Stepping Off the Pitcher’s Plate.**

A. The pitcher is considered to be in pitching position when both feet are on the pitcher’s plate. The pitcher may legally be removed from the pitching position by stepping backward (not forward or sideways) off the pitcher’s plate.

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

**PENALTY (a)-(b) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

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### **SECTION 9.12 - Ball Rotation**

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

### **SECTION 9.13. - Foreign Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher**

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

**PENALTY — For the first offense, an illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8) shall be called. On the second offense, the pitcher shall be ejected.**

*Note: This rule is not designed to prohibit the pitcher from going to their mouth inside the pitching circle; the pitcher may go to their mouth, but must wipe off the hand before starting the pitch. It does not matter where the pitcher is positioned, inside the pitching circle*

**PENALTY — A ball is awarded on the batter. THIS IS AN ILLGAL PITCH, RUNNERS ADVANCE ONE BASE.**

- b. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching fingers, hand, wrist forearm or thighs that may be distracting to the batter. This includes a batting glove, sweatband and jewelry of any kind. **Exception:** The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.
- c. The pitcher shall not wear clothing items that a batter or umpire considers distracting (e.g., loose lacing on a glove, ball-colored logos).

**PENALTY (b)-(c) — The pitcher shall remove the item upon request of the**

## **SECTION 9 – Pitching**

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umpire or be ejected from the game.

### **SECTION 9.14 - Intentionally Pitching at a Batter.**

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

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

### **SECTION 9.15. - Intentional Base on Balls**

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

**PENALTY** — The penalty for not delivering each pitch legally to the catcher is an illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8). *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter but each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out.

### **SECTION 9.16. - Returning a Pitched Ball to the Pitcher**

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

*Exceptions:*

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

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

### **SECTION 9.17 - Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher's Plate**

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

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

**PENALTY – Illegal pitch (see Rule 9-8).**

### **SECTION 9.18 - Time Allowed Between Pitches**

The pitcher must release the next pitch within 10 seconds after receiving the ball or after the umpire signals "play ball."

**PENALTY – If 10 seconds have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, an additional ball shall be awarded to the batter.**

If two minutes have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team at bat. *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out. On the first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending player. On the second offense, the offending player shall be ejected from the game.

### **SECTION 9.19 - Warm-Up Pitches Allowed**

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

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

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

## SECTION 10 — Batting

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### Batter

#### **SECTION 10.1 - On-Deck Batter**

- a. The on-deck batter is restricted to the on-deck circle, **behind** the batter.
- b. The on-deck batter must wear a helmet.
- c. The warm-up bat used by the on-deck batter must meet the specifications of Rule 3-3 (Page 30).
- d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle to take their turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

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

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

### Batting

#### **SECTION 10.2. - Legal Position In the Batter's Box**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Notes:*

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

### **SECTION 10.3. - Balls and Strikes**

**A Strike zone.** Any part of the ball passing through any part of the strike zone is a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate.

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

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

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

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

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

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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- 1) For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground. Any part of the ball passing over any part of the plate, from the top of the kneecaps to under the batter's forward armpit is a strike.
- 2) For each legally pitched ball that is swung at by the batter and missed.  
**EFFECT (1)-(2) — The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**
- 3) For each foul tip.  
**EFFECT — The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.**
- 4) For each foul ball when the batter has fewer than two strikes.  
**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**
- 5) When the batter bunts foul after the second strike.  
**EFFECT — If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**
- 6) For each pitched ball swung at and missed that touches any part of the batter.
- 7) For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter's person or clothing when in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.
- 8) For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.  
**EFFECT (6)-(8) — The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. Each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**
- 9) When the batter fails to take their position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed to by the plate umpire.  
**PENALTY — The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown. A strike is called. Each runner must remain on the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

### **SECTION 10.4 - Fair Ball**

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



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contacted. A legally batted ball shall be judged fair if:

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

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

### **SECTION 10.5 - Foul Ball**

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

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

### **SECTION 10.6 - Foul Tip**

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

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

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

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

### **Hits, Bunts, Slaps — SECTION 10.7.**

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

### **Regulations Governing Batting**

#### **SECTION 10.8 - Bat**

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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

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

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

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

### **D. Thrown bat.**

1. When the player throws a bat intentionally in anger, the umpire may eject the player.
2. If the bat is thrown into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called.
3. If a bat is thrown into foul territory, whether intentional or not, that endangers a participant a team warning shall be issued to the offending team. Each subsequent violation by the same team shall be an out.

**Effect 2 & 3 - The ball remains alive (delayed dead ball). For a first violation the team is warned. For each subsequent violation by the same team, the coach of the offended team has the option to choose the result of the play or the batter is declared out and all runners return to last base occupied. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two outs may be declared - each runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of pitch.**

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### **SECTION 10.9 - Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing**

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

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

**If the batter is out of the batter's box and the ball is considered fair, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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

### **SECTION 10.10 - Batting Order**

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

### **SECTION 10.11 - Batting out of Order.**

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

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

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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

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

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

*Notes:*

- 1. No one is called out for failure to bat. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.*
- 2. No runner shall be removed from the base they are occupying except the batter who has been taken off the base by the plate umpire as in the penalty above to bat in her proper place. They merely missed their turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following in the batting order becomes the legal batter.*
- 3. The announcer shall announce the players as listed on the lineup card. The public-address announcer, umpires or official scorer shall not call attention to the improper batter.*

### **SECTION 10.12. - Checked Swing**

- a. A pitched ball should be called a strike if it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether or not the batter checked the swing.**
- b. A pitched ball should be called a ball if the plate umpire is in doubt or blocked out, regardless of whether or not the batter checked their swing.**

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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- c. If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help, the plate umpire may ask for help.

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

### **SECTION 10.13 - Dropped Third Strike Rule**

- a. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter is automatically out if there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied. The ball is live, and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- b. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter is not out if there are two outs, or there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied. The ball is live, the batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out, and base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.
- c. In 10 and Under play, a dropped third strike the batter is out, but the ball remains live for runners who can advance or steal.

### **SECTION 10.14 - Hitting Ball a Second Time**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 10.15 - Hit Batter (by Pitch)**

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

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. If the pitch is "ball four," the batter shall be awarded base on balls. Runners may not advance unless forced.**

*Notes:*

1. *It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.*
  2. *The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.*
- b. The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:
    - 1) The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch or obviously tried to get hit by the pitch.

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

## SECTION 10 — Batting

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was “ball four.”. Runners advance if forced.

