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If you have questions about becoming an Area Director contact our  
National Office.**

### **The Mission of SportsNation/SoftballNation/BaseballNation**

To provide a competitive sports environment for member teams through fair play, integrity and sportsmanship. To encourage participation in these sports in accordance with the highest traditions of competition. To promote the game of softball and baseball.

By sanctioning with SportsNation/SoftballNation/BaseballNation, each team agrees to abide by the rules in this rule book and the guidelines set forth.

**Updates and Revisions:**

**This Rule Book is the 2020-2021 edition. Any and all updates and changes to these rules will be found on the official SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation website:  
www.softballnation.com or www.Baseball-Nation.com**

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_



# General SoftballNation Rules & Guidelines

Sec. 1 Any player participating in any SPORTSNATION sanctioned event must be physically able to participate. The player must be able to walk on and off the field and play the game as intended. This is to keep injured players from further injury.

Sec. 2 Team Insurance: At all levels of youth play, certificates of team insurance must be presented to either the League or Tournament Director. Teams are not required to purchase insurance through SPORTSNATION, but any insurance purchased must be equal to or greater than the team insurance offered by the SPORTSNATION insurance provider. 23U teams that purchase insurance must purchase adult insurance.

NOTE: Teams are not required to purchase SPORTSNATION team insurance, but any insurance purchased must be equal to or greater than the team insurance offered by SPORTSNATION.

Sec. 3 Adult division teams, including the 23U teams, must purchase the adult insurance if purchasing insurance.

Sec. 4 Communicable Disease Procedures:

When a player is bleeding or has an open wound, the bleeding must be stopped and the open wound covered with a bandage/dressing strong enough to withstand the rigors of competition. This treatment must be immediate and a suspension of play for a reasonable amount of time, will be awarded the team. Should the treatment of this wound exceed a reasonable amount of time, the affected player must be substituted. If no substitute is available, the team may play on with one less player until the affected player can continue, with all penalties as set forth by all other rules in affect. When the affected player can continue, he/she may re-enter the lineup. Return to play will be determined by appropriate medical personnel or the home plate umpire. Any player whose uniform is saturated with blood, regardless of the source, must follow the same guidelines as stated above for a person bleeding and must have that uniform changed, if determined necessary, before returning to the game.

NOTE: A reasonable amount of time will be determined by the home plate umpire and will be no less than five minutes.

Sec. 5 Alcohol and Tobacco: No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the dugouts or on the field during any SPORTSNATION sanctioned event. No tobacco products are allowed in the dugouts or on the field for the entire SPORTSNATION youth program.

Sec. 6 Admission Fee: No youth player will be charged admission to any SPORTSNATION youth tournament, above and beyond the team entry fee.

Sec. 7 Scorekeepers: It is the option of the Tournament Director to either use or not use an official scorekeeper. If an official scorekeeper is not used, the home team will be the official scorer and it is the obligation of the visiting team to verify the score at the end of each half inning.

Sec. 8 Team Sanctioning/Registration: By sanctioning your team with SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation, you are agreeing to abide by all rules and regulations set forth by SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation. Failure to abide by these rules and regulations may result in the team's removal from a league or tournament without refund. By participating with a team in any event sanctioned by SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation every player is agreeing to abide by the rules, regulations and potential penalties set forth in this rule book. Failure to abide by the rules and regulations in this rule book may result in immediate suspension from participation without refund.

## Definitions

**ALTERED BAT:** (Rule 2. Sec. 1) A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or an illegal or non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat. Examples of altering a bat are, but not limited to, the following: painting a bat, replacing the handle of a metal bat with a wooden or other type handle, inserting material inside the bat, or shaving material out of the inside of the bat.

A flare or cone grip that does not meet the specifications of the rules in this book is considered an altered bat.

**EFFECT:** If discovered before the next pitch, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and all base runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is ejected for using an altered bat. In Slow-Pitch, the player will be suspended for a period up to two calendar years.

**APPEAL PLAY:** A play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a manager, coach, or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, or before all fielders (including the pitcher) have left the field (crossed the foul lines), or on game-ending plays, before the umpires have left the field. There are four types of appeals: (1) Missing a Base, either advancing or returning; (2) Leaving too soon (before the ball is touched) on a caught fly ball; (3) Batting Out of Order or using an Illegal Substitute or Re-entry; and (4) Attempting to advance to second base after legally overrunning first base on a hit or base on balls. There are two methods of making an appeal: (1) Live Ball and (2) Dead Ball.

For a Live Ball Appeal, any fielder in possession of the ball may either tag the base missed (type 1) or left too soon (type 2) or the runner in violation, even if standing on a base. For the type 4 appeal, the runner must be tagged while off base.

For a Dead Ball Appeal, after all runners have advanced and 'time' has been called, any fielder or coach/manager, with or without the ball, may make a verbal request to rule on a type 1, 2, or 3 appeal. More than one appeal may be made on any given play.

**APPROVED BAT:** A bat model that has met the requirements set forth by SPORTSNATION for fair and safe competition.

**BALL ROTATION:** A pitcher will have a choice of balls at the start of each half inning, with the exception that if both balls do not get into play in the first half inning, the pitcher, in the bottom of the first inning, must pitch the unused ball. Thereafter, every third out, the ball in play must be returned to the pitcher's plate. The pitcher, now taking the field, has a ball to start the next half inning. Before throwing a warm-up pitch, the pitcher may request the other ball, giving the ball in his/her possession to the plate umpire. A choice has now been made, and the pitcher must pitch this ball until it goes out of play or becomes blocked.

**BASE LINE:** A direct line between two consecutive bases.

**BASE PATH:** The traditional path traveled by a runner who is attempting to advance to the next base. A runner who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three (3) feet to either side of the direct line to the next or preceding base shall be declared out. Note: A runner establishes her own base path when she is not being played upon.

**BASE RUNNER OR RUNNER:** A player on the team at bat who has finished his/her batting turn, reached first base, and has not yet been put out.

**BATTED BALL** refers to any pitched ball that is hit by the bat or that hits the bat, thus becoming either a Fair or Foul Ball. No intent to hit the ball is necessary.

**BATTER'S BOX:** The area in which the batter is restricted to while in position to bat. The batter must have both feet entirely within the lines of the box prior to the pitch (the lines are considered to be within the box).

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

**BATTER HIT BY PITCH:** A legal or illegally pitched ball that hits the batter's person or clothing provided the batter does not strike at the pitched ball. The plate umpire will award first base to the batter hit by the pitch. Any runners will advance one base if forced due to the batter being awarded first base. If an illegal pitch hits the batter, all base runners will advance one base without liability to be put out.

**EXCEPTION:** If the batter makes no effort to avoid being hit by the pitched ball or if the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the ball striking the batter is disregarded, and the ball is dead. The pitched ball is a strike or ball depending on the location of the pitched ball.

**BATTING HELMET:** A batting helmet bearing the NOCSAE stamp is mandatory for each batter, on-deck batter, player, youth coach in the coach's box and any runner. The batting helmet worn by each batter, on-deck batter, player and youth coach in the coaches' boxes and all runners must have extended ear flaps which cover both ears and temples. If a pitcher wears a batting helmet, the outer covering must have a non-glare surface. In Youth Fast-Pitch, it is mandatory that all batters, runners, on-deck batters, and youth coaches in the coaches' boxes wear faceguards and it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that all faceguards be NOCSAE approved.

**BATTING ORDER:** The batting order is the official lineup of offensive players listing the order in which team members must come to bat. A lineup card must include each player's name, number, and defensive position. Extra Players (EH) and Designated Hitters (DH) must also be included.

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

**NOTE:** A blocked ball is not called when a live ball unintentionally strikes a base coach.

**NOTE:** For offensive equipment causing a blocked ball and a play is being made, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball becomes blocked.

**NOTE:** For defensive equipment causing a blocked ball, all runners will be awarded two bases from the time of the throw, or the time of the pitch if the batted ball becomes blocked.

**BUNT:** A bunt is a legally batted ball in which the batter does not take a full swing but holds the bat in such a manner as to tap the ball slowly to the infield.

**EFFECT (SLOW PITCH):** The ball is dead, the batter is out, and base runners may not advance.

**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 before the pitch reaches the plate.

**CATCH:** A catch is a legally caught ball that occurs when a fielder secures a batted or thrown ball with his/her hand or glove. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arms, or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body or clothing, the catch is not complete until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, immediately after he/she contacts the ball, collides with another player, or wall (fence), or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall have complete control of the ball, and his/her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.

**NOTE:** An intentionally dropped ball is a fair fly, line drive, or bunted ball that has first been caught, by definition of a catch, by an infielder and is then intentionally dropped in an attempt to confuse or obtain additional outs.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, the batter-runner is called out, and all other runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

**CATCHER’S BOX (Slow Pitch):** The catcher’s box is the area in which the catcher must stay until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catcher’s box. The lines of the box are considered within the box. All of the catcher’s body and equipment must be within the catcher’s box until the ball is batted or reaches the catcher’s box. An illegal pitch is called if the batter does not swing.

**CATCHER’S BOX (Fast Pitch):** The catcher’s box is the area in which the catcher must stay until the pitched ball is released. The lines of the box are considered within the box. All of the catcher’s body and equipment must be within the catcher’s box until the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire will signal and indicate an illegal pitch if the catcher is not in proper position.

**CHARGED CONFERENCE:** A charged conference is when a coach or manager or any dugout/bench personnel requests and is granted a time-out to meet with offensive or defensive personnel. It is not a charged conference when the offensive team’s pitcher (as a base runner) is putting on a warm-up jacket while on base or if the offensive team confers while the defensive team is in conference and vice versa.

**CHOPPED BALL:** When the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion so that the ball bounces high into the air this is considered a chopped hit ball. The chopping motion should resemble that of chopping a piece of wood lying on the ground.

**EFFECT (SLOW PITCH):** The ball is dead, the batter is out, and base runners may not advance.

**COACH:** A member of the team at bat who takes his place in the coach’s box to direct his/her players in running the bases. Two coaches are allowed, one at first base, and one at third base. One coach can have in his possession a scorebook and an indicator, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only.

The defensive coaches/manager must remain in the dugout, as their normal position, when their team is playing defense. If the manager or coach does not comply after a warning from the umpire, he/she will be ejected from the game.

**CROW HOP:** Prior to delivering the pitch, the pitcher replants the pivot foot and pushes off from a spot other than the pitcher’s plate.

**DEAD BALL:** The ball is not in play and not considered in play again, until the pitcher has the ball in his possession and the umpire has called or indicated “play ball”.

**DELAYED DEAD BALL:** A situation in which a violation of a rule occurs and is recognized by the umpire by giving the delayed dead-ball signal, but is not ruled upon until the ball becomes dead.

**DIVISIONS OF PLAY: SOFTBALL NATION** has divisions of play for men, women, and a Coed Division for both to compete in jointly. The Men’s Division is designed for men 18 years of age and older. The Women’s Division is designed for women 18 years of age and older. The player must already be 18 to compete in the Adult Division. Males may not compete in the female division and females may not compete in the male division in any program. This also applies to the Youth Program. The cut-off date for the youth age eligibility is December 31<sup>st</sup>. Whatever age the child is on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the prior year is the eligible division for the current year.

**Examples:** (i) A child who turns age 13 on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year is ineligible to play 12U in the next year.

(ii) A child who turns age 13 on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year is eligible to play 12U for the current year.

a. A player cannot play in two (2) age divisions in one tournament.

b. A player may play up one age group but never down in an age group.

**EXCEPTION:** A player who turns 11, 13, or 15 years of age in the current year, may move up two (2) divisions and may play in the 14U, 16U, or the 18U age divisions, respectively.

- c. Proof of age must be verified by one of the following: (1) government-issued I.D.; (2) copy of the birth certificate. The document must accompany youth players at all times.
- d. Teams may have no more than twenty (20) players on their roster.
- e. Adult Division softball (male & female) players are eligible for Adult Division play once they have reached their eighteenth (18th) birthday.
- f. 23Under Division: 23U teams are considered adult teams. The 23U division will play by the adult rules including the age eligibility rule

**DOUBLE PLAY:** A continuous play by the Defense where two offensive players are legally put out without an intervening play or an error.

**FAIR BALL:** A fair ball is a batted ball that:

- a. Settles on fair territory between home plate and 1st base or home plate and 3rd base
- b. Is on or over fair territory, including any part of 1st and 3rd bases, when bounding toward the outfield, or touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base
- c. First falls in fair territory beyond 1st or 3rd base
- d. While in or over fair territory, touches the person of any umpire or player
- e. While over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence

**NOTE:** A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and foul line and not as to the position of the fielder at the time he/she touches the ball. It does not matter whether the ball first touches fair or foul territory, as long as it does not touch anything foreign to the natural ground in foul territory and complies with all other aspects of a fair ball. Home plate is in fair territory.

**FAIR TERRITORY:** The part of the Playing Area within and including the First and Third Base Foul Lines, from the Home Plate to the bottom of the extreme playing area fence and then extending perpendicularly upward.

**FAKE TAG:** Making the motions of a tag without the ball. This may be considered obstruction, and the offender may be ejected.

**FLAGRANT PLAYER OBSTRUCTION:** A defensive fielder shall not at any time flagrantly, with or without excessive force, impede the batter/runner or any other base runner. **PENALTY:** Immediate ejection of the defensive player.

**FLOATING RUBBER:** An area that includes the pitching rubber and the area behind the pitching rubber that is not more than five feet behind the pitching rubber and not wider than the width of the rubber. In slow pitch only, a pitcher may take his/her pitching position from anywhere within this area.

**FORCE OUT:** A force out is an out which can be made only when a base runner loses the right to the base he is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-base runner and before the batter-runner or a succeeding base runner has been put out..