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

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

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

3) The pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person as they swing and misses for a third strike.

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

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

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

### **SECTION 10.16 - Illegally Batted Ball.**

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

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

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

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

c. An altered bat is used.

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

d. An illegal bat is used.



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

### **SECTION 10.17 - Infield Fly Rule**

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

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

Notes:

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

### **SECTION 10.18 - Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball**

- a. An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball. A ball that is trapped shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.
- b. An infielder may not intentionally drop a fair fly ball, a line drive or a bunt when there are less than two outs and runners are on first; first and second; first and third; or first, second and third.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) — The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.**

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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### **SECTION 10.19 - Stepping Out of the Box**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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touched at the time of the interference.

### ***Exceptions:***

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

### **SECTION 10.20 - Batter Is Out**

The batter is out when:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Note: In cases where there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- i. The batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

**EFFECT — If the batter is out of the batter's box and the bat is still in the batter's hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hand(s), a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.**

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

*Note: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out, and the ball is live and in play.*

- j. The batter swings and misses a pitched ball and then intentionally hits it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

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

- k. The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

**EFFECT — If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. Runners may tag and advance with liability to be put out.**

If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

## **SECTION 10 — Batting**

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l. The batter's third strike is a foul tip.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. Runners may advance without tagging but with liability to be put out.**

m. A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher.

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

n. The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied.

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

o. A pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person, including the hands, as they swing and misses for a third strike.

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

p. The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by the pitch.

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

q. The batter hinders the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box or intentionally hinders the catcher (e.g., on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

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

***Exceptions:***

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the batter instead of the runner, is out. The ball is dead.

2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.

r. The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

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

## **SECTION 11 – Base Running**

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### **Batter-Runner**

#### **SECTION 11.00 - Double First Base**

A. When using the double first base at first base, the following rules will be in effect:

- 1) A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared fair and a batted ball hitting the orange portion is declared foul.
- 2) Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, from home to first running through the bag, the defense must use the white portion and batter-runner the orange portion.
- 3) On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, or an errant throw pulling the defense into foul ground, the defense, or batter-runner may use either the white or orange portion.
- 4) On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the white or orange portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner must return to the white or orange portion.
- 5) When tagging up on a fly ball, the white or orange portion. may be used.
- 6) On an attempted pick-off play, the runner must return to the white or orange portion

#### **Section 11.1 - Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner**

The batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out:

A. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied. This is called the dropped third strike rule (Rule 10-13).

*Note: If the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out; the ball is live; and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.*

B.. After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.

C. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).

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

D. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

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**EFFECT (a)-(d) – The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

### **SECTION 11.2. - Base Awards**

**A. First base.** The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

1) After “ball four.”

**EFFECT – The ball is live, unless blocked. The batter may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**Exception:** *In 10 & Under, the batter, who receives a base on balls, cannot advance past first base. If the batter-runner advances further, once the ball becomes dead, return the batter-runner to first base.*

2) After catcher obstruction.

**EFFECT – Delayed dead ball.**

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

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

**a) The batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base.**

**b) If forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If not forced, each other base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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

3) When a pitched ball, not swung at or called a strike, touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while they are in the batter's box. It doesn't matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.

## Section 11 – Base Running

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The batter's hands are not to be considered a part of the bat. **Exception:** If the batter makes no attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch, or obviously tries to get hit by the pitch, a "Ball" or "Strike" is called (depending upon the ball's location). The batter stays at bat unless the pitch was a third strike (the batter is declared out), or the pitch was ball four (the batter is awarded first base). The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

4. When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher), who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

5. When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or Clothing of an umpire after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

6. When a runner intentionally kicks the ball that an infielder has missed.  
**EFFECT (3)-(6) – The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. Each base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**EFFECT (4)-(6) – The batter is credited with a base hit.**

7. When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher) that has a reasonable chance to make a play.

8. When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (7)-(8) – The batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.**

**If off base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is out, and each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base she legally touched at the time of the interference. If forced, each other runner advances one base without liability to be put out. The ball is dead.**

**If on base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is not out. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. However, if the closest defensive player is**



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**behind the base, the ball is dead. If forced, each runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**B. Second base.** The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:

1) When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out.**

2. When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.

3. When a fair-batted ball bounces over, wedges under or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field, or becomes blocked.

4. When a fair-batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.

5. When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory; or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (2)-(5) — The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and credited with a two-base hit (double). Each other base runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**C. Third base.** The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:

1) When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

2) When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that in the opinion of the umpire might become fair.

**EFFECT (1)-(2) — Delayed dead ball. The batter is awarded third base and credited with a three-base hit (triple) but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner is awarded home plate.**

**D. Home plate.** The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:

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1) When a fair-batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.

2) An illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence in flight.

*Note: The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment, which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.*

**EFFECT (1)-(2) – The ball is dead. The batter runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.**

**E. Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate when a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes her.

**EFFECT – Delayed dead ball.**

**If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base they would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18-c-1).**

### **SECTION 11.3. - Batter-Runner Is Out**

The batter-runner is out:

A. When player hits a fair ball and is legally put out before reaching first base.

**EFFECT – The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

B. When player hits a fair or foul fly ball, other than a foul tip, and it is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

C. When player is legally put out before reaching first base when the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.

*Note: If the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out.*

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**EFFECT (b)-(c) – The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

D. When she does not proceed to first base after a fair-batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

**EFFECT – The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if they are touched while off base, the base is touched before they reach it, or they leave the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

E. When player does not proceed to first base after:

1) A base on balls.

**EFFECT – The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when they leave the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

2) Being hit by a pitch.

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if player requires medical treatment, they may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if they leave the field for necessary medical treatment). Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

3) Catcher obstruction.

**EFFECT – Delayed dead ball.**

**If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.**

F. When, after reaching a base safely, a batter-runner or runner(s) abandons her base and obviously heads toward their position or the dugout (e.g., believing they was put out), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

**EFFECT – The ball is live, the batter-runner or runner(s) is out, and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

G. When they hit an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect.

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

H. When either of their feet is completely outside the runner's lane, in contact with the ground, and, in the judgment of the umpire, they

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interfered with the fielder taking the throw at first base. **Exception:** They may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder, attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

I. When, with less than two outs and first, first and second, first and third, or first, second and third bases occupied, in infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive which could have been caught with ordinary effort.

*Note: An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped. A ball that has been guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball.*

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it takes precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.**

J. When player runs the bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

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

K. When they move back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction.**

L. When player interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out.

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

M. When player interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box, makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base or interferes with a dropped third strike.

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the**

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**runner closest to home plate also shall be called out.**

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

N. When the immediate preceding runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play.

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

O. When, after hitting a home run, providing their team previously was warned for a first offense, any member of the offensive team other than the base coach touches the individual, before touching home plate.

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

P When a spectator enters the field of play or reaches onto the field from the stands and clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead at the moment of the interference. The umpire shall award appropriate compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc.**

*Note: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence and a spectator interferes with a possible catch. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator.*

### **Base Runner(s)**

**For 10 & Under see 10 & Under Rules. (page 136)**

#### **Base Runner May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out — SECTION 11.4.**

A runner may advance with liability to be put out:

- a. When a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- b. Following a dropped third strike with two outs or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.
- c. Following a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- d. Following a fair-batted ball that strikes the person attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).
- e. Following a fair-batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment of clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.
- f. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.

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- g. When a pitched or thrown ball hits an umpire.
- h. When a pitched or thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.
- i. When a foul tip is legally caught.

*Note: No tag-up is necessary.*

- j. When a runner is hit by a fair-batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.

**EFFECT (a)-(j) – The ball is live.**

### **Base Runner Awards – SECTION 11.5.**

In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

- a. **One base.** A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:

- 1) If forced to vacate a base because of a one-base award to the batter.

**EFFECT – The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances one base if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- 2) When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, provided the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

**EFFECT – Delayed dead ball. Each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is awarded a ball. If the pitch is “Ball four” or the illegal pitch hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base.**

- 3) When a pitched ball is blocked (i.e., lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop).

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball. Each runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 4) When a live ball is carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory (“catch and carry”).

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.**

- 5) When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead-ball areas or becomes blocked.

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked.**

- b. **Two bases.** A base runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

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1) If forced to vacate a base because of a two-base award to the batter.

**EFFECT — The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances two bases if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

2) When a fair ball deflects off a defensive player and enters dead-ball territory.

3) When a fair ball deflects off a runner or umpire and enters dead-ball territory after having passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher) provided no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (2)-(3) — The ball is dead. The batter-runner and each other runner are awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

4) When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.**

**Exceptions:**

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

*Note: If a runner touches the next base and returns to their original base, the original base they left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.*

**2. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead, and each runner must return to the base legally touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play the runner being played on is called out (if this player has scored before the blocked ball was ruled, the runner closest to home is called out).**

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

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.**

**c Home plate.** A base runner is entitled to advance to home plate with

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d no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three or four-base award to the batter.

e **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:

1) When a fielder not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball fakes a tag without the ball or impedes her.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball.** If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violations by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player, and each other runner forced to advance.

*Notes:*

1. Base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.

2. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where there was obstruction unless properly appealed for missing a base, leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched or for an act of interference.

2) When a spectator reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead.** The umpire shall award appropriate compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc.

*Note: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence and a spectator interferes with a possible catch. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator.*

### **Base Runner Forfeits Exemption From Being Put Out — SECTION 11.6.**

A base runner forfeits exemption from liability to be out:

a. If, after overrunning first base, the batter-runner feints or attempts to continue to second base.

b. If, after dislodging a base, the runner attempts to reach the next base.

c. If, while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out.

d. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching an awarded base, attempts to advance farther.



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e. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching base safely, abandons their base (e.g., obviously heads toward their position or the dugout believing they was put out or that another batter/runner was put out to end the inning).

### **SECTION 11.7. - Base Runner Is Out**

The base runner is out.

a. When, on a force play, a fielder (1) contacts the base while holding the ball, (2) touches the ball to the base or (3) tags the runner before she reaches the base.

b. If the ball is in play and player is not in contact with a base when they legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

#### **Exceptions:**

1) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where they are without liability to be put out, or they may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Other runners may advance with liability to be put out.

2) A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides may immediately return without liability to be put out, provided they not feint or attempt to advance to second.

c. When player physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.

*Note: If this were the third out of the inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding runner would count.*

**A.R.** With fewer than two outs, if a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding runner, the batter is out, but all preceding runners score. With two outs, only those preceding runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. This is a time play, not an appeal play.

d. When anyone other than another runner physically assists player while the ball is in play.

e. When, after play has resumed, the player fails to return to touch the base they previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.

**EFFECT (a)-(e) — The ball is live. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

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f. When player is running to any base in regular or reverse order, and attempts to avoid or delay a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder who has the ball in her possession.

**EFFECT—The ball is live. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**Exception:** It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the runner's proper path, and the runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

g. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out.**

*Notes:*

*1. If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make a play, the runner will be ruled out if they interfere with the second fielder.*

*2. If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play, and only that fielder is protected from interference by the runner. The runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.*

h. When player is struck with a fair-batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out. If the runner is off a base and hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when hit by an infield fly, the runner is not out.**

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i. When player is struck by a batted ball while in contact with a base, or otherwise interferes with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball, they are not out unless the umpire rules intentional interference with the ball or the fielder making a play.

**EFFECT – If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the runner are out. Each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

j. When player intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

**EFFECT – The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

k. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

l. When a coach, while in the coach's box, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

*Note: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live and in play.*

m. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws to throw a home plate.

**EFFECT (k)-(m) – The ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

n. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on their feet and deliberately, with force, crashes into the defensive player.

*Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall also be ejected.*

o. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

*Note: Members of a team include all persons authorized to be in the team's dugout.*

**EFFECT (n)-(o) – The ball is dead. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

p. When they leave the base they were occupying before the pitch is released.

q. When a runner is legitimately off their base after a pitch or as a result

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of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, they fail to immediately return to their base or attempt to advance to the next base.

R. When, once player returns to a base for any reason, they leave the base unless (1) a play is made on them or another runner, (2) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

**EFFECT (p)-(r) – The ball is dead, “No pitch” is declared, and each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

s. When, after reaching a base safely, player abandons their base and obviously heads toward their position or the dugout, for whatever reason.

t. When a runner uses a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with, the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

**EFFECT (s)-(t) – The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

### **SECTION 11.8. - Base Runner Is Out After a Proper Appeal**

The base runner is out after a proper appeal:

a. When [player fails to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the runner or the missed base may be tagged.

*Note: No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored or after leaving the field of play.*

b. When player fails to retouch their base before a fielder tags them or the base after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.

c. When player leaves their base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball first touches the fielder. Either the runner or the base may be tagged.