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

- a. Settles on foul territory between home and 1st base or home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st and 3rd base on or over foul territory.
- c. Falls first on foul territory beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d. While on or over foul ground, touches an umpire, player or foreign object to the natural ground.

**NOTE:** A foul fly ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not the position of the fielder.

**FOUL TIP: (Slow Pitch)** A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batters head, to the catcher's hands or glove/mitt, and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike. The batter is out if it is the third strike. A foul tip is a dead ball.

(Fast Pitch) A foul tip is a batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hand(s) or glove/mitt, and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike and the ball remains alive. A runner may advance with liability to be put out from one base to another on a foul tip without tagging. The foul tip is treated as if it were a swing and miss. Any batted ball that rises and is caught by any fielder is a foul ball, and if legally caught, the batter is out.

**HOME TEAM:** Team on whose grounds the game is being played; or, if the game is scheduled on neutral grounds, it is decided by mutual agreement or a coin toss. Home Team bats in the last half of the innings.

**ILLEGAL BAT:** An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements contained in this rule book or has not been approved by **SOFTBALL NATION**.

**ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL:** An illegally batted ball occurs when:

- a. A batter's entire foot is completely out of the box on the ground when he/she hits the ball, fair or foul.
- b. Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate when he/she hits the ball.
- c. The batter hits the ball with a bat that is illegal, altered, or non-approved by **SOFTBALL NATION**.

**ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL:** Occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his cap, illegal glove or any part of his/her uniform detached from its proper place.

**ILLEGAL PLAYER:** A player who enters the line-up without the right to the offensive or defensive position.

Examples of, but not limited to, illegal players are:

1. Illegal use of the re-entry rule
2. Illegal use of the substitution rule
3. Illegal use of the Courtesy Runner rule
4. Using a player to pitch who was removed from the pitching position by rule

**NOTE:** Use of an illegal player will result in an out being declared on the player (if still on base) and the player is ineligible to play the remainder of that game. If the player is playing defense and the infraction is discovered before the next pitch (legal or illegal), then any out made on the play will be voided, the player ejected, the batter will be awarded first base, and all other runners will advance only if forced.

**INELIGIBLE PLAYER:** A player who is unregistered or who does not meet the requirements to register.

Examples of, but not limited to, an ineligible player(s) are:

1. Playing under an assumed name
2. Players not on the team roster (unless a guest player)
3. Violating residence requirements
4. Violating divisional age requirements
5. Player(s) that are listed on two (2) official **SOFTBALL NATION** sanctioned rosters without an official release form on file with the Area Director's Office.

**NOTE:** Use of an ineligible player will result in a forfeit of the game if appealed properly.

**INFIELD:** The portion of the field within the baselines and also includes the areas of the field normally covered by Infielders in defensive positions.

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

**INFIELD FLY:** An infield fly is a fair ball, not including a line drive, which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases are occupied with less than 2 outs. Any fielder can catch an infield fly.

**NOTE:** When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare “INFIELD FLY – BATTER IS OUT” to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare “INFIELD FLY – BATTER IS OUT, IF FAIR”.

The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after a fielder touches the ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball.

**INNING:** An inning is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate between offense/defense and there are three outs for each team. A new inning begins when the third out of the bottom of an inning is recorded.

**INTERFERENCE:** Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member, which impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play, or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline. No contact is necessary for interference to be called. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

**NOTE:** An infielder is still considered in the act of fielding a batted ball if he/she has bobbed the initial play on the ball and still is within a step and a reach of replaying the ball.

**Effect:** The ball is dead immediately, the player who interferes is declared out, and all base runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the interference.

**INTERFERENCE:** (Spectator Interference): Any person or entity not involved in the game reaching into or in the field of play that interferes with normal play.

**Effect:** The ball is dead immediately; the umpire will make a ruling that will nullify the act of the interference.

**LEAP:** An action by the pitcher who has both feet clearly off the ground during the delivery of a pitch. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher’s plate or the ground until the non pivot (front foot) touches the ground or the pitcher shall be considered leaping.

**EFFECT:** An illegal pitch is called on the pitcher.

**LEGAL TOUCH:** A legal touch occurs when a runner or batter-runner, who is not touching a base, is touched by the ball while the ball is securely held in a fielder’s hand or glove. The ball is not considered as being securely held if it is juggled or dropped by the fielder after having touched the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand/glove of the fielder.

**LEGALLY CAUGHT BALL:** A legally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball, provided the ball is not caught in the fielder’s cap, hat, pocket, protector or any other part of his/her uniform. It must be caught and firmly held with the hand or hands.

**LINE DRIVE:** A Fly Ball that is batted sharply and directly into the Playing Field.

**NOTE:** A Line Drive should never be considered an Infield Fly.

**LIVE BALL:** A live ball occurs when the Umpire signals Play Ball. The ball remains live until the ball becomes dead for any reason as stated in these rules.

**MANAGER:** A person appointed by the Team to be responsible for the Team’s actions on the Field. Also, the Manager represents the Team when communicating with officials or the opposing team.

**OBSTRUCTION:** Obstruction is the act of a defensive team member who hinders or impedes a batter’s attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is initially fielding a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

**NOTE:** Catcher obstruction is called when the catcher obstructs the batter who is attempting to hit or swing at a pitch. Prior to the pitch, catcher obstruction does not apply, a dead ball shall be called and the batter will be allowed to re-set him/herself.

**ON-DECK BATTER:** The player (or substitute) whose turn at bat immediately follows the current batter. The On-Deck batter must remain in one of the on-deck circles during and between pitches. The on-deck batter must vacate the on-deck circle to avoid fielders making plays. The on-deck batter may also leave the on-deck circle to direct runners at home plate or to remove a bat from the runner's path. For safety reasons, on-deck batters shall not take 'full cut' practice swings while outside the on-deck circle.

**OUT:** One of the three requirements of retiring the Offensive Team each inning.

**OUTFIELD:** The portion of the field beyond the lines of the infield and extending to the extremities of the Playing Field. This usually refers to the area of the grass in playable territory.

**OVERSLIDE:** An over-slide is the act of the offensive player sliding beyond a base he/she is attempting to reach. This is usually caused when his/her momentum causes him/her to lose contact with the base, which then causes him/her to be in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over-slide 1st base, without being in jeopardy, if he/she immediately returns to that base.

**OVERTHROW:** An overthrow is a play in which a ball is thrown to retire a runner who has not yet reached or is off base and goes into dead ball territory beyond the boundary lines of the playing field..

**PASSED BALL:** A pitch that the catcher fails to, with ordinary effort, stop or control and which enables any runner to advance.

**PITCH:** Any delivery of the ball to the Batter by the Pitcher.

**PITCHER:** The Fielder designated to deliver the Pitch to the Batter.

**PIVOT FOOT:** The pitcher's foot that must be in contact with the pitcher's plate or ground until the pitcher steps towards home plate.

**PLAY or PLAY BALL:** The term used by the Umpire to indicate that play shall begin or continue after a dead ball interval.

**PLAYER PARTICIPATION:** SOFTBALL NATION considers a player to be a participant of a game when the line-up card with substitutions is turned into the umpire or official scorekeeper, or is announced.

**PLAYING FIELD:** The playing field is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded. The playing field shall have a clear and unobstructed area within the radius of the prescribed fence distances.

**QUICK PITCH:** A quick pitch is made by the pitcher with the attempt to catch the batter off balance. This would be before the batter takes his/her position in the batter's box, or while he/she is still off balance as a result of the previous pitch.

**NOTE:** When a Quick Pitch is declared by the Umpire, the ball is dead and the pitch is cancelled (neither a ball nor a strike).

**RETOUCH:** The act of a Runner returning to touch a Base as legally required.

**SACRIFICE BUNT:** A batter is credited with a sacrifice bunt when, with less than two outs, the bunt enables a runner to advance at least one base and the batter is put out before reaching first base, or would have been put out if the bunt had been fielded without error.

**SACRIFICE FLY:** A batter is credited with a sacrifice when, with less than two outs, a hit fly ball enables a runner to score and the batter is put out before reaching first base or would have been put out if the hit had been fielded without error.

**STEALING (STOLEN BASE/DOUBLE STEAL):** The act of a runner attempting to advance to the next base without the aid of a hit ball, putout, base on balls, fielder's choice, or a fielding error. An attempted steal involving more than one runner (two or three) is considered a double or triple steal. The act of a runner attempting to advance during the pitch or after the pitch has reached the plate is considered to be the act of stealing.

**NOTE:** In Slow Pitch, stealing is not allowed.

**STRIKE ZONE (SP)** The strike zone is that space over any part of the plate between the batter's highest shoulder and his/her front knee when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. Where the ball contacts the ground or glove has no bearing on the actual strike zone.

**STRIKE ZONE (FP):** The strike zone is that space over any part of home plate with the top edge being halfway between the batter's forward armpit and beltline and the lower edge at the bottom of the batter's knees when the natural batting stance is assumed. Any part of the ball passing through this strike zone is considered a strike. The umpire is instructed to determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when swinging at a pitch.

**SQUEEZE PLAY:** A play in which the runner from third base advances toward home plate following the release of the pitched ball, and the batter bunts the ball permitting the runner to score.

**TAG:** The action of a Fielder touching a Base with any part of his/her body while holding the ball firmly and securely in his/her hand or glove. Also, Tag refers to touching the Runner with the ball, or with the glove holding the ball, while continuously holding the ball firmly and securely during and immediately following the tag.

**TEAM REPRESENTATIVE:** Any person affiliated with the Offensive or Defensive Team, including Sponsors, Managers, Coaches, and Players in a Game.

**THREE-FOOT LINE:** A line (drawn or undrawn) parallel to, and three feet from the 1<sup>st</sup> base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and 1st base and extending to the outer edge of 1<sup>st</sup> base. The batter-base runner is declared out when he/she runs outside the three foot line, and in the judgment of the umpire, interferes, either intentionally or unintentionally, with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or with a thrown ball coming from the vicinity of home plate.

**THROW:** The act of propelling the ball with the hand or arm toward another defensive player and is always distinguished from the Pitch.

**TIE BREAKER/EXTRA INNINGS (SP/FP):** After the completion of seven (7) innings or when the time limit has expired and the score is still tied, the tie-breaker procedure will begin. This would involve the last batter of the previous inning, whose turn at bat had been completed, assuming an initial starting position on second base. This would be done at the beginning of each half inning; until, at the conclusion of a full inning, a winner is determined.

**TIME:** The term used by the Umpire to order suspension of play.

**TRIPLE PLAY:** Any continuous play made by the Defense in which three Runners are put out, provided that there is no error made between the outs.

**TURN AT BAT:** A player's turn at bat begins when he/she enters the batter's box and continues until he/she is put out or becomes a base runner.

**WILD PITCH:** A pitch that cannot be handled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

# SLOW PITCH GENERAL PLAYING RULES

NOTE: If there are no qualifying or state tournaments in a state or region, invitations can be issued by the National Office for a team to participate in the respective Slow Pitch Nationals.

## RULE 1 – THE PLAYING FIELD

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

a. ADULT DIVISION MINIMUM DISTANCE Male 275 feet

Sec. 2 Ground rules or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed upon by leagues or opposing teams whenever backstops, fences, stands, vehicles, spectators, or other obstructions are within the prescribed area.

Sec. 3 The playing field layout should include, in addition to marking for foul lines, the following:

- a. THE THREE-FOOT LINE is drawn parallel to and 3 feet from the base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and 1st base.
- b. THE BATTER'S ON-DECK CIRCLE is a 5-foot circle placed between home plate and 1<sup>st</sup> base and between home plate and 3rd base.
- c. THE BATTER'S BOX, one on each side of home plate, shall measure 3 feet by 7 feet. The inside lines of the batter's box shall be 6 inches from home plate. The front line shall be 4 feet in front of the center of the plate. The lines are considered as being in the box.
- d. THE CATCHER'S BOX shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be 8 feet 5 inches wide
- e. THE COACHES BOX is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to, and eight feet from, the foul lines extended from the bases toward home plate.

Sec. 4 THE OFFICIAL DIAMOND shall have base lines as follows:

- a. MEN AND WOMEN ADULT DIVISIONS – 70 FEET.
- b. Distances from Home Plate to 2nd Base: Using 70' bases it's 99'

Sec. 5 THE OFFICIAL DIAMOND shall have Men and Women adult pitching from a distance of 53 feet (with the use of the floating rubber).

Sec. 6 If, during the course of any game, the base or pitching distances are found to be in error; the error should be corrected immediately, and the game shall be continued. This is not a point to be protested.

## RULE 2 – EQUIPMENT

For every division contained inside the cover of this Rule Book all equipment must be 100% conforming, 100% of the time. SOFTBALL NATION reserves the right to approve or reject any softball related equipment for its intended use in the SOFTBALL NATION Program. SOFTBALL NATION reserves the right to disallow any bat or piece of equipment from any and all sanctioned play for any reason. This includes any equipment that may meet minimum industry standards. Any such ban will be immediate.

SOFTBALL NATION has adopted a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or less. All bats with a BPF of 1.20 or less for the entire length of the barrel or hitting surface are approved for use in

SOFTBALL NATION Program unless it has been ruled to be unsafe and/or not allowed in sanctioned play.

All bats used in SOFTBALL NATION play must be stamped with a BPF of 1.20 or less unless otherwise approved. A list of approved and non-approved bats may be found on the SoftballNation website. This list is subject to change at any time. (Exception: Wooden Bats do not have to be stamped with a BPF of 1.20 and may be used and are legal in all SOFTBALL NATION play if they meet the standards set forth in these rules).

**TEAM MANAGER AND PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING EQUIPMENT:** It is the responsibility of any participating player to know that his/her equipment is in total compliance. If a player knowingly or unknowingly uses an altered or non-approved bat in a SoftballNation sanctioned event, he/she is subject to immediate ejection and a minimum one year suspension from participating in any SoftballNation event.