*Notes:*

1. *Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.*

2. *No runner may return to touch a base, which they left too soon if they left the field of play or if a following runner has scored.*

d. When player legally overruns first base, but attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.

e. When player is running or sliding for home plate, fails to touch it and makes no attempt to return to it, and a fielder (while touching the plate) properly appeals to the umpire for the decision.

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### **SECTION 11.9. - Base Runner Is Not Out**

The base runner is not out:

- a. When player is hit with a fair-batted ball over foul territory, and in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When player is hit with a fair, batted ball that has passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- c. When player is hit by a fair-batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and player could not avoid contact with the ball.
- d. When hit by a batted ball while touching their base, unless player intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- e. When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- f. When player fails to return to base at the end of playing action because player is not given sufficient time. Player will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire will call "No pitch".
- g. When player keeps contact with their base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- h. When player has legally started to advance. Player may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.
- i. When player does not run in a direct line to a base provided a fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in their possession.
- j. When player runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
- k. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.
- l. When player slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
- m. When player is touched while off a base:
  - 1) With a ball not securely held by a fielder.
  - 2) With a hand or glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player's hand.
- n. When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an

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Appeal play until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or until after the Pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

O. When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner While using an illegal glove/mitt.

### Regulations Governing Base Running

#### **SECTION 11.10 - Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases.**

No batter-runner or runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

a. Not proceeding to first base after a fair-batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if batter-runner touched while off base, the base is touched before batter-runner reaches it, or batter-runner leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

b. Not proceeding to first base after a base on balls.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when batter-runner leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

c. Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if they require treatment, they may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if they leave the field for necessary treatment). Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

d. Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction (see Rule 11-18-b).

**EFFECT — If the coach elects to take the result of the play, the batter-runner is out if and when batter-runner leaves the field of play, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.**

e. After reaching a base safely, obviously heading toward their position or the dugout (e.g., believing they was put out), or leaving the field of play for any reason.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner or runner(s) is out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

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### **SECTION 11.11 - Catch and Carry.**

A fielder may not catch or field a live ball and carry it into dead-ball territory. This is commonly referred to as a “catch and carry.”

#### **PENALTY**

— **The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded one base, without liability to be put out; from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory. *Exception:* If the ball is a legally caught fly ball, the batter is out.**

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally kicks, pushes, pitches or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory, the ball is dead, and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

*Notes: If a line is used to determine dead-ball (out-of-play) territory, the line is considered in play.*

- 1. If a fielder's foot is touching the line, they are considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball with no penalty.*
- 2. If a player's entire foot is over the line and touching dead-ball territory at the time player catches, fields or throws the ball, player has entered dead-ball territory, no play is allowed, and the penalty is applied.*
- 3. If a player has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, player legally may catch, field or throw the ball until and unless the entire foot contacts the ground in dead-ball territory, at which time the ball becomes dead, no play is allowed, and the penalty is applied.*
- 4. If a player contacts dead-ball territory with any part of the body except the foot, the player is considered out of play. No play is allowed, and the penalty is applied.*

### **SECTION 11.12 - Collisions**

a. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if she remain on her feet and runs into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent a collision ruling, the runner can slide, jump over or go around (within three feet) a defender holding the ball in an upright or kneeling position, or return to the previous base touched.

*Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected.*

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The runner is called out for running into a fielder holding the ball. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the collision.**

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**If the runner deliberately crashed into a fielder holding the ball before the player was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate trailing runner will also be declared out.**

**If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out.**

**If an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out.**

b. Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

### **EXAMPLES:**

1. The right-handed batter who lays down a bunt in front of home plate is on a collision course with the catcher if player runs in a direct line to first base. Each player at this point is within legal rights – the batter taking a path in a direct line to first base, and the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball. The questions that have to be answered are: (1) did the batter alter direction in any way and draw contact in an attempt to receive an obstruction call? (2) Did the catcher alter the attempt to field the ball in any way so as to draw an interference call? and (3) Could the catcher actually make an out on the play?

2. The batter-runner collides with the first baseman who is attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line (towards home plate). The runner has a right to the base line in this case, and the first baseman has the right to field an errant thrown ball. This is the result of the “normal” flow of the game, and the play should be ruled incidental contact with no effect or penalty.

### **SECTION 11.13 - Dislodged Base**

a. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the player nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**EFFECT — The ball is live, and the runner may stay where they are without liability to be put out, or they may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

b. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs.



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c. At the conclusion of play, “Time/Timeout” shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

### **SECTION 11.14 - Fake Tag.**

A fake tag occurs when a fielder who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag, thereby, causing the runner to slow down or stop. A fielder may not fake a tag on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

**PENALTY – Delayed dead ball. The umpire shall award the obstructed player the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance.**

### **SECTION 11.15. – Hit by a Batted Ball**

An umpire or base runner is considered hit by a batted ball if the ball contacts his/her person, attached equipment or clothing:

a. When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is struck by a fair batted ball after it has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

b. When a umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is unavoidably struck by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by a fielder (including the pitcher), and no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (a)-(b) – The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

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

c. When a runner is struck by a fair-batted ball while in contact with a base, they are not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or the fielder making a play. The ball is live or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.

**EFFECT – If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**If the closest defensive player is behind the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, credited**

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**with a base hit, and each other runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the runner are out. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

d. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and (1) before the ball touches an infielder, including the pitcher (2) before the ball passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher who has a reasonable chance to make a play or (3) after passing an infielder including the pitcher, and another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT – Runner interference.**

**The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out.**

**If the runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when struck by an infield fly, they are not out.**

e. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball than in infielder has missed.

**PENALTY – The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

f. When a runner is struck by a fair-batted ball over foul territory and, in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT – The ball is live and in play. The runner who was struck and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

### **SECTION 11.16. - Illegal Glove/Mitt Used to Make a Play**

A fielder shall not make a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove or mitt.

**PENALTY – The coach of the offended team shall have the option to:**

a. Nullify the entire play.

**1) The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the pitch and continues her turn at bat.**

**2) Each runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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

*Note: If the illegal glove/mitt does not meet specifications (Rule 3-7), it shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).*

### **SECTION 11.17 - Leading Off Base .**

Once a runner returns to a base for any reason, they may not leave the base unless (1) a play is made on them or another runner, (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with their base at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand  
**Exception:** If the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a runner to return to a base, the runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

**PENALTY** – The ball is dead, “No pitch” is declared, and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

### **SECTION 11.18. - Look-Back Rule**

a. The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched 1st base or has been called out, and the pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both her feet are on or within the lines. The pitcher must have the ball in their glove or hand.

b. When a runner is legally off their base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing their turn at bat, and player is in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner has one stop, but then must immediately go one direction or the other.

c. Once the runner has determined a direction, they may not change it unless the pitcher:

- 1) Throws the ball from within the pitcher's circle.
- 2) Carries the ball outside the pitcher's circle.
- 3) Has one foot completely outside the pitcher's circle, on the ground, and is in possession of the ball.

## Section 11 – Base Running

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- 4) Sets the ball on the ground.
  - 5) Loses possession of the ball, including handing it to another player.
  - 6) Makes a play on the runner or another runner.
- Note: if the pitcher's circle is not visible, the umpire must use good judgment.*

d. The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

- 1) They fake a throw.

*Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher's arm moves forward.*

- 2) Pitcher makes any aggressive body movement toward the base runner (e.g., steps toward the runner, head and body fakes toward the runner).

e. There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the runner to comply with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the runner.

f. When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:

- 1) A runner standing off their base must immediately return to the base they last occupied or advance to the next base.
- 2) A runner who starts back to the base they last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.
- 3) The batter-runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.
- 4) The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.

**PENALTY (1)-(4) – The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two runners are off base and the umpires call different runners out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first, as it is not possible to obtain more than one out under the look-back rule. The ball is dead when the first runner is called out, and the other runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.**

g. The batter-runner may overrun first base, not stop and advance toward second base after the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle. This is legal as long as the runner does not retouch first base on their way to second base. When the runner has legally started to advance, they may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while in the pitcher's circle or by the pitcher stepping on the pitcher's plate with the ball in possession.

## Section 11 – Base Running

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### SECTION 11.19 - Missing a Base

A runner must touch each base in order when they are advancing or returning to a base and the ball is in play. Missing a base is an appeal play. The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.

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

1) If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly to allow the players to finish the play. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is made (i.e., by tagging either the runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.

2) If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

c. An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.

d. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after a foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.

e. A runner may not return to touch a missed base if: (1) they have left the field of play, (2) a following runner has scored, or (3) is standing on a base beyond the base they missed, and “Time/Timeout” has been called by the umpire, or the ball becomes dead. If the runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, they can continue.

f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch a base and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order.

g. Any runner, who misses the first base to which they are advancing and who is later called out, shall be considered as having advanced one base.

### SECTION 11.20 - Occupying Bases.

a. A runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until they have legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.

## Section 11 – Base Running

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

*Note: If a runner is being run down between bases and the following runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base, if the first runner, however, returns safely to the base they left and both runners then are occupying the same base, the second runner is out if touched with the ball.*

c. A runner, who is touching a base when “Time/Timeout” is called, may not advance during the suspension of play.

### **SECTION 11.21 - Overrunning or Over-sliding Bases .**

a. A batter-runner, who touches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides it, may immediately return without liability to be put out. The batter-runner may legally turn left or right when returning to the base. If, however, runner feints or makes any attempt to advance to second, regardless of whether in fair or foul territory, may be tagged out (while is off base) by a defensive player with the ball. This is an appeal play.

b. A batter-runner may round a base and go directly to the next base without stopping. If, however, stops after rounding a base, and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitching circle, must comply with the look-back rule.

*Note: A batter, who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike, is treated the same as if they batted the ball.*

c. A runner may legally touch home plate and then overrun or over-slide without liability to be put out.

### **SECTION 11.22.- Running Out of the Base Line / Out of the Runner's Lane**

The traditional path traveled by a runner, who is attempting to advance to the next base, is defined by a direct line between the bases and three feet on either side of that line, unless a fielder has the ball in her possession, and is within three feet of the runner and prepared to apply a tag. A base runner, who is running to any base in regular or reverse order and who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession, shall be declared out.

## **Section 11 – Base Running**

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**PENALTY** – The ball is live. The offending runner is out, but each other runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out.

**Exceptions:**

- 1) A runner is not out when they run behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base line in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
- 2) The runner is not out when they fail to run in a direct line to a base provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.

**b.** The batter-runner shall not run outside the runner's lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. This is an interference violation.

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

**Exceptions:**

- 1) The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- 2) The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to touch the base on the last stride.
- 3) The infraction is ignored if the act does not interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

**Notes:**

1. *The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is in contact with the ground and is completely outside either line.*
2. *A batter runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

**Tag and Force Plays – SECTION 11.23.**

- a. A batter-runner or runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play, and is not in contact with a base when legally touched by the ball securely

## Section 11 – Base Running

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held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand(s) or glove/mitt holding the ball.

### Exceptions:

1) A batter-runner, who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides it, may immediately return without liability to be put out provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second

2) If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

3) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither they nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or they may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

b. A batter-runner is out when they legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.

c. A batter-runner or runner is considered forced out if they must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another base runner, but:

1) Is tagged (legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder) before they reach the forced base.

2) The fielder, while holding the ball, contacts the base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.

3) The fielder touches the ball to the forced base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.

d. The runner is out if off base when a fair or foul ball is legally caught, and fails to retouch the base (occupied at the time of the pitch) before a fielder tags her or the base.

e. If an appeal is honored at a base to which a runner was forced to advance and the out is a force out, no runs would score if it was the third out. If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and player may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which forced.

*Note: There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner.*

f. The batter-runner or runner is not out:

1) When touched while off a base with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

*Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.*



## Section 11 – Base Running

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- 2) When touched while off a base with a fielder's hand or glove/mitt when the ball is in the fielder's other hand.
- 3) When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt.
- 4) When an improper live-ball appeal is made (See Appeals, Rule 5-1).

### **SECTION 11.24 - Tagging Up After a Caught Fly Ball.**

- a. The initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch. A base runner is out if they leave the base too soon. Either the runner or the base (left too soon) may be tagged. This is an appeal play.
- b. An appeal must be honored even if the base left too soon was before or after an award. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.
- c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner who must return to a base after a foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- d. A runner may not return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball if: (1) they have left the field of play; (2) a following runner has scored; (3) standing on a base beyond the base they left too soon, and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire; or (4) the ball becomes dead.

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

- e. The failure of a preceding runner to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.
- f. If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a time play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.
- g. A runner may not use a running start from a position behind and not in contact with a base.