SoftballNation directors reserve the right to inspect any and all equipment at any time. Inspection may include but is not limited to: visual inspection, inspection by use of compression testing, and any other means of inspection. If, upon inspection, a SoftballNation director determines that a piece of equipment has been altered or is not in compliance, the director reserves the right to remove the offending team and/or player from the sanctioned event without refund.

**Any player refusing to allow his/her bat to be inspected is agreeing to a minimum one year suspension effective immediately.**

**If a team refuses to identify the owner of a bat, the bat owner will be considered the person who used the bat or the team manager.**

Sec. 1 THE OFFICIAL BAT shall be of one piece construction and can be made of wood (hardwood) or other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION; 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. Below is a list of additional requirements:

a. The bat shall not be more than 34 inches in length and no more than 38 ounces in weight and shall meet the BPF standard of 1.20 on the entire length of the barrel, and shall have BPF 1.20 permanently stamped by the manufacturer or have the thumb print or shield logo stamp. Bats without BPF 1.20 or the thumb print or the shield stamped on the bat shall be considered illegal unless the bat has been approved by SoftballNation.

Exception: Wood bats do not have to have the BPF stamp if the bat meets all other requirements.

Exception: SoftballNation may allow a particular bat or bats to be used in sanctioned play without the BPF 1.20 marking. An updated list of such bats is available on the SoftballNation website.

Note: This list of bats (if any) is subject to change at any time.

Note: SoftballNation reserves the right to disallow any bat or piece of equipment from any and all SoftballNation sanctioned event(s) for any reason.

b. The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (not smooth plastic type), or combination material..

c. The grip shall not be less than ten inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the small end of the bat.

d. The bat shall be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" by the manufacturer.

NOTE: If the words "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" cannot be read due to normal wear, the bat shall be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.

e. The bat may be made of metal or other materials approved by the SOFTBALL NATION and may be angular; however, SOFTBALL NATION must approve any material before it is used in Sanctioned Events.

f. All exposed surfaces of the bat must be smooth and free of burrs, pins, rivets, deep dents or dangerous dents, fractures/cracks of any type, sharp edges or any type of exterior fastener that would present a safety hazard.

EXCEPTION: At the umpire's discretion, slightly dented bats may be considered legal.

- g. Unless the bat is made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, it should have a rubber or plastic insert in the barrel.
  - h. A one-piece rubber grip and knob combination is illegal.
  - i. Metal or other approved material bats must have a knob on the handle that is welded or mechanically fastened.
  - j. All bats must have a safety knob of a minimum of ¼ inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. The ¼ inch is measured from the outer edge of the knob 90 degrees to the outside layer of wrapping. The knob portion of the bat may be taped as long as the bat does not exceed 34 inches in length; however, the umpire may request tape to be removed from both the handle and knob, if there is any question concerning the bat being altered or illegal. After determining the bat legal, the player may tape the bat back to his/her preference, providing the bat meets the requirements set forth by these rules.
  - k. A flare or cone grip may be attached from the factory or a factory flare or cone may be attached to the bat by the player, but the flare or cone must be installed properly to the bat. The flare or cone must be taped or covered by an approved bat grip and the bat must meet all requirements after installation to be considered legal.
  - l. Shall be rounded, and shall be smooth. Shall not be more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/16 inch is permitted, to allow for expansion on the round bat.
  - m. No foreign substance may be added to the bat more than 18 inches from the small end (handle end). Foreign substances include but are not limited to resin, pine tar, etc.
- NOTE: Any bat that does not comply with these guidelines must be removed from the game, and the bat may no longer be used in any SOFTBALL NATION Sanctioned Play.
- NOTE: If a bat is designated age / gender specific it may only be used in that respective division of play. Fast Pitch bats may only be used in Fast Pitch play. Penalty: See Illegal Bat.

**PENALTY FOR AN ALTERED BAT:** If a player is determined to have used an altered bat in a SoftballNation sanctioned event, the player is ejected from the tournament. If the Altered bat is discovered during an official protest, the batter is out and all runners must return to their previous position. At the discretion of the tournament director, UIC or other representative of SoftballNation, the player and team manager may be suspended from participation in any sanctioned event for up to two years. Any appeal of any suspension must be made in writing to the National Office.

Sec. 2 THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALL shall be a smooth-seamed, concealed-stitched, or flat-surfaced ball. The center of the ball may be made of either long fiber kapok or mixture of cork and rubber, and/or machine wound, with a fine twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement. Or it may be made of other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION. The cover of the ball shall be optic yellow, tanned horsehide, cowhide or any other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION, cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with waxed cotton or linen thread to form a softball. The solid core ball must be stamped with a label that contains the maximum C.O.R. and compression standards. MAXIMUM C.O.R. is .44 (.47 for Women) Maximum Compression for SOFTBALL NATION softballs is 400 pounds. Directors have the option to use a lower C.O.R. and lower Compression ball. NOTE: The men's division will use the twelve-inch softball. The women's division will use the eleven-inch softball. For Official Tournament Play, the ball must have the SoftballNation Logo on it.

Sec. 3 GLOVES/MITTS MUST BE WORN BY ALL FIELDERS: The catcher's glove/mitt may be any size. Gloves that are entirely gray, white or optic in color are illegal. Gloves that have circles on the outside or inside of the glove and prove to be distracting are illegal. The gloves worn by all fielders with the exception of the catcher shall be governed by the following specifications:

- a. The height of the glove measured from the bottom edge across the center of the palm to a line even with the highest point of the glove/mitt shall be a minimum of eight (8) inches and may be increased by either ½ or 1 inch to reach a maximum height of fourteen (14) inches
- b. Width of the glove measured from the bottom edge of the webbing farthest from the thumb in a horizontal line to the outside edge of the little finger shall be eight (8) inches
- c. The webbing across the glove shall be measured parallel to the top end and shall be 5 ¾ inches

Sec. 4. All players, coaches, and participants must wear shoes. Sandals are considered proper shoes for non-players. A shoe shall be made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar materials. The sole may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber or polyurethane cleats. Metal cleats or any type of shoe that has exposed metal on the sole, other than a rivet, may not be worn in any division of play. Shoes that have steel or any type of metal tips on the cleats such as (but not limited to) soccer shoes, golf shoes, football, and track shoes are illegal. \*PENALTY: IF IT IS DISCOVERED DURING THE GAME THAT AN OFFENSIVE PLAYER IS WEARING METAL CLEATS AN OUT WILL BE CALLED AND THE PLAYER MUST REMOVE THE CLEATS OR A SUBSTITUTION MUST BE MADE. A DEFENSIVE PLAYER WHO IS WEARING METAL CLEATS WILL BE SUBSTITUTED FOR AND MAY RETURN IF THE METAL CLEATS HAVE BEEN REMOVED.

Sec. 5 NO EQUIPMENT shall be left lying on the field, either in foul or fair territory.

Sec. 6 UNIFORMS. All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color with same team name/logo.

NOTE: Shirts may have sleeves or no sleeves and still be considered matching.

NOTE: Players CANNOT EXCHANGE shirts with other players when they are substituted for during the game. All players must have their own shirt with separate numbers. PENALTY:

For sharing shirts will be an illegal substitution. EXCEPTION: When a jersey is saturated with blood, team members can exchange shirts. Ball caps or visors must be alike and must be worn properly. Caps or visors are not a mandatory part of the uniform. All headgear must be of the same color and worn as intended by the manufacturer (brim –forward). Hard plastic visors; bandanas, and handkerchiefs are not approved headgear.

a. A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thigh, which may be distracting to the batter. Players may wear solid colored undergarments under their uniform shirts or shorts. It is not mandatory that all players wear these undergarments, but if worn, they shall not be ragged, frayed, or slit on the exposed areas.

b. Numbers must be worn on all uniforms. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers.

c. Casts, (plaster, metal or other hard substances) or other items judged dangerous by the umpire may not be worn during the game, by any coach coaching the bases or by any player.

Coaches in wheelchairs MAY NOT be on the field of play during ANY live ball situation unless the chair has all exposed metal parts covered by a soft substance and taped in such a way that would eliminate the risk of bodily injury to the players playing the game or other coaches coaching the game. This pertains to ALL play.

Sec. 7 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATION: SOFTBALL NATION HIGHLY RECOMMENDS protective equipment for ALL DIVISIONS of softball. All players are permitted to wear any approved protective equipment including catcher’s equipment, batter’s helmet, and soccer style shin guards. If used, the equipment must not be detached. Detached equipment can be an obstruction. Repeated acts can be grounds for ejection.

### **RULE 3 – PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTIONS.**

Sec. 1 A TEAM SHALL CONSIST of eight (8), nine (9), ten (10), eleven (11), or twelve (12) players if the optional extra player (EH, EP) is used. Players of the team in the field may be stationed anywhere on fair territory, except the catcher, who must be in the catcher’s box, and the pitcher, who must be in a legal pitching position at the start of each pitch. No part of the defensive player’s foot (except catcher) may be on or outside the foul line, from the time when the pitcher steps on the rubber or until the pitch is released. Teams can play a maximum of ten (10) players on defense, and a minimum of eight (8).

NOTE: Teams may use any player on the roster on defense at any time. This is defense only.

Umpires will only be concerned with the batting order. Any non-ejected player on the team's roster may play defense. This is known as "Free Substitution on Defense".

**NOTE: STARTING WITH 8 OR 9:** Teams can play a maximum of ten (10) players on defense, and a minimum of eight (8) or nine (9). If a team starts a game with eight or nine players, the vacant 9<sup>th</sup> and/or 10<sup>th</sup> spot(s) in the batting order shall be declared an out. If a team starts with eight (8) or nine (9) players and the tenth (10) player arrives, the team may insert the tenth player immediately. If a team is playing the game with ten (10) players and a player is removed from the game for any reason, that team may continue to play with nine (9) players with the vacated spot in the batting order being declared an out. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup because of the removal of a player for any reason, the opposing team with two (2) outs may not intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter, in order to get to the "automatic out" created by the vacated spot in the batting order.

**NOTE: DROPPING TO EIGHT:** While a team may start a game with eight (8) players, a team **MAY NOT** Start a game with nine (9) or more players and drop down to eight (8) players for any reason. . .i.e. the removal of a player for injury or ejection. Under no circumstances may a team play with fewer than 8 players. If this happens, the game is a forfeit.

a. A team must have the required number of players present in the team area to start or continue a game. Players listed in the starting line-up and not available at game time may be substituted for and re-entered later.

b. Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official scorekeeper or the umpire at the start of each game. The line-up shall contain the first and last name, position and uniform number of each player.

**NOTE:** If a wrong number is on the line-up card, correct it and continue playing ball with no penalty.

c. Their last name, first name and uniform number should be listed for all available substitutes in the designated place on the line-up card.

d. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list any time during the game.

## Sec. 2 EXTRA PLAYER (EH)

a. Any team may use one (1) or two (2) Extra Players (EH) per game provided it is made known prior to the start of the game and properly indicated in the lineup.

b. The (EH) must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.

c. The (EH) may play defense at any time without his/her status being affected. He/she may go in and out of the defensive lineup as often as needed as long as his/her position in the official batting order is not altered.

d. The (EH) may be substituted for at any time with the substitute becoming the new (EH). The substitute must be a player who has not been in the game.

**Sec. 3 ANY OF THE STARTING PLAYERS** may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once (including the starting EH), provided that the players occupy the original position in the batting order whenever in the game.

**NOTE:** The original player and his/her substitute may not be in the game at the same time.

a. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an illegal player. Penalty shall be the immediate ejection of said player when the violation is brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team.

b. Violation of the re-entry is handled as a protest, which can be made anytime during the game.

**Sec. 4 A TEAM MUST HAVE** the required number of players to start or continue a game.

Requirements are:

a. A team must have a minimum of eight (8), nine (9), ten (10), eleven (11), or twelve (12) players with which it started the game with the exception of vacated spots where players are removed for any reason. At no time may a team play more than ten (10) players defensively.

b. If a team starts with the EH'S and any player is removed, injured, or ejected from the game with no substitute to replace the removed, injured or ejected player, the vacated spot automatically becomes an out each time the vacant spot comes to bat.

- c. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup because of the removal of a player, as described in Section 4 (a), the opposing team may not with two (2) outs intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter, in order to get to the “automatic out” created by the vacant spot in the batting order.
- d. If the previous batter is walked, the vacant spot in the batting order is skipped, the “automatic out” is waived, and the next batter is the player whose name follows the vacant spot in the batting order. This only applies when there are two (2) outs.
- NOTE: If a team has a vacant spot and a substitute arrives, he/she must be inserted into the vacant spot immediately.
- NOTE: A team may continue to play with more than one (1) vacant spot if it started with more than one EH.

Sec. 5 A PLAYER SHALL BE officially in the game when his/her name has been entered on the official score sheet or has been announced. The following regulations govern the substitution of players:

a. The manager or team representative shall notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game. Failure to notify the umpire of a substitution would create an illegal substitution with the penalty – IMMEDIATE EJECTION FROM THE GAME WHENEVER THE INFRACTION IS DISCOVERED.

NOTE: Re-entry is considered a substitution, and if an illegal entry occurs; the penalty is the immediate ejection of the illegal player.

b. Substitute players will be considered in the game as follows:

- (1) When a batter, when he/she takes his/her place in the batter’s box.
- (2) When a fielder, when he/she takes the place of the fielder he/she is substituting..
- (3) When a runner, when he/she replaces the player on the base he/she is holding.
- (4) When a pitcher, when he/she takes his/her place on the pitcher’s plate.

In 1-4 above, in each case a pitch has to be thrown or a play has to have been made.

c. Each pitcher (starter or substitute) must pitch until the first batter facing him/her has completed his/her turn at bat, the side has been retired or he/she has been removed from the game. A pitcher removed from the game, by rule or ejection, is not subject to this rule. Any other player may be removed from the game at any time.

d. A player substituted for in the game shall not participate in the games except as a coach.