**PENALTY** — The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner(s) must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

## Section 11 – Base Running

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### SECTION 11.25. - Touching the Bases

a. An advancing runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home). All awarded bases must also be touched, and in legal order.

*Note: Obstructed runner's are still required to touch all bases in legal order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.*

b. Bases missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing. However, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one they have left too soon on a caught fly ball: (1) once they have left the field of play, (2) once a following runner has scored, (3) when they are standing on a base beyond the base they left too soon and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire or (4) when the ball becomes dead.

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

c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after a foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.

**PENALTY (a)-(c) — For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the runner is out if, before they reach each untouched base, player is touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder. If the base is one to which the runner is forced, player is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base they failed to touch (including home plate).**

*Notes:*

*1) If a runner does not touch home plate and does not make an attempt to touch it, the fielder may touch either the runner or home plate. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is then made by tagging either the runner or home plate, the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.*

*2) When a runner is legally returning to tag up after a caught fly ball, the runner can be put out by being tagged, or by the defense touching the base the runner occupied at the time of the pitch. Each other runner may advance or return with liability to be put out.*

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

## Section 11 – Base Running

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

e. The batter-runner may not move back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch or retouch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

g. When a runner has legally started to advance, may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's plate or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in their possession.

h. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**EFFECT – The ball is live, and the runner may stay where they are without liability to be put out, or they may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, "Time/Timeout" shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.**

i. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, they are entitled to hold the base until player has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

**EFFECT – The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball. For example, if a runner is being run down between bases and the following runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner returns safely to the base they left, however, and both runners are then occupying the same base, the second runner is out if touched with the ball.**

j. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to their base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the runner to return to their base, and the base runner is obligated to return to their base without undue delay.

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

When the ball is dead, the umpire shall not put the ball in play until each runner has retouched their base. However, after allowing sufficient time for each runner to retouch at the end of playing action, the umpire shall declare the runner out.

k. Should “Time/Timeout” be called while a runner is touching a base, they may not advance during a suspension of play.

## **SECTION 12 – Conduct**

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### **SECTION 12.1. - Coaches' Conduct –**

The highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Code of Conduct.

### **SECTION 12.2. - Coaches' Misconduct**

Misconduct is any act of unprofessional behavior that discredits the game of softball. Specifically, a coach shall not remove his or her team from the field or refuse to continue play due to a dispute with game officials.

### **SECTION 12.3 - Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere:

- a. incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators.
- b. Use profanity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.
- c. Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials.

**PENALTY (a)-(c) – The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify their coach. If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection.**

- d. Call "Time/Timeout" or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher throw an illegal pitch. If an illegal pitch is thrown, it shall be declared "No pitch."

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

- e. Take a position in the batter's line of vision or act in any manner to distract the batter.

**PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

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

## SECTION 12 – Conduct

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team has the option of taking the result of the play, or the illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing each other runner one base. If the illegal pitch is “Ball four” or hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner is awarded one base.

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

- f. No fielder shall take position in the runner’s line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit them from seeing the release of the pitch.

**PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

**First violation:** The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify their coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a one-base award to the obstructed runner and each other runner forced to advance.

### SECTION 12.4 - Fighting

The NAFA Softball Rules committee believes there is no place in softball for physical abuse of officials or fighting among opponents. While coaches are responsible for the actions of their players, cooperation is needed from players, coaches, and game officials to prevent incidents.

- a. Physical abuse of game officials is any threat of physical intimidation or harm to include pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact.
- b. Fighting is any physical abuse of an opposing player, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment in a combative manner.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) – Participants who fight or who physically abuse an official shall be ejected from the game.**

***Exceptions:***

- 1) A player involved in a fight who in the act of defending themselves and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
- 2) If a player or coach makes physical contact with another player in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, they shall not be ejected or suspended.

### SECTION 12.5 - Equipment Abuse

No player or coach shall deliberately throw a piece of equipment as a result of disgust or frustration.

**PENALTY – The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual, unless the umpire judges the act to be so flagrant that the offender shall be ejected without warning. Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender.**

## **SECTION 12 – Conduct**

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### **SECTION 12.6 - Intentionally Pitching at a Batter (Pitcher).**

A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter.

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

### **SECTION 12.7 - Use of Video/Electronic Equipment**

- a. Non-uniformed team personnel may sit in the stands for the purpose of videotaping a contest, but may not chart pitches. Any scouting information involving current opponents shall not be relayed to the playing field or to team personnel. A team may film or videotape only contest in which it is playing.
- b. Electronic equipment used to relay information between coaches, players, and other team personnel shall not be allowed. Radar guns used for the purpose of clocking the speed of the ball from pitcher to catcher shall not be allowed. Cell phones must be turned off in dugout, and on the playing field.

**PENALTY – The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual. If use of the equipment continues, the offender shall be ejected.**

### **SECTION 12.8 - Use of Tobacco Products**

- a. The use of tobacco products by players, managers, coaches and trainers is prohibited while on site for practice and competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site.

**PENALTY – Players, managers, coaches and athletic trainers who use tobacco products during practice or competition shall be ejected for the remainder of that practice or competition.**

- b. Umpires, scorers and other game personnel are prohibited from using tobacco products from the commencement of pre-game activities until they leave the competition site.

**PENALTY – If observed by the umpire or game administrator, the offender shall be directed to immediately dispose of the tobacco product. Failure to comply when directed shall result in ejection.**

## SECTION 13 — Umpires

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### SECTION 13.1 - Apparel and Equipment

The NAFA has adopted a mandatory umpire uniform for use throughout all regions of the U.S. and Canada. Heather grey slacks are mandatory for all age levels. Shorts are not acceptable! The NAFA has adopted two primary colors for umpires shirts ... black and grey. These shirts must have the NAFA logo present on the breast of the shirt. Black NAFA umpire caps are the only acceptable option. They should bear the NAFA logo, and American Flag, where possible. No other logo, or insignias are permissible. Numbers are not acceptable on shirts, or outerwear. Grey or black ball bags are acceptable for the home plate umpire. Black shoes without any lettering, markings, or insignia are required for all NAFA umpires (plate and base).

***NOTE: All NAFA Umpire apparel must be purchased through an approved, and officially licensed NAFA supplier. Any reproduction of the NAFA logo, or official apparel is prohibited, unless approved the by the NAFA.***

A. The plate umpire shall wear a black mask, black or tan padding, and black throat protector (An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of a throat protector on the mask).

*Note: An attached throat protector must be commercially manufactured, properly attached and unaltered. A throat protector that is part of the mask shall extend far enough to adequately protect the throat.*

B. It is required that the umpiring crews have a current NAFA Softball Rules Book accessible during the competition.

C. It is strongly recommended that all umpires wear appropriate protective equipment.

### SECTION 13.2 - Duties

Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team personnel to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties. Each umpire is an approved official and is authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpires shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is general information for umpires:

A. It is recommended that the umpire not be affiliated with a team.

B. The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and shall report to the playing field at least 20 minutes ahead of time, start the game at the designated time and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when he/she arrives on the field and reports to the home coach, and it ends when he/she leaves the field after the game.



## **SECTION 13 – Umpires**

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- C. The umpires should introduce themselves to the coaches and other appropriate game management personnel.
- D. The umpires shall inspect the playing field and equipment.
- E. At the pre-game meeting, the plate umpire shall clarify all ground rules for the representatives of each team.
- F. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing tie or during suspension of play
- G. No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his or her respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- H. An umpire should consult his or her associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it is to make the decision and who requests the opinion of the other umpire(s).
- I. In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes shall be designated as the plate umpire, while the umpire(s) whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions shall be designated as the base umpire(s).
- J. The plate umpire and base umpires shall have equal authority to: (1) call runner out for leaving a base too soon; (2) call "Time/Timeout" for suspension of play; (3) eject or suspend a player, coach or other team personnel; and (4) call illegal pitches.
- K. The umpire shall declare the batter or runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire shall not call a player out for: (1) missing a base, (2) leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched, (3) attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base and (4) batting out of order.
- L. The umpire shall not penalize a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the penalty would be an advantage to the offending team. 0

### **SECTION 13.3. - Plate Umpire**

The plate umpire shall:

- A. Have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- B. Take a position behind the catcher.
- C. Have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.

## **SECTION 13 – Umpires**

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D Call and count all balls and strikes and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes.

E By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire, make decisions on plays, fair or foul balls and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield in a two-umpire system, the plate umpire will assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.

F Determine and declare whether: (1) a batter bunts, (2) a batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter and (3) a fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.

G Call or indicate “Play/Play ball” to start the game or resume play, “Time/Timeout” to temporarily suspend play and “Game” to terminate play for a regulation game.

H Announce each substitution to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer, if applicable.

I Render base decisions as indicted in the NAFA umpire’s manual.

J Have the lights turned on when necessary for safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.

K Be the sole judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play should bad weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game.

L Penalize rule infractions (such as illegal pitch, interference, delay of the game, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsportsmanlike conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher).

M Conduct the pre-game meeting with the representatives of the opposing teams five minutes before the scheduled starting time.

N Assume all duties when circumstances warrant starting or finishing a game as a single umpire.

### **SECTION 13.4 - Base Umpire(s).**

The base umpire(s) shall:

A Take such positions on the playing field as outlined in the NAFA umpire’s manual.

B Assist the plate umpire in administering the rules of the game.

C Render base decisions as indicated in the NAFA umpire’s manual.

D Call base runners out for leaving before the pitch has been released.

### **SECTION 13.5 - Change of Umpires.**

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

## SECTION 13 — Umpires

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### SECTION 13.6. - Pre-game Responsibilities

Before the start of the game, the plate umpire shall:

A For legality and safety, inspect the equipment, particularly the bats, catcher's helmets, batting helmets, and cleats. Umpires should make certain that dented bent or illegal bats or broken helmets are not available for use during the game (i.e., not allowed in the dugout).

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

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

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

C Have two balls to replenish the supply of game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:

- 1) A ball has been hit out of the playing field.
- 2) A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play.
- 3) The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

### SECTION 13.7. - Pre-game Meeting

Five minutes before the scheduled starting time, the plate umpire shall conduct the pre-game meeting with the representatives of the opposing teams. During this meeting, the plate umpire shall:

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

*Note: Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*

B Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. Where the teams do not agree the umpires shall determine ground rules.

## SECTION 13 – Umpires

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C Review special game rules (e.g., tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules).

D Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.

### SECTION 13.8 - Procedures at End of Game

At the completion of the game, the plate umpire shall return the game balls to the appropriate games management staff or coach and report any flagrant conduct or irregularity associated with the game. The umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play or protest. The umpires shall leave the field together in as polite, businesslike and inconspicuous a manner as possible.

### SECTION 13.9 - Umpire's Judgment

- a. Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed but is never subject to protest. There will be no protest on such judgments as whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a runner was safe or out, a pitched ball was a ball or strike; or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with his or her associate(s) before taking any action but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules. **Exception:** On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the catcher, the plate umpire may seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball.
- b. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.
- c. The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

## SECTION 13 — Umpires

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### SECTION 13.10 - Suspension of Play

- a. An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
- 1) When, in his/her judgment, conditions justify such action.
  - 2) When he/she leaves his/her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
  - 3) When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
  - 4) If a fair batted ball hits the umpire before passing an infielder (See Rule 9-16).
- b. An umpire shall not temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
- 1) While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
  - 2) After the pitcher has started delivery.
  - 3) In case of injury until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at their base. **Exception:** When necessary to protect an injured player, the umpire may suspend play immediately.
  - 4) At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed.

### SECTION 13.11. - Umpire's Responsibility for a Protest

All protests must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NAFA rules, the plate umpire must: (a) allow the coach the right to file a protest; (b) announce to each coach, to the official scorer that the game is being played under protest; and (c) note and record the game situation at the time of protest.

### SECTION 13.12. - Umpire's Responsibility for an Appeal

Only the defensive team may make an appeal to the umpires. Once the appeal is made to the umpire whose responsibility it was to watch the base and base runner, that umpire will step forward and make the proper call.

**SECTION 13.13. - Umpire's Responsibility for Ejections and/or Suspensions** —The umpire has the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game (which is ejection) for just cause.

## **SECTION 14 - 8U & 10U RULES in some areas**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Bases Pitching</b>		<b>Recommended Fence</b>
<b>Distance</b>			
8-U	60'	30'	175
10-U	60'	35'	175

### ***Rule 3 – Equipment and Uniforms***

#### **Ball Section 1.**

In 8U and 10U, the yellow optic cover, 11-inch ball, with a COR of .47 shall be used in all NAFA play.