EXCEPTION: The starting lineup, including the “EH” may re-enter once.

NOTE: Any player participating in any SOFTBALL NATION sanctioned event must be physically able to participate. By physically able, the player must be able to walk on and off the field and play the game as intended. This is intended to keep injured people from further injury.

NOTE: A player’s correct name supersedes error, if an incorrect number has been entered on the score sheet.

Sec. 6 DIVISIONS OF PLAY: SOFTBALL NATION has divisions for men and women, and a coed division for both to compete in jointly. The men’s division is specifically for men ages 16 and older, and the women’s division is specifically designed for women ages 16 and older. With the exception of CO-ED division, women may not compete in the men’s program and men may not compete in the women’s program of any division. This also applies to the Youth Program.

Sec. 7 The Tournament Director or the Tournament Umpire-in-Chief may declare a higher-class player ineligible immediately without having a team protest, no matter their roster status.

Sec. 8 ILLEGAL PLAYER:

The use of an illegal player is handled as a protest that can be made at any time while the player is in the game. A Player will not violate the illegal player provision until he/she enters the game and one (1) pitch is thrown. Any action before one pitch is thrown is correctable.

An illegal player violation results in the immediate ejection of the illegal player. In addition, the following penalties will apply:

1. If the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and before the next pitch, the illegal player is called out. Any advance by any runner as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified. Any additional outs recorded on the play stand.

2. If the illegal player has made a defensive play and before the next pitch (or the defensive team or the umpires have left the field), the offensive team has the option of 1) the result of the play or 2) replaying the last pitch. NOTE: The illegal player can be legally replaced by any eligible substitute.

#### Sec. 9 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES

When a player is bleeding or has an open wound, the bleeding must be stopped and the open wound covered with a bandage/dressing strong enough to withstand the rigors of competition.

This treatment must be immediate and a suspension of play for a reasonable amount of time will be awarded the team. Should the treatment of this wound exceed a reasonable amount of time, the affected player must be substituted for. If no substitute is available and the team is using the EH, the team may play on with ten players until the affected player can continue, with all penalties as set forth by Rule 4, Sec. 4 in effect. When the affected player can continue, he may re-enter the line-up. Return to play will be determined by appropriate medical personnel or the home plate umpire. Any player whose uniform is saturated with blood, regardless of the source, must follow the same guidelines as stated above for a person bleeding and must have that uniform changed, if determined necessary, before returning to the game.

NOTE: A reasonable amount of time will be determined by the home plate umpire and will be no less than 5 minutes. Soiled clothing must be changed, and the change of clothing need not be matching team clothing. This is not a point of protest.

## **RULE 4 – THE GAME**

Sec. 1 No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the dugouts or on the field during any SOFTBALL NATION sanctioned event.

NOTE: SportsNation/SoftballNation/BaseballNation reserves the right to remove any player or spectator from the game or vicinity of the game if that player of spectator is believed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Sec. 2 The choice of the first (visitor) or last (home) at bat in the inning shall be decided by the single toss of a coin unless otherwise stated in the rules of the tournament or organization under which the schedule of games is being played.

Note: It is recommended when using the Double Elimination Format: In the championship game(s) the undefeated team will be awarded their choice of taking “Home” or “Visitors” in the first game. In the “if” game, “home” or “visitor” will be decided by a coin flip.

Sec. 3 THE FITNESS OF THE grounds for a game shall be decided by the Tournament Director, Tournament Umpire-In-Chief and the Home Plate Umpire.

#### Sec. 4 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/ROSTERS

NOTE: SOFTBALL NATION’s Official Roster Signing Date will be the date two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled date of the State Tournament. All teams qualifying to play in any of SOFTBALL NATION’s Post Season Tournaments are required to have an official roster into the Area Director’s office by this date.

Sec. 5 HOME RUN LIMITS for independent teams: (Any untouched fair ball hit over the fence) GOLD Division: 5 home runs and 1 up. Any Home Runs beyond the limit are outs.

NOTE: No team may go 1up in Home Runs in the home half of the last inning of the game.

SILVER Division: 3 home runs. The 4th and 5<sup>th</sup> HR’s are outs and the 6<sup>th</sup> HR and beyond ends the inning.

BRONZE Division: 1 home run. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Home Run is an out. The 3rd and beyond ends the inning.

**EXCEPTION:** For all Home Run Rules: If a player has batted out of turn or has been substituted for illegally and has been called out by proper appeal after hitting a home run. That home run DOES NOT count against the team's total.

Sec. 6 EACH UNTOUCHED BALL over the fence, exceeding a team's home run limit, will be scored as an out or ends the inning as per the rule.

**NOTE:** Any untouched batted ball that goes over the fence in fair territory shall be considered a home run against the teams home run total, regardless if the batter/base runner or base runners miss a base, pass a runner or otherwise get called out in the act of running the bases.

Sec. 7 ANY BALL TOUCHED BY a defensive player which then goes over the fence in fair territory, shall not be included in the total of over the fence home runs.

Sec. 8 THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR can declare that the homeruns do not have to be run out for all divisions. The tournament director must make clear any amended rules that pertain to "not running the bases", i.e. touching a base, "hit-and-sit", etc.

**NOTE:** It is recommended that Men's Gold and Silver teams only be required to touch first base upon hitting a home run. All base-runners must touch the next base. Men's Bronze players must run out all home runs.

Sec. 9 A REGULATION GAME shall consist of seven (7) innings or an allotted period of time when a time limit is in effect: A regulation game officially begins when the defensive team has taken the field and the umpire indicates (verbally or physically) play ball. A full seven (7) innings need not be played if the home team (the team second at bat) scores more runs in six innings or before the third out of the seventh inning.

**NOTE:** The game is officially over when BOTH umpires have left the playing field.

**EXCEPTION:** Run Rules: Men's Divisions: All adult divisions, unless otherwise stated in this rule book, will use 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings and 10 runs after 5 innings as run rules in all Tournament Play. If one team is ahead by the above listed runs after 3 or 4 innings, or if the home team is ahead by the above listed runs after 2 ½ or 3 ½ innings, the team with the lead shall be the winner. If one team is ahead by the above listed runs after 5 innings of play, or if the home team is ahead by the above listed runs after 4 ½ innings, the team with the lead shall be the winner. If the home team is trailing, by any number of runs, they get to bat in their half of the inning.

a. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued by playing additional innings, or until one side has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.

**International Tie Breaker:** Will be used for Tie-breakers in Slow Pitch games: TIE BREAKER/EXTRA INNINGS (SP/ FP): After the completion of seven (7) innings or when the time limit has expired and the score is still tied, the tie-breaker procedure will begin. This would involve the last batter of the previous inning, whose turn at bat had been completed, assuming a position on second base. This would be done at the beginning of each half inning; until, at the conclusion of a full inning, a winner is determined.

b. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other causes that place the patrons or players in peril.

c. These provisions do not apply to any acts on the part of the players or spectators that might call for the forfeiture of the game. The umpire may forfeit the game if attacked physically by any team member or spectator.

d. The umpire shall forfeit a game in favor of a team not at fault in the following cases:

- (1) If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field refuses to begin a game at the time the team is scheduled to play, or within a time set for forfeitures (grace period) by the organization in which the team is playing.
- (2) If after the game has started, one team refuses to continue play unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- (3) If after the umpire has suspended the game, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "play ball".
- (4) If a team uses tactics to delay or to hasten the game.

- (5) If, after being warned by the umpire, any one of the rules is willfully violated.
- (6) If the order for the removal of a player or manager/coach, from the game, is not obeyed within one minute.
- (7) If because of the removal of a player by the umpire, or for any reason, there are fewer than 8 players on the team.
- (8) The score of a forfeited game will be 7-0 to the winning team.
- e. During all SOFTBALL NATION tournament play, in the event of rain or any other causes which interrupt a game, the game must be resumed at the exact point where it was stopped unless the teams mutually agree to accept the existing score as the final score.  
NOTE: Players not listed in the lineups, and not available at game time, may be substituted for when the game is resumed.
- f. In the event that a tournament cannot be completed, an official game may be called after 5 innings of play or 4 ½ innings of play, if the home team is ahead.

Sec. 10 THE WINNER OF THE game shall be the team that scores the most runs in a regulation game. 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 more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.

Sec. 11 A RUN SHALL NOT BE scored if the third out of the inning is a result of:

- a. The batter being put out before legally touching 1st base.
- b. A base runner being forced out due to the batter becoming a base runner.
- c. A base runner-leaving base before a pitched ball reaches home plate or before the pitched ball is batted.
- d. An appeal play at 1st base on the batter/runner for the 3rd out of the inning.

Sec. 12 NO SUCCEEDING RUNNER shall score a run when a preceding runner has been declared the third out of an inning.

Sec. 13 A BASE RUNNER SHALL not score a run ahead of the base runner preceding him/her in the batting order, if the preceding runner has not been put out.

Sec. 14 A MANAGER AND/OR team representative, on or off the field, shall be allowed only one charged conference with a batter or base runner in any one inning.  
PENALTY: A strike will be called on the batter if more than one conference occurs.

Sec. 15 It is the option of the Tournament Director to either use or not use an official scorekeeper. If an official scorekeeper is not used, the home team will be the official scorer and it is the obligation of the visiting team to verify the score at the end of each half inning.

## **RULE 5 – PITCHING REGULATIONS**

- Sec. 1 THE PITCHER SHALL take a position with one or both feet in contact with the pitching rubber or within an area not more than five feet behind the rubber and not outside the width of the rubber. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full stop with the ball held in the pitching hand or both hands in front of the body.
- b. This position must be maintained at least one (1) second and not more than five (5) seconds before making the delivery.  
EXCEPTION: Sixteen (16) inch program will use ten (10) seconds.
  - c. The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in the catcher's box.

Sec. 2 THE PITCH STARTS when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his/her windup after the required pause. Prior to the required pause any wind up may be used. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball leaves the hand.

a. It is not necessary to step, but if a step is taken, the step may be forward, backward or sideways as long as the ball remains within six (6) inches of the hip.

Sec. 3 A LEGAL DELIVERY shall be delivered with an underhand motion.

a. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left up to the judgment of the umpire who shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, he/she shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.

b. The hand shall be below the hip.

c. The ball must be delivered with an arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground while not exceeding a maximum height of 10 feet from the ground.

d. The catcher must be within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball reaches the plate or until the ball is batted.

PENALTY: The ball is dead, a ball is called on the batter, and a warning given to the catcher and the defensive coach that if the catcher repeats such an act after this warning, they will be removed from the catcher's position for the remainder of that game.

e. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strike out or put out made by the catcher. The pitcher has five seconds to release the next pitch.

EFFECT: (e) – An additional "BALL" is awarded to the batter.

f. Any action or motion by the pitcher (i.e. stops or pauses in the pitching motion or fakes a pitch or any other illegal action prior to the release of the pitch) while on or off the pitching rubber shall result in:

EFFECT: Dead ball, a ball shall be called on the batter and a warning issued to the pitcher, that a similar act would be grounds for removal from the pitching position. These acts are considered illegal pitching actions, and are not to be considered illegal pitches.

Sec. 4 THE PITCHER MAY use any wind-up desired providing:

a. He/she does not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter whether on or off the pitching rubber.

b. His/her wind-up is a continuous motion.

c. He/she does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.

d. He/she delivers the ball on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.

e. He/she does not pitch the ball behind his/her back or between his/her legs.

NOTE: (a-e) are illegal pitching actions.

Sec. 5 THE PITCHER SHALL not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball to the batter either on or off the pitching rubber.

Sec. 6 THE PITCHER SHALL not at any time during the game, be allowed to use tape or other substances on the ball, the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball. Under the supervision of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands.

Sec. 7 AT THE BEGINNING of each half inning or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than 1 minute may be used to deliver not more than 3 pitches to the catcher or other teammate. Play shall be suspended during this time.

EFFECT: Sec. 1 – 7 is an illegal pitch and the ball is dead. A ball shall be called on the batter and base runners do not advance.

EXCEPTION: If a batter strikes at any illegal pitch, it shall be a strike and there shall be no penalty. The ball remains in play if hit by the batter.

NOTE: The umpire will not give a vocal warning or a delayed dead ball signal to the batter on an illegally pitched ball. An umpire will declare “Dead Ball, No Pitch” on any illegal pitching action. These are illegal actions by the pitcher prior to the release of the pitched ball. A pitched ball that hits the ground or home plate is a dead ball and may not be hit by the batter.

Sec. 8 “NO PITCH” SHALL be declared when:

- a. The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
- b. The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
- c. The pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched his/her base after a foul ball and the ball is dead.
- d. The ball slips from the pitcher’s hand during his/her wind-up or during the back swing.
- e. No player, manager or coach shall call “Time”, employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.

EFFECT: No pitch shall be declared and a warning issued to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act shall result in the offender being removed from the game.

Sec. 9 THERE SHALL BE only one charged conference between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with each and every pitcher in an inning. The second charged conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

NOTE: It is not a charged conference when the coach or team representative enters the field of play and removes the pitcher from the pitching position. The player may return to the pitching position.

Sec. 10 AT NO TIME DURING the game shall an offensive or defensive player or coach be allowed to leave their positions on the field or come from the dugouts to argue whether a pitch was a strike or a ball. The three players involved (pitcher, catcher, batter) may be allowed to question balls or strikes.

NOTE: Any other than the pitcher, catcher or batter who leaves his/her positions on the field or the dugout to question balls and strikes, will be immediately ejected.

## **RULE 6 – BATTING**

Sec. 1 THE BATTER SHALL take his position within the lines of the batter’s box.

- a. The batter shall not have his/her entire foot touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter’s box or touching home plate when the ball is hit.
- b. The batter shall not step directly across in front of the catcher to the other side of the batter’s box while the pitcher is in position to pitch.

EFFECT: Sec. 1(a-b) The ball is dead, the batter is out, base runners may not advance.

- c. The batter shall not enter the batter’s box with an illegal bat.

EFFECT: THE OPPOSING TEAM HAS THE OPTION OF TAKING THE RESULT OF THE PLAY, OR THE BALL IS DEAD, THE BATTER IS OUT, BASE RUNNERS MAY NOT ADVANCE.

- d. The batter shall not enter the batter’s box with an altered bat or non-approved bat.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out, and without warning, is ejected from the game. Base runners may not advance.

- e. The batter must take his/her position within five (5) seconds after the umpire has called “play ball”. He/she must have both feet within the lines of the box before the start of the pitch. He/she may touch the line, but no part of his/her foot may be outside of the lines prior to the pitch.

EFFECT: The ball is dead. The umpire will call a strike on the batter; also issue a warning to the batter to take his position or risk being called out. If the batter refuses to take his/her position after the warning, he/she will be called out. The warning will be given to a batter only one time per game. Any repeated violation during the game by that player, will result in an out being called. This rule is intended to help speed up the play of the game, and umpires, while using good judgment in

enforcement of the rule, must prohibit the batter from delaying the game by taking an excessive or unnecessary amount of time entering the batter's box.

f. The count on the batter is a maximum of 3 balls and a minimum of 2 strikes.

Sec. 2 EACH PLAYER OF THE side at bat shall become a batter in the order in which his/her name appears on the score sheet. The batting order of each team must be on the score sheet and delivered by the manager or captain to the home plate umpire. The batting order must be followed throughout the entire game unless a player is substituted for. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the player he/she is replacing in the batting order. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the preceding inning. NOTE: Batting out of order is an appeal play which may be made by the defensive team only.

a. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter takes his/her place and legally assumes any balls and strikes.

b. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has batted, and before the next pitch to the following batter, the player who should have batted is out. Any advance or score made because of a batted ball by the improper batter's advance to 1st base on a hit, error or a base on balls shall be nullified. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.

c. If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat.

Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.

d. No base runner shall be removed from the base he/she is occupying to bat in his/her proper place. He/she merely misses his/her turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following him/her in the batting order becomes the legal batter.

e. When the third out of the inning is made before the batter has completed his/her turn at bat, he/she shall be the first batter in the next inning and shall have the ball and strike count on him/her canceled.

Sec. 3 THE BATTER SHALL NOT hit a fair ball a second time with the bat in fair territory.

NOTE This will be a judgment call...if the double-hit is ruled intentional, the umpire will call dead ball, batter is out and all runners must return to their last legally touched base...unintentional and it will be ruled a foul ball.

NOTE: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and in the umpires judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play.

Sec. 4 A STRIKE IS CALLED BY the umpire:

a. For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone before touching the ground and at which the batter does not swing. It is not a strike if the ball touches home plate and is not swung at.

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

c. For each foul tip held by the catcher. The batter is out if it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> strike. The ball is dead on any strike.

d. For each foul ball not legally caught, including the final strike.

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

f. When any part of the batter's person is hit with his/her own batted ball, when he/she is in the batter's box, and he/she has less than two strikes.

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

EFFECT: (d-g), The ball is dead and base runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out.

NOTE: A pitched ball that hits the ground or home plate is a dead ball and may not be hit by the batter.

**Sec. 5 A BALL IS CALLED BY the umpire.**

- a. For each pitch, which does not enter the strike zone, or touches home plate, which is not hit or swung at by the batter
  - b. For each illegally pitched ball not hit or swung at by the batter
  - c. When a pitch hits the batter outside of the strike zone
  - d. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
  - e. When the pitcher fails to pitch within five (5) seconds
  - f. For each excessive warm-up pitch.
  - g. When the pitcher attempts a quick return pitch, the pitcher shall be given a warning.
- EFFECT: (a-g) The ball is dead and base runners may not advance.**

**Sec. 6 A FAIR BALL IS A LEGALLY batted ball which:**

- a. Settles or is touched on fair ground between home and 1st or home and 3rd
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over fair ground
- c. Touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base
- d. While on or over fair ground, touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player
- e. First falls on fair ground beyond 1st or 3rd base. A fair fly ball must be judged according to relative position of the ball and the foul line, regardless of whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time he/she touches the ball.

- EFFECT: Sec. 7(a-e) The ball is in play and base runners are entitled to advance any number of bases with liability to be put out. The batter becomes a base runner unless the infield fly rule applies.**
- f. While on or over fair ground, lands behind a fence or into a stand beyond the outfield fence, this is a home run..
  - g. Hits a foul pole on the fly. If the ball hits the pole above the fence level, it shall be a home run.

**Sec. 7 A FOUL BALL IS A LEGALLY batted ball which:**

- a. Settles on foul ground between home and 1st base or between home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over foul ground.
- c. First touches on foul ground beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d. While on or over foul ground, touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player, or it is blocked.

- EFFECT: (Sec. 8 a-d) The ball is dead. A strike is called on the batter for each foul ball, including the final strike. Base runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out. Base runners may not advance on a third strike foul ball, including a legally caught foul ball; however, all runners may advance on any other legally caught foul ball.**
- e. Is caught, with less than two strikes, allowing all runners to tag-up and advance at their own risk of being put out.

**Sec. 8 THE BATTER IS OUT:**

- a. When the final strike is struck at, missed and touches any part of the batter's person
- b. When a batter appears in the batter's box with, or is discovered using an altered bat or a non-approved bat, prior to or after hitting the ball. The batter is also ejected from the game for using an altered or non-approved bat.
- c. When a fly ball is legally caught
- d. Immediately when he/she hits an infield fly, and the umpire has declared "Infield Fly".

Refer to Definitions for definition of an Infield Fly.

- e. If a fielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort with 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> bases occupied with less than two outs.

**EFFECT: (e). The ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. This does not apply to an infield fly; the dropped ball remains alive on an infield fly. NOTE: A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.**

f. If a preceding runner, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball, or is attempting to throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play, the preceding runner and the batter are both declared out.

g. When the batter bunts or chops the ball downward or fails to take a full swing in the judgment of the umpire.

h. Any batter-runner that touches first while still carrying his/her bat.

NOTE No batter/runner is allowed in any situation to carry his/her bat and touch first base.

Effect Batter /runner is declared out and no runner is allowed to advance.

i. when he/she takes a 2<sup>nd</sup> called strike or swings at and misses the ball for a second strike.

j. On a 2<sup>nd</sup> strike foul ball.

k. When hit by his/her own-batted ball, in fair territory, outside the batter's box

Sec. 9 THE BATTER OR BASE RUNNER is not out if a fielder making a play on him/her uses an illegal glove. The manager of the offended team has the option of having the batter bat over and assuming the ball and strike count he/she had prior to the pitch he/she hit (base runner return), or taking the result of the play. The umpire(s) will signal a delayed dead ball.

#### Sec. 10 ON-DECK BATTER

a. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order.

b. The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of either of the on deck circles without interfering with the view of any manager or coach.

c. The on-deck batter may loosen up with two official softball bats, an official warm up bat, or the player may use any other official warm-up bat or product that has been approved by the SOFTBALL NATION National Office. Nothing else may be attached, such as a donut, fan etc. when loosening up.

d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle when he/she becomes the batter or to direct base runners advancing from 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home plate.

e. When the on-deck batter interferes with the defensive player's opportunity to make a play on a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference is declared out.

Sec. 11 MEMBERS OF THE TEAM at bat shall not interfere, either physically or vocally, with a player attempting to field either a fair or foul ball. This includes a base coach.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out, and any base runner(s) must return to the base that they occupied at the time of the pitch.

## RULE 7 – BASERUNNING

**Courtesy Runner** - recommended for men, women, coed, church

One courtesy runner per half inning may be allowed. Any non-ejected player not on base can be a courtesy runner.

Once a courtesy runner is used, that player must complete the running assignment (i.e. there can never be a substitute or courtesy runner for a courtesy runner. For exception, see a. below).

Note: If a player who is in the batting order is used as a courtesy runner and that player's turn to bat comes up while that player is still on base, that batting position will become an automatic out and the courtesy runner will remain on base. A substitution for this player may not be made until the courtesy running assignment is completed.

a. If the courtesy runner is injured while on base, the original player for whom the courtesy runner entered must replace the courtesy runner, or a legal substitution for the original player can be made. The injured courtesy runner cannot participate in the game in any shape or form until after that half-inning.

**NOTE:** If a legal substitution is made for an injured courtesy runner, then the player is considered to have left the game and can re-enter if he/she has a re-entry privilege remaining.

b. Using a courtesy runner for does not affect the re-entry status of the player who had the courtesy runner.

COED Courtesy Runners: Males must run for males and females must run for females.

Sec. 1 THE BASE RUNNER MUST touch bases 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Home Plate in that order.

a. When a base runner must return to bases while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.

EFFECT: The ball is in play and base runners must return with liability to be put out.

b. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, he/she may hold the base until he/she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.

c. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position neither he/she nor the succeeding runners in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position. The ball is in play and runners may advance with liability of being put out.

d. A base runner may not run the bases in reverse order, either to confuse the fielders, or to make a travesty of the game.

EFFECT: The ball is dead and the runner is out.

NOTE: A runner in a double play situation who stops or retreats back towards the base left is not to be considered as running the bases in reverse order or considered making a travesty of the game.

e. Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

EFFECT: The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it. The other runner can be put out by being touched with the ball.

f. Failure of a preceding runner to touch a base or to leave a base legally on a caught fly ball and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a succeeding runner who touches the bases in proper order. However, if the preceding runner were to be called out for the third out of the inning, no succeeding runner may score a run.

g. Runners may not return to touch a missed base, or one left illegally, after a succeeding runner has scored.

h. When the ball is dead, runners may not return to touch a missed base, a base he/she has left illegally, even after the ball becomes alive. However, when a dead ball occurs, a runner may return to a missed base or a base he/she left illegally, if he/she is required to by the umpire in the awarding or determination of bases. Runners are not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he/she is required to return to.

i. Runners may not return to touch a missed base or one left illegally once he/she enters his/her dugout or bench area.

j. When the umpire has called three (3) balls or when a walk is issued, all runners must touch all bases in legal order. Base runners do not advance unless forced.

k. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases. Awarded bases must also be touched in proper order.

Sec. 2 THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-BASE RUNNER:

a. As soon as he/she hits the ball.

b. When the umpire has called three (3) balls. The ball is dead. Base runners do not advance unless forced. A batter may be awarded an intentional walk by the defensive team by merely notifying the umpire. In the case of more than one intentional walk being given at a time, all runners must touch each base in correct order.

c. When the catcher or any other fielder obstructs or hinders the batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.

(1) The umpire will signal, "delayed dead ball".

(2) The offensive team manager has the option of taking the base awarded the batter for catcher's obstruction or he/she may take the result of the play.

(3) If the batter reaches first base safely and all other runners advance at least one base on the batted ball, catcher's obstruction is canceled and no other options are given.

d. When a fair ball strikes the umpire or base runner on fair ground.

- (1) If the ball hits the umpire or base runner after passing an infielder, other than the pitcher or touches an infielder, including the pitcher, the ball is in play.
- (2) If the ball hits the umpire or base runner before passing an infielder, the ball is dead and the batter is entitled to first base without liability of being put out. Runners not forced by the batter-runner must return.

Sec. 3 BASE RUNNERS ARE entitled to advance with liability to be put out:

- a. When the ball is batted into fair territory and is not blocked.
- b. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.

EXCEPTION: Base runners may not advance on a caught third strike foul ball.

- c. When the ball is thrown into fair territory or foul territory and is not blocked.
- d. If a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner after passing an infielder other than the pitcher, or having been touched by an infielder, including the pitcher, the ball shall be in play.

Sec. 4 A PLAYER FORFEITS his/her exemption from liability to be put out.

- a. If, while the ball is in play, he/she fails to touch the base he/she is entitled to before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at 1st base or any other runner forced to advance because of the batter-runner at 1st base, or any other runner, forced to advance because of the batter-runner, this is a force out.
- b. If, after over running 1st base, the batter-runner attempts to advance to the next base.
- c. If, after dislodging the base, the batter-runner attempts to continue to the next base.

Sec. 5 BASE RUNNERS ARE entitled to advance without liability to be put out.

- a. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls, the ball is dead.
- b. When a fielder obstructs a base runner from making a base, unless the fielder is trying to field a batted ball or has the ball ready for a tag.

EFFECT: When obstruction occurs, the umpire shall call and give a delayed dead ball signal for obstruction.

- (1) If play is being made on the obstructed runner or if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching 1st base, the ball is dead; and all runners advance without liability to be put out to the bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, if there had been no obstruction.

EXCEPTION: A base runner obstructed in a run down shall be awarded the lead base at the time of the obstruction. Any proceeding runners forced to advance by the award of bases for obstruction shall advance without liability to be put out.

- (2) If no play is being made on the obstructed runner at the time of obstruction, the play shall proceed until the play is completed. The umpire shall call "time" and impose such penalties, if any, as in his judgment, will nullify the act of obstruction.

- (3) If a fielder without the ball fakes a tag, the umpire may award the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction.

NOTE: In the case of a "fake tag", the fielder will be automatically ejected from the game.

- c. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base for catchers obstruction.
- d. When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with his/her cap, glove or any part of his/her uniform while detached from its proper place.

NOTE: The umpire(s) will give the "delayed dead ball" signal.

EFFECT: The runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. In either case runners may advance further at their own risk. If the illegal act was made on a fair ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded. Note: The awarded home run will count towards the team's totals.

- e. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.

EFFECT: Awarded bases shall be determined by the position of the base runners at the time of the infraction.