### ***Rule 10 – Batting***

#### **Dropped Third Strike Rule Section 13.**

- a. In 8U and in some 10U play, on a dropped third strike the batter is out, but the ball remains live for the runners who can advance or steal.
- b. In some areas runners must be thrown out if the 3rd strike is dropped. Runners cannot advance home.

#### **Infield Fly Rule**

#### **Section 17.**

#### **Notes:**

In 10 & Under play the Infield fly rule will be enforced.

### ***Rule 11 – Base Running***

#### **Base Runner(s)**

#### **Base Runner May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out**

#### **Section 4.**

**Exceptions:** (to be included after EFFECT (a)-(j))

In 8U and in some 10U play:

- a. All runners may advance with liability to be put out as specified. Like all other runners they may not be declared out while in sole possession of a base.
- b. Runners occupying first or second base at the time of the pitch are permitted to advance only one base per un-hit, legally pitched ball. If they advance more than one base by stealing, they shall be returned to the correct base (either second or third) without liability to be put out when play becomes dead.
- c. A runner occupying third base at the time of the pitch may not advance to home on un-hit, legally pitched ball unless the base is awarded. If they advance safely to home by stealing on the play, they shall be returned to third base when play becomes dead.
- d. The batter, after receiving a base on balls, is permitted to advance only to first base without liability to be put out. If they advance beyond first base safely, they will be returned to first base when play becomes dead.
- e. Awarded bases originating from obstruction or the ball entering dead ball territory, will not exceed the advance limitations specified in these exceptions.
- f. Awards resulting from base on balls, hit batters and illegal pitches shall all be imposed as specified in the NAFA rulebook, regardless of the base occupied

## Code of Conduct

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

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current NAFA Softball Rules.
- b. Ensure their players are legally equipped, and properly attired for competitions and practices.
- c. Confine discussions with the game officials to the interpretation of the playing rules. Do not bring a rule book on the playing field.
- d. Comply wholeheartedly with the spirit and intent of the playing rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible.
- e. Teach players to respect the dignity and integrity of the game, opponents, officials, spectators, and institutions they represent.
- f. Prohibit team personnel from using profanity or making personal or malicious remarks towards opponents, officials, and spectators.
- g. Refrain from personnel actions that may arouse players or spectators to unsportsmanlike behavior.
- h. Coaches should be in control of players at all times, in order to prevent any unsportsmanlike act toward officials, opponents, or spectators.
- i. Seek assistance from an onsite administrator, or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly fans or spectators.
- j. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude towards the game and its participants.

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

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current NAFA Softball Rules.
- b. Be fair and unbiased in making decisions, rendering them without regard to the score or the quality of play on the field.
- c. Honor all assignments and contracts.
- d. Tobacco and alcohol are prohibited.
- e. When in uniform or onsite do not fraternize with players, coaches and/or spectators.
- f. Cooperate with your partner(s) to arrive at decisions that are ultimately fair and correct.
- g. Listen to coaches concerns, and respond in a professional manner.
- h. Information that might be used by a team's future opponent is not to be shared.
- i. Seek assistance from onsite administrators, or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly fans and spectators.
- j. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude towards the game and its participants.

## **Age Qualifications, Rosters, and Boundaries**

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**Age cutoff** - January 1st of the current year, players age on January 1st determines the age division she is eligible to participate in. Players may play up in age division, but not down.

10 & Under with birthdates on January 1 or after of the current year.  
12 & Under with birthdates on January 1 or after of the current year.  
14 & Under with birthdates on January 1 or after of the current year.  
16 & Under with birthdates on January 1 or after of the current year.  
18 & Under with birthdates on January 1 or after of the current year.

18 & Under team may elect to play "B", "A", or Elite, However any team with three or more Division 1 College players must play "Elite".

### **Rosters**

Rostering of players for championship play.

- a) No player will be allowed to be on more than one roster for participating in advancing to National play in any age or classification.
- b) State Directors will have the discretion regarding rostered players in qualifying tournaments leading to National play within their state.
- c) Teams may create a weekend roster for local play, this will be used to insure players will play on only one teams in a local tournament.
- d) Number of Players: A maximum of 20 players, including pickups, shall be permitted on a team's championship roster. Teams are allowed to pickup players for National Play as long as the player does not participate on more than one team for a National Tournament.
- e) NAFA allows for electronic and pdf type rosters, as long as the roster lists legal rights of our organization, a statement that players can be injured playing our sport, and that minor players have parents sign the copy of the roster presented.

### **Boundries**

NAFA has no boundaries or restrictions on players other than Elite players at 18U regarding division 1 players.



## Appendix A

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An official NAFA softball bat rule is in the process of development. Until the process is completed, the NAFA will use the official bat rule of the NCAA. The text of the NCAA official bat rule used by the NAFA is set forth in this appendix. The NAFA gratefully acknowledges the NCAA 's generosity in affording the NAFA permission to adopt and reprint the rule herein.

### **The Official Bat:**

- a. Shall be made of one piece of hardwood, or formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive in such a way that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat.
- b. Shall be metal, plastic, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic, titanium or any other composite material approved by the NAFA. Any new composite construction bat must be reviewed and approved by the NAFA.
- c. May be laminated but must contain only wood or adhesive and have a clear finish (if finished).
- d. Shall be round and smooth. If the barrel end has a knurled finish the maximum surface roughness shall not be more than 250 if measured by a profilometer or 4/1000 if measured by a spectrograph.
- e. Shall not be more than 34 inches (87.0 cm) long nor exceed 38 ounces (1100.0 g) in weight.
- f. Shall not be more than 2 1/4 inches (6.0 cm) in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/32 inch (0.90 mm) is permitted to allow for expansion on the round bat.

*Note: If the bat ring goes over the bat, it should be considered a legal bat.*

- g. There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the large end.
- h. Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of burrs and cracks.
- i. If metal, shall not have a wooden handle.
- j. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The safety grip shall not be less than 10 inches (25.0 cm) long and shall

## Appendix A

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not extend more than 15 inches (40.0 cm) from the small end of the bat. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the safety grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral. It does not have to be a solid layer of tape. It may not exceed two layers. Taping of a bat less than the required length is considered illegal.

- k If metal and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other approved material insert firmly secured at the large end of the bat.
- l Shall have a safety knob of a minimum of 1/4 inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A "flare" or "cone" grip attached to the bat will be considered altered. The knob may be taped as long as there is no violation of this section.
- m Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read due to wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.
- n Shall not have dents or flat spots that prevent a bat ring from passing over the length of the bat. In determining whether a bat is legal, the ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.