EFFECT: For offensive equipment or an offensive player causing a blocked ball, the player closest to home plate is declared out, and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball becomes blocked.

(1) The ball is dead. In all cases where a thrown ball goes into the spectators' seats, goes over, through, or under any fence surrounding the playing field; hits any person or object not engaged in the game, including bats lying near benches, goes into the players benches, whether the ball rebounds onto the playing field or not, or remains in the meshes of any wire screen, each and every base runner shall be awarded two (2) bases.

(2) When the first throw is made by an infielder, two (2) bases shall be awarded. The award shall be governed by the position of each runner at the time the pitch was made; however, if all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one (1) base when the infielder makes the wild throw, on the first play after a pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners, when the wild throw was made.

(3) When a throw is made by an outfielder or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the two (2) base award shall be governed by the position of each runner and the last base he/she has touched at the time the throw was made. If two runners are between the same base, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

(4) When a fielder loses possession of the ball such as on an attempted tag and the ball enters a dead ball area or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one (1) base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked. If a runner touches the next base and returns to his/her original base, the original base he/she left is considered the "last base touched" for the purposes of an over throw award.

f. When a ball bounds or rolls into a stand, over, under, or through a fence; bounds out of play unintentionally off a defensive player or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field.

EFFECT: (f). The ball is dead and all base runners are awarded two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.

g. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead immediately. All base runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time he/she entered the dead ball area.

NOTE: A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have intentionally carried it there. A dead ball line is considered in play.

Sec. 6 A BASE RUNNER MUST return to his/her base:

- a. When a foul ball is not caught.
- b. When a batter or base runner is called out for interference. Other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- c. When a foul ball is illegally caught and so declared by the umpire
- d. When the umpire declares an illegally batted ball.
- e. When a pitched ball that is swung at and missed touches any part of the batters' person.

EFFECT: (a–e). The ball is dead and base runners must return to last base occupied prior to the pitch except when forced by the batter becoming a base runner. Base runners need not touch the intervening bases in returning, but must return promptly; however, they must be allowed sufficient time to return.

Sec. 7 BATTER-BASE RUNNER IS OUT:

- a. When, after hitting a fair ball, he/she is legally touched with the ball before he/she touches 1st base.
- b. When after hitting a fair ball, the ball is held by a fielder touching 1st base with any part of his/her person, before the batter-base runner touches 1st base.
- c. When, after a fly ball is hit, a fielder catches the ball before it touches the ground or any object other than a fielder.
- d. When, after hitting a fair ball or a base on balls is awarded, he/she fails to advance to the next base.

EFFECT: (a – d). The ball is in play and the batter-runner is out.

- e. When he/she runs outside the three foot line, and in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at 1st base; however, he/she may run outside the three foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- f. When he/she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the base runner closest to home plate shall be called out.
- g. When a batter-runner interferes with a play at home in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate, the runner is also out.
- h. When he/she moves back towards home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
- i. When he/she is discovered using an altered or illegal bat.  
EFFECT: (e –i). The ball is dead and the batter-runner is out. Other base runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.
- j. Any batter-runner who carries the bat and legally reaches or touches first base, while still holding the bat, during a live ball situation (including a homerun), will be declared out. Should this be the 3rd out of an inning, no preceding runner shall score.  
EFFECT: If less than two (2) outs, a delayed ball signal will be given and the ball will remain alive.  
NOTE... This would still count against the offending team’s HR total.  
NOTE: 1st base double base – At facilities that use the White and Orange double bag at first base, the following rules will be implemented. If the first play is at first base, either from the infield or outfield, a batter/runner will be called out for touching the inside base. If the play is elsewhere, the inside base may be tagged in a continuation or possible continuation toward second (2nd ) base. The batter/ runner running toward first (1st ) base may cross over to the inside bag to avoid a collision if a wild throw occurs. The fielder may tag the outside of the bag to record the out in this situation. This is only permissible on the initial play at first base.  
The inside bag will be used by the batter/runner/runner if attempting to get back to first (1st) base. If a runner on the first play at first base touches “ANY” part of the orange bag, that runner is considered to have touched the bag legally. If the runner touches “ANY” part of the white bag in a continuation or possible continuation to 2nd base, the runner is considered to have touched the bag legally.

**Sec. 8 THE BASE RUNNER IS OUT:**

- a. When in running to any base, he/she runs more than three feet from a direct line between that base and the next base in regular or reverse order to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder. When a play, such as a rundown, is made on a runner who has “rounded” a base, and that runner is outside of a direct line between bases, the runner establishes his/her baseline as a direct line between him/her and the next base in regular or reverse order.
- b. When while the ball is in play, he/she is legally touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder while not in contact with a base.
- c. When on a force out, a fielder tags him/her with the ball or tags the base on a force out.
- d. When the base runner fails to return to touch the base he/she previously occupied when play is resumed after suspension of play.
- e. When a base runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.
- f. When anyone, other than another base runner, physically assists a base runner while the ball is in play.
- g. When the base runner leaves his/her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has been touched by a fielder, provided the ball is returned to a fielder and legally held on that base, or a fielder legally touches the base runner before he/she returns to his/her base.
- h. When the base runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases, in regular or reverse order, and the ball is in play and legally held on that base; or the base runner is legally touched while off the base he/she missed.
- i. When the batter-runner legally over runs 1st base attempts to run to 2nd base and is legally touched while off the base.
- j. In running or sliding for home plate, he/she fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in his/her hand while touching home plate and appeals to the umpire for a decision.

EFFECT: ( f – i). These are appeal plays, and the defensive team loses the privilege of putting the base runner out if the appeal in not made before the next legal or illegal pitch. If an appeal is made after the ball is dead and before the next pitch is made, the ball remains dead and runners may not advance. The pitcher must have the ball in his/her possession, around the area of the pitcher's plate. Any player in the game, coach or manager may then make an appeal by announcing to the umpire, which runner is being appealed; which base has been missed; or which base has been left too soon. Any player may also make an appeal while the ball is still alive, and before the ball becomes dead, by tagging the runner or the base being appealed, with the ball.

k. When the base runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, and occurs before the base runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall be called out also.

l. When a base runner is struck with a fair-batted ball in fair territory while off base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher.

m. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball, which an infielder has missed.

n. When with a base runner on 3rd base, the batter interferes with a play being made at home plate with less than 2 outs.

o. When the coach near 3rd base runs in the direction of home plate, on or near the baseline, while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The base runner nearest to 3rd base shall be declared out.

p. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect at or around a base, to which a base runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. This includes the bat boy/girl or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.

q. When any base runner runs the bases in reverse order to confuse the defensive team, or to make a farce of the game. This includes the batter-runner moving backward toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag.

r. If a coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

s. When a runner, after being declared out or after scoring, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall also be called out. EFFECT: (j – s) The ball is dead and the base runner is out. Other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.

t. When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player, the runner is declared out. The ball is dead and all runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision unless (j) or (s) applies.

NOTE: IF THE ACT IS DETERMINED TO BE FLAGRANT, THE OFFENDER SHALL BE EJECTED.

u. When the base runner fails to keep contact with his/her base until a legally pitched ball has reached home plate. The ball is dead. "No Pitch" is declared and the base runner is called out.

v. When he abandons a base, does not attempt to advance to the next base, and enters the team area or leaves the field of play. The base runner shall be called out immediately when he/she enters the team area or leaves the field of play.

w. If hit by an infield fly when not in contact with the base. The ball is dead and the runners and the batter are both declared out. Other runners must return to the base occupied, without liability to be put out, at the time of the pitch.

#### Sec. 9 BASE RUNNER IS NOT OUT:

a. When a base runner runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder who is attempting to field the ball in the baseline.

b. When a base runner does not run a direct line to the base, providing the fielder, in the direct line, does not have the ball in his/her possession.

c. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the base runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpires judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.

d. When a base runner is hit with a fair-batted ball that has passed through an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the judgment of the umpire, no other fielder has a chance to make a play on the ball.

e. When a base runner is touched with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

- f. When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play, until after the next pitch.
- g. When a batter-runner over runs 1st base, after touching it, and makes no attempt to advance to the next base.
- h. When the base runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, he/she shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher pitches the ball. The umpire shall call no pitch.
- i. When a runner, who has legally started to advance, cannot be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, nor by stepping on the plate with the ball in his/her possession.
- j. When a base runner holds his/her base until a fly ball touches a fielder, and then attempts to advance.
- k. When a runner is in contact with the base, and is hit by a batted ground ball or fly ball in fair territory, the base runner is not out and the ball is dead. All runners advance one (1) base if forced. EFFECT: Ball is dead; all runners advance one (1) base, if forced.
- l. When a base runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper place. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
- m. When a fielder makes a play on a batter or base runner while using an illegal glove. See Rule 5, Sec. 9 for option given to the manager of the offensive team.
- n. When a fair-batted ball hits the base runner, after it touched or touches any fielder, including the pitcher.

**Sec. 10 Double First Base Rules:**

- a. The defense must use the white (fair) portion and the batter-runner must use the colored (foul) portion when a play is being made on the batter-runner.

Penalties – (1) The batter-runner is out when a play is being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion provided the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to touch either the white or colored portion of the double base. (2) The batter-runner is out for interference when there is a force play and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white portion. (3) Obstruction is called on the defense where there is a force play on the batter-runner, who touches only the colored portion, and collides with the fielder about to receive a thrown ball, while also touching the colored portion.

- b. The defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or the colored portion: (1) On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base; (2) On any errant throw that pulls the defense off the base into foul territory; (3) When the defense uses the colored portion of first 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, is not out for interference unless the umpire rules the act as intentional interference.

c. Once the batter-runner has physically passed first base, then the double first base rules as defined above in (a) and (b) no longer apply. That is, the double first base is considered one base and the offense and defense can touch either portion of the base as if it were a single base.

- d. The double first base is highly recommended but not mandatory.

**RULE 8 – DEAD BALL – BALL IN PLAY**

Sec. 1 THE BALL IS DEAD AND not in play:

- a. When the ball is batted illegally.
  - b. When a batter steps from one box to another when the pitcher is ready to pitch.
  - c. When a ball is pitched illegally.
- EXCEPTION: If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the play stands.
- e. When the umpire declares “No Pitch”.
  - f. When the umpire calls time.
  - g. When the umpire calls time and an appeal play follows, the ball remains dead throughout the appeal.

- h. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person or clothing, whether or not the batter swings at the ball.
- i. When a foul ball is not caught.
- j. When a base runner is called out for leaving a base too soon on a pitched ball.
- k. When the offensive team causes interference.
- l. When the ball is outside the playing limits of the playing field. A ball is considered "out of play" when it touches the ground, person on the ground or object outside the playing area.
- m. If an accident to a runner prevents him/her from proceeding to a base, which he/she is awarded. A substitute runner shall be permitted for the injured player.
- n. In case of interference with the batter or fielder.
- o. When the batter bunts or chops a pitched ball.
- p. When any part of the batters person is hit by his own batted ball while he is in the batter's box.
- q. When a runner runs the bases in reverse order.
- q. When a coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while the fielder is attempting to make a play, and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- r. When a base runner fails to keep contact with his/her base, until the pitched ball has reached home plate..
- s. When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he/she reaches first base.
- t. When a blocked ball is declared.
- u. When the batter enters the batter's box with, or uses, an illegal bat or altered bat.
- v. When a caught fair ball, including a line drive, which can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped, with less than two outs, and with a runner on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or 1st, 2nd or 3rd bases.
- w. When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- x. When a foul ball is caught and the batter has 2 strikes.
- y. When a batter is hit with his/her own-batted ball in fair territory outside the batter's box.
- z. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground before passing or touching an infielder.

## Sec. 2 THE BALL IS IN PLAY:

- a. At the start of each half inning, when the pitcher has the ball in the pitching position and the umpire has called "Play Ball".
- b. When the infield fly rule is enforced.
- c. When a thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
- d. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground after passing or touching an infielder.
- e. When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- f. When the base runners have reached the bases which they are entitled, when the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
- g. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- h. When no play is being made on an obstructed runner. The ball shall remain alive until the play is over.
- i. When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- j. When a base runner must re-tag a base, in reverse order, while the ball is already in play.
- k. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out.
- l. When a base is dislodged while runners are running the bases.
- m. When a runner runs out of the base line in regular or reverse order to avoid a tag by a fielder.
- n. When a runner is forced or tagged out.
- o. When the umpire calls the base runner out for failure to return and touch the base when play is resumed, after a suspension of play.
- p. When a live ball strikes a groundskeeper, photographer, policeman etc. assigned to the game.
- q. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.

- r. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the judgment of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play.
- s. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- t. When a thrown ball strikes a coach.
- u. As long as there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This would include an immediate live ball appeal before the umpire has called "time". Once the umpire has called "time" however, the ball remains dead during a subsequent appeal play.
- v. When a foul ball is caught and the batter has less than two strikes.
- w. When, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach touches or physically helps a runner.  
EFFECT: A delayed dead ball signal will be given and play shall continue. The touched or assisted runner shall be ruled out and all other subsequent play will be ruled upon accordingly.

Sec. 3 THE BALL REMAINS ALIVE until the umpire calls "time", which should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area, and in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased.

## **WOMEN'S SOFTBALL**

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the section under General Slow Pitch Playing Rules.

SOFTBALL NATION has divisions for men and women, and a coed division for both to compete in jointly. The men's division is specifically for men ages 18 and older, and the women's division is specifically designed for women ages 18 and older. With the exception of COED division, women may not compete in the men's program and men may not compete in the women's program of any division

### **CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN'S SOFTBALL TEAMS:**

- GOLD Division" – 4 Home runs with the one up home run rule
- SILVER Division" – 2 Home runs with the one up home run rule
- BRONZE Division" – 1 Home run with any additional HR's being declared outs
- Women's Varsity Military – 2 HR's with the one up home run rule

**THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALL** shall be an eleven-inch smooth-seamed, concealed-stitched or flat-surfaced ball. The center of the ball may be made of either long fiber kapok or mixture of cork and rubber, and or machine wound, with a fine twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement. Or it may be made of other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION. The cover of the ball shall be optic yellow, tanned horsehide, cowhide or any other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION, cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with waxed cotton or linen thread to form a softball.

The solid core ball must be stamped with the C.O.R. of the ball and the Compression of the ball. MAXIMUM C.O.R. of .47 with a Maximum Compression of 400 pounds. Directors have the option as to which compression and which C.O.R. are to be used and may use a C.O.R. and Compression lower than the maximum. For Official Tournament Play, the ball must have the SoftballNation Logo on it.

### **UNIFORMS - SOFTBALL NATION Women Uniform Requirements:**

- (1) GOLD Division Matching uniforms with numbers.
- (2) SILVER and BRONZE Division Matching shirts with numbers.

# COED SOFTBALL

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the section under General Slow Pitch Playing Rules.

All Coed post season tournaments will use a format decided upon by the tournament director.

**Divisions of Play:** Teams will be separated by three divisions of play:

A team may be classified or re-classified by an Area Director at any time before the National Championship.

## **Player Participation:**

**GOLD Division:** Teams may have players from any division.

**SILVER Division:** Teams may have one (1) male gold division player and two (2) female gold division players

**BRONZE Division:** Teams may have two (2) male silver division players and two (2) female silver division players. Bronze teams may not have any Gold Division players (men or women).

## **PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

### **Sec. 1 A team shall consist of:**

a. Coed (Slow-Pitch) with extra players. Twelve (12) players, six (6) males and six (6) females.

NOTE: If the "EH" is used in Coed, twelve (12) players must be used.

It is not permissible to use eleven (11) players because of the alternate players.

b. Coed (Slow-Pitch). Ten (10) players; five (5) males and five (5) females.

c. A team must start a game with a minimum of ten (10) players and finish a game with ten (10) players. Coed teams may use the extra player (EH) rule.

d. Five (5) male and five (5) female players must play defense at all times.

e. Positioning is left up to the individual manager.

f. Any player on the team's official roster may play defense without being in the batting lineup as long as the player has not been ejected from that game.

### **Sec. 2 EXTRA PLAYER (EH)**

a. If the extra player (EH) is used, a team must use two (2) extra players, one male and one female.

These players may play defense at any time, but they must retain their original positions in the batting order. The batting order must remain the same unless a substitution is used in the offensive line-up.

NOTE: When a team is using the extra player(s) (EH), and in the event a player or players are removed for any reason during the course of the game. When no substitution is available, the player removed shall be scored as an out when his/her turn comes up in the batting order. In the event this occurs, the player immediately following the removed player is simply by-passed as a batter, but may still remain in the game as a defensive player.

## **THE GAME**

Teams qualifying for the SOFTBALL NATION COED Nationals must have an official signed roster into the Nationals Tournament Director no later than seven (7) days prior to the beginning of the National Championship.

### **HOME RUN LIMIT for Coed (Slow Pitch) Teams**

a. Gold Division: The HR rule will follow the men's rule (see General Slow Pitch Rules)

b. Silver Division: The HR rule will follow the men's rule (see General Slow Pitch Rules)

c. Bronze Division: The HR rule will follow the men's rule (see General Slow Pitch Rules).

## **BATTING**

Sec. 1 Each player on the side at bat shall become a batter in the order in which their names appear on the score sheet.

- a. Male and female players must alternate in the batting order. Either a male or female batter may bat first in the line-up. This order must also be maintained when using the extra player (EH) rule.
  - b. When a male batter is walked intentionally or unintentionally, the male batter is awarded second base, and the following female batter has the option to bat or walk.
  - c. It is the defensive team's responsibility to know whether or not the wrong ball is in the game. Only the team at bat shall be allowed to make the appeal on the wrong ball being pitched.
- EFFECT: The offensive team shall have the choice to either take the result of the play or bat again.

## **BASE RUNNING**

**Courtesy Runner** - recommended for men, women, coed, church.

COED Courtesy Runners: Males must run for males and females must run for females.

For additional Courtesy Runner rules, See Slow Pitch Rule 7 (Base Running)

**Double Home Plate:** SoftballNation has adopted the use of the Double Home Plate in Coed play whenever possible.

The extra home plate is called the Scoring Plate.

All base runners must touch the Scoring Plate when attempting to score a run.

The scoring plate is placed 9 feet 5 inches behind the third base corner of the regular home plate.

The front of the scoring plate should be parallel to the front of the regular home plate.

A commitment line will be marked on the baseline between third and home thirty feet from home plate. The commitment line should be marked perpendicular to the baseline and should be two feet long.

When Using the Double Home Plate:

The Base Runner must run home when his/her foot lands on or beyond the commitment line.

The Base runner coming home is out if:

- a. the catcher or other defensive player has the ball and touches home plate before the base runner touches the scoring plate and after the base runner has passed the commitment line.
- b. he/she fails to touch the scoring plate when scoring a run.
- c. if he/she passes the commitment line coming home and then retreats back towards third base.

# BLACK AMERICAN SOFTBALL

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the section under General Slow Pitch Playing Rules.

## PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

NOTE: Black American Rosters are allowed four (4) players not of black origin. No more than three (3) non-blacks may be in the line-up at one time. If origin is in question, a birth certificate must be supplied to show proof of origin.

## THE GAME

Home Run Limits:

The BA program will follow the Gold, Silver, Bronze format in Home Run Limits unless otherwise noted by a tournament director.

# CHURCH SOFTBALL

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the section under General Slow Pitch Playing Rules.

## CLASSIFICATION OF CHURCH SOFTBALL TEAMS:

Competitive & Recreational.

## UNIFORMS

SOFTBALL NATION CHURCH UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS: Competitive & Recreational  
- Matching shirts with numbers

## THE GAME

ADULT DIVISION SOFTBALL (MALE & FEMALE)

Players are eligible for adult division play once they have reached their eighteenth (18th) birthday.

## HOME RUN LIMIT FOR CHURCH SOFTBALL TEAMS:

(Any untouched ball hit over the fence is considered a "Home Run")

Competitive: 3 Home Runs with the One-up Home Run Rule. Any ball hit over the fence that's beyond the team's limit will be recorded as an out.

Recreation: 1 Home Run: Any ball hit over the fence that's beyond the team's limit will be recorded as an out.

Note: Any ball touched by a defensive player, which goes over the fence in fair territory, shall not be included in the total of over the fence home runs.

## Church Eligibility:

A player or team is eligible to play Church Softball if he/she, or they, meet the active membership of the Church, certified by the signature of the Official of the Church.

## Qualification for post-season Church Play:

a. A team must compete in a Qualifying or State Championship Tournament to qualify to play in SOFTBALL NATION Church Nationals.

NOTE: If there are no qualifying or state tournaments in a state or region, invitations can be issued by the National Office for a team to participate in the Church Nationals.

## Rosters:

The roster should be frozen by the Area Director when that church team qualifies to play in a SOFTBALL NATION Post season Tournament.

# HISPANIC SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the section under General Slow Pitch Playing Rules.

## **Classifications of Hispanic softball divisions:**

Gold, Silver, Bronze

Home Run Rules are the same as listed in the General Playing Rules for Men's Slow Pitch.

## **Rosters:**

Hispanic rosters are allowed four (4) non-Hispanic players, three of which may play at a time.

# MILITARY SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL

**Military Exemption for State Championship Play:** Military Teams are eligible for waivers from their respective State Tournament providing Operational Commitment be provided expressing inability to field a team for their State Championship. A military team is a team that has 80% of rostered players on Active Duty or holding a valid Government ID.

## **Military Nationals:**

### **Entry Qualifications:**

All Military Teams are eligible.

Eligible players include: Government Employees, Government Contractors with CAC Cards, Government Retirees and Dependents...

### **Players Must Have a Valid Government Issued Identification.**

**Guest Players:** Military teams are allowed two non government ID players.

## **Divisions of Play:**

### **Men's Divisions:**

Gold: 5 & 1up Home Run Rule

Silver: 3 Home Runs, 4<sup>th</sup> is out, 5<sup>th</sup> is out, 6<sup>th</sup> and beyond end the inning.

Bronze: 1 Home Run, 2<sup>nd</sup> is out, 3<sup>rd</sup> and beyond end the inning.

### **Women's Divisions:**

Competitive and Recreational

# FASTPITCH GENERAL PLAYING RULES

**NOTE:** If there are no qualifying or state tournaments in a state or region, invitations can be issued by the National Office for a team to participate in the Fast-Pitch Nationals.

## RULE 1 - THE PLAYING FIELD

**Sec. 1** The playing field dimensions for youth and adult fast-pitch softball programs are as follows:

**Distance Table**

Age Group	Pitching	Bases	Fences (min) recommended	Fences (max) recommended
8U	35 feet	60 feet	150 feet	200 feet
10U	35 feet	60 feet	150 feet	200 feet
12U	40 feet	60 feet	175 feet	200 feet
14U	43 feet	60 feet	175 feet	200 feet
16U	43 feet	60 feet	200 feet	225 feet
18U	43 feet	60 feet	200 feet	225 feet
23U	43 feet	60 feet	200 feet	225 feet

**NOTE:** A double first base may be used. (See Rule 7, Sec. 10 for rules regarding the double first base)

**Sec. 2** Ground rules or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed upon by leagues or opposing teams whenever backstops, fences, stands, vehicles, spectators, or other obstructions are within the prescribed playing area.

**Sec. 3** The playing field layout should include, in addition to markings for foul lines, the following:

- The three-foot running line is drawn parallel to and 3 feet from the base line on the foul side, starting at a point halfway between home plate and 1st base.
- The batter's on-deck circle is a 5-foot circle in foul territory with one between home plate and 1<sup>st</sup> base and one between home plate and 3rd base.
- The batter's box, one on each side of home plate, shall measure 3 feet by 7 feet. The inside lines of the batter's box shall be 6 inches from home plate. The front line shall be 4 feet in front of the center of the plate. The lines are considered part of the batter's box.
- The catcher's box shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be 8 feet 5 inches wide.
- The coach's box is located behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond, parallel to and 8 feet from the foul lines, extending from the far edges of the bases toward home plate.

**Sec. 4** If during the course of any game, the base distance or pitching distance is determined to be in error, the error should be corrected immediately, and the game shall continue as if the incorrect distances were correct. Incorrect base and pitching distances cannot be protested.

**Sec. 5** There shall be a sixteen (16) foot diameter [eight (8) foot radius] circle drawn around the pitcher's plate.

**NOTE:** When the ball is alive and in possession of the pitcher within the 16' circle, any runners between bases must immediately advance to the next base or return to the last base touched with liability of being put out. If the runner fails to return or advance immediately, the umpire shall rule the ball dead and shall declare the base runner out.

**NOTE:** A fake throw by the pitcher from within the 16' circle is to be considered as making a play on the runner(s) between bases and the runner is not obligated to follow the rule in the previous note.

## RULE 2 - EQUIPMENT

**NOTE:** For every division contained inside the cover of this Rule Book, all equipment must be 100% conforming, 100% of the time. SOFTBALL NATION reserves the right to approve or reject any softball related equipment for its intended use in the SOFTBALL NATION Program. Equipment does not merely need to meet industry standards but must meet SOFTBALL NATION standards before approval for its use is granted. If, should SOFTBALL NATION believe in any way, shape, or form that a particular piece of equipment is dangerous and/or not acceptable for fair play; SOFTBALL NATION reserves the right to ban such equipment immediately.

**The ALTERED BAT RULES FOR SLOW PITCH ALSO APPLY TO FAST PITCH.**

**Sec. 1 THE OFFICIAL BAT** should be made of one piece of wood (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. Below is a list of additional requirements:

a. The bat shall not be more than 34 inches in length and no more than 38 ounces in weight and shall meet the Bat Performance Factor (BPF) standard of 1.20 or less for the entire length of the barrel, and non-wooden bats shall have BPF 1.20 permanently stamped by the manufacturer. Bats without the BPF stamped on the bat shall be considered illegal.

b. The bat may be made of metal or any other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION and may be angular; however, SOFTBALL NATION reserves the right to approve any material before it is used in sanctioned events.

c. The bat shall be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" by the manufacturer and be rattle-free.

**NOTE:** If the words "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" cannot be read due to normal wear, the bat shall be declared legal, if it is legal in all other aspects.

d. All exposed surfaces of the bat must be free of burrs, pins, rivets, DEEP OR DANGEROUS DENTS, fractures/cracks of any type, sharp edges, or any type of exterior fastener that would present a safety hazard.

**EXCEPTION:** At the umpires' discretion, slightly dented bats may be considered legal.

e. The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (not smooth plastic/rubber type), or combination material.

f. The grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the knob of the bat.

g. Unless the bat is made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, it should have a rubber or plastic insert in the barrel.

h. A one-piece rubber grip and knob combination is illegal.

i. Metal bats must have a knob on the handle and welded or mechanically fastened.

j. All bats must have a safety knob of a minimum of ¼ inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. The ¼ inch is measured from the outer edge of the knob, 90 degrees to the outside layer of wrapping. The knob portion of the bat may be taped as long as the bat does not exceed 34 inches in length; however, the umpire may request that tape be removed from both the handle and knob, if there is any question concerning the bat being altered or illegal.

After determining the bat legal, the player may tape the bat back to his/her preference, providing the bat meets the requirements set forth by Sec. 1 (a-1).

k. A flare or cone grip may be attached from the factory or a factory flare or cone may be attached to the bat by the player, but the flare or cone must be installed properly to the bat.

The flare or cone must be taped or covered by an approved bat grip and the bat must meet all requirements of Sec. 1 (a-1) after installation to be considered legal

l. The bat shall be rounded and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/16 inch is permitted to allow for expansion of the round bat.

**NOTE:** Any bat that does not comply with these guidelines must be removed from the game, and the bat may no longer be used in any SOFTBALL NATION Sanctioned Play.

**NOTE:** STINGERS ARE APPROVED FOR SOFTBALL NATION PLAY PROVIDED THEY ARE PROPERLY INSTALLED.

**NOTE:** If a bat is designated age/gender specific it may only be used in that respective division of play. Fast Pitch bats may only be used in Fast Pitch play. Penalty: See Illegal Bat.

**Sec. 2 THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALL** shall be a raised-seamed, concealed-stitched or flat-surfaced ball. The center of the ball may be made of either long fiber kapok, or a mixture of cork and rubber, and/or machine wound with a fine twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement. Or it may be made of other materials approved by SOFTBALL NATION. The cover of the ball shall be optic yellow, tanned horsehide, cowhide or any other materials approved by the SOFTBALL NATION, cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with waxed cotton or linen thread to form a softball. The solid core ball must be stamped with a logo that contains the maximum C.O.R. and compression standards. FAST PITCH: MAXIMUM C.O.R. shall be .47. Maximum Compression for softballs allowed by SOFTBALL NATION is 525 pounds. The official softball used for all divisions of the fast pitch program will be the 12" raised-seam softball.

**EXCEPTION:** The youth division, girls 8U and 10U, will use the 11" raised-seam softball.

**Sec. 3 ALL FIELDERS MUST WEAR GLOVES** or mitts made of leather or other approved materials. The glove/mitt worn by a pitcher must be uniform in color and may not be optic yellow. Gloves and mitts may not have colors or designs that appear to be distracting to the batter.

**NOTE:** If in the umpire's judgment, the pitcher's glove/mitt contains some color, logo, or design that is distracting, the pitcher will be instructed to use another glove or mitt.

**Sec. 4 ALL PLAYERS,** coaches, and participants must wear shoes. Sandals are considered proper shoes for non-players. A shoe shall be made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar materials. The sole may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber or polyurethane cleats.

a. (Youth) Metal Cleats may be worn by players at the following age groups: 14u, 16u, 18u, 23u. Note: where allowed by park/field regulations.

b. (Adult) Metal cleats may be worn in all divisions of adult FP play.

**EXCEPTION:** Metal Cleats will not be allowed at facilities where they are prohibited.

**Sec. 5 EQUIPMENT** shall not be left lying on the field in fair or foul territory. A discarded stationary bat or catcher's mask/helmet is not considered loose equipment. They are considered part of the field.

**Sec. 6 UNIFORM:** All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color and style.

a. Ball caps or visors must be alike and must be worn properly. Caps or visors are not mandatory but when worn by one or more players must be identical and must be a team cap or visor. Hard plastic visors, bandanas, and handkerchiefs are not approved headgear.

b. A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm, or thigh that may be distracting to the batter. Players may wear solid colored undergarments under their uniform shirts or shorts. It is not mandatory that all players wear these undergarments, but if worn, they shall not be ragged, frayed, or slit on exposed areas. Players may wear scrunchies if worn in good taste and not worn in a derogatory fashion. Scrunchies may not be worn in a fashion that would hide or prohibit the viewing of the player's number.

c. Numbers must be worn and visible on all uniforms and be a minimum of six (6) inches in height. The number is required on the back of the uniform shirt but not on the front. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. If this occurs, the umpire must ensure that this is corrected immediately.

d. **YOUTH FAST PITCH ONLY: It is recommended that players not wear jewelry.**

Medical alert ID bracelets or necklaces are allowed but should be worn or taped to the body as not to present a hazard. Casts, (plaster, metal, or other hard substances) or other items judged dangerous by the umpire may not be worn during the game by any coach coaching the bases or by any player.

Coaches in wheelchairs **MAY NOT** be on the field of play during ANY live ball situation unless the chair has all exposed metal parts and/or surfaces covered by a soft substance and taped in such a

manner that would eliminate the risk of bodily injury to the players playing the game or other coaches coaching the game. This pertains to ALL adult and ALL youth play.

**EXCEPTION:** In some cases a protective device may be attached to an approved head protector, with prior approval by the local SOFTBALL NATION Director.

**NOTE:** Prosthesis may be worn; however, any metal that is part of a brace or support must be covered by soft material and taped. Casts are prohibited.

**NOTE:** Prior to the start of the game, the manager/coach shall be responsible for verifying to the Umpire-in-Chief that all his/her players are equipped and in compliance with the Official SOFTBALL NATION Rule Book.

**Sec. 7 A BATTING HELMET** bearing the NOCSAE stamp is mandatory for each batter, on-deck batter, runner, bat boy/girl, and youth coach in the coach's box. The batting helmet worn by each of these individuals must have extended earflaps that cover both ears and temples, and shall have a non-glare surface.

For all youth Fast Pitch play, approved face protection is mandatory. The face guard should bear the NOCSAE stamp.

**EXCEPTION:** In the adult program, one or two earflaps are acceptable. If a pitcher wears a batting helmet while pitching, the outer covering must have a non-glare and non-reflective surface. Plastic visors are prohibited for players, coaches and managers. The batting helmet must be worn properly at all times.

**PENALTY:** The Umpire will issue a team warning if any player is found to be in noncompliance. All subsequent violations of the warned team will result in the ejection of the player not in compliance with this rule.

**NOTE:** When an umpire detects a runner (including the batter/runner but not including a retired runner) deliberately removing his/her batting helmet during playing action, a dead ball will be declared immediately. The violator is declared out with all runners returning to the last base touched at the time of the infraction. Preceding runners, scoring before the removal of the helmet, will score and are not required to return to the last base occupied.

### **Sec. 8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:**

The catcher must wear a NOCSAE approved head protector which shall have a non-glare surface, a protective mask, with throat protector (commercially manufactured, properly attached, and not altered in any manner), body protector, and baseball/softball shin guards. The male catcher or any male player warming up a pitcher shall wear an approved protective cup. Any player warming up a pitcher at any location within the confines of the park or facility will be required to wear an approved head protector and an approved mask with throat protector. All protective equipment must conform to industry standards. SOFTBALL NATION HIGHLY RECOMMENDS protective equipment for ALL DIVISIONS of softball. All players are permitted to wear any approved protective equipment including catcher's equipment, batter's helmet, and soccer-style shin guards. If used, the equipment must not be detached. Detached equipment can be an obstruction. Repeated acts could be grounds for ejection.

## **RULE 3 - PLAYERS/SUBSTITUTIONS**

Roster Deadlines: Players must be added to a team's roster before the tournament entry deadline. All rosters must comply with other roster rules of SOFTBALL NATION.

**NOTE:** For the current Softball Season, SOFTBALL NATION will have one division of play in youth fast pitch. However, teams will be seeded at the Fast Pitch Nationals in an upper and lower Division (A & B) for the playoff portion of the tournament.

**Sec. 1 THE LINE-UP:** A team's starting lineup shall consist of a minimum of nine (9) and a maximum of twelve (12) batters.

Teams can play a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of nine (9) players on defense.

Teams may use any player on the roster on defense at any time. This is defense only. Umpires will

only be concerned with the batting order. Any non-ejected player on the team's roster may play defense. This is known as "Free Substitution on Defense" Players of the team in the field may be stationed anywhere on fair territory, except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box, and the pitcher who must be in a legal pitching position at the start of each pitch. No part of the defensive player's foot (except catcher) may be outside the foul lines, from the time when the pitcher steps on the pitching rubber or until the pitch is released.

**PENALTY:** Illegal pitch.

a. A team must have the required minimum number of players (9) present in the team area to start a game. Players listed in the starting line-up and not available at game time may be substituted for and re-entered later. Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official scorekeeper or the umpire at the start of each game. The line-up shall contain the first and last name, position (if applicable), and uniform number of each player.

**NOTE:** If a wrong number is on the line-up card, correct it and continue playing ball with no penalty. A player's correct name supersedes an error if an incorrect number has been entered on the line-up card.

1. All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place by last name, first name and uniform number.

2. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list any time during the game.

### **Sec. 2 THE EXTRA HITTER (EH):**

**NOTE:** Coaches have the option of using none (0), one (1), two (2) or three (3) Extra Hitters. An EH(s) is optional, but if one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of game and be listed on the line-up card or score sheet handed to the umpire and/or opposing scorekeeper.

a. The Extra Hitter (EH) can play defense.

b. If the EH(s) is used, he/she must be used the entire game.

c. The EH(s) must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.

d. An EH may be substituted for at any time, either by a pinch runner or a pinch hitter who then becomes the (EH). The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game offensively (except as a courtesy runner) or who was the original starter or a substitute EH in that batting position (re-entered player).

**Sec. 3 RE-ENTRY RULE:** Any of the starting offensive players or their substitutes may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once (this includes the starting EH(s)), provided that the players occupy the original position in the batting order whenever in the game offensively.

**NOTE:** The original player and his/her substitute cannot be in the game offensively at the same time.

a. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an illegal player. Refer to: Sec 6 for Illegal Player Penalty

b. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled like an appeal play that can be made anytime during the game. If appealed while the illegally re-entered player is on base, then that player would be declared out.

### **Sec. 4 PLAYING WITH FEWER PLAYERS THAN WHAT STARTED:**

a. If a team loses an offensive player due to injury, ejection, or other means and there are no eligible players left on the bench to replace that player, then the team may finish the game with as few as eight (8) players. All vacant spots in the line-up are declared outs when those spots are due to bat.

b. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup because of an injured/ejected/removed player as described above, the opposing team may not, with two outs, intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter in order to get the "AUTOMATIC OUT" created by the vacant spot in the batting order. This would also include catcher obstruction to the previous batter or the previous batter being hit by a legal or illegally pitched ball. If the previous batter is walked, hit by a legal or illegally pitched ball, or is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base due to catcher's obstruction, the vacant spot is skipped, the "AUTOMATIC OUT" is waived, and the next batter is the player whose name follows the name in the vacant spot in the batting order. This only applies when there are two (2) outs.

**NOTE:** If a team has a vacant spot and a substitute arrives, he/she must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot.

**NOTE:** If a batter is hit by a pitch and cannot continue or a baserunner is injured while on base and cannot continue, and there are no eligible substitutes, then the offensive team may take an out for that position or allow the defensive team to choose the substitute runner. If (in this instance only) the chosen substitute's turn at bat comes up while he/she is on base, the defensive coach must choose another player to run in this spot. From then on the team would refer to Sec. 4 a. and b.  
c. Ejected players are never allowed to re-enter a game.

**Sec. 5 SUBSTITUTIONS:** A player shall be officially in the game offensively when his/her name has been entered on the official score sheet, has been announced, or has stepped in the batter's box, or has taken his/her place on a base (exception: Courtesy Runner), and a pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown. A player shall be officially in the game defensively when he/she takes a position in the field and one pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown.

a. The manager or team representative shall notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game offensively. Failure to notify the umpire of an offensive substitution would create a Batting Out of Order situation.

b. Re-entry is considered a substitution and if an illegal re-entry occurs, the penalty is the immediate ejection of the illegal player.

c. Each pitcher (starter or substitute) must pitch until the first batter facing him/her has completed his/her turn at bat, the side has been retired, or he/she has been removed from the game by the umpire. A pitcher removed from the game by rule or ejection is not subject to this rule. Any other player may be removed from the game at any time.

d. A player substituted for in the game shall not participate in the game except as a coach, courtesy runner, or defensive player unless he/she has re-entry privileges.

**NOTE:** A player's correct name supersedes an error if an incorrect number has been entered on the score sheet.

**Sec. 6 ILLEGAL PLAYER:** The use of an illegal player is handled as an appeal play that can be made at any time while the player is in the game. A player will not have violated the illegal player provision until he/she enters the game and one (1) pitch, legal or illegal, is thrown. Any action before one pitch is thrown is correctable. An illegal player violation results in the immediate ejection of the illegal player. In addition, the following penalties will apply:

a. If the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and before the next pitch, the illegal player is called out. Any advance by any runner as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified. Any additional outs recorded on the play not involving the illegal player will stand.

b. If the illegal player has made a defensive play and before the next pitch (or the defensive team or the umpires have left the field), the offensive team has the option of 1) the result of the play or 2) replaying the last pitch.

**NOTE:** The illegal player can be legally replaced by any eligible substitute.

**Sec. 7 INELIGIBLE PLAYER:** An ineligible player is one who is not on the official team roster (and not a guest player), one who is too old to play in the designated division, or one who has false credentials in the team notebook (birth certificate, roster information, etc.)

a. The use of an ineligible player is handled as a protest that can be made anytime during or after a game in which the ineligible player participated, up until the end of the current regular season or tournament. A \$75.00 protest fee is required for each player protested.

b. The penalty for using an ineligible player is a forfeit of any/all games played or in progress and the immediate ejection of both the illegal player and his/her coach.

**Sec. 8 COURTESY RUNNER:** When the pitcher or catcher of record (played in the last half-inning, or, in the top of the first inning, appears on the line-up card as a starter in those positions) attains a base by any means, the offensive manager/coach has the option to insert a courtesy runner in place of that pitcher or catcher, and continue to run for that player until he/she scores, is put out, or until the half-inning ends. The courtesy runner can be any legal and eligible (non-ejected) player on the team roster and in uniform and not currently occupying a base. The decision to use a courtesy runner may be made anytime the pitcher or catcher is on base.

**NOTE:** Should a player who is courtesy run for in the top of the first inning not start as the pitcher of catcher in the bottom of the first inning, then that team's coach will be ejected from the game.

- a. Once a courtesy runner is used, that player must complete the running assignment (i.e. there can never be a substitute or courtesy runner for a courtesy runner. For exception, see d. below).
- b. A player can be a courtesy runner more than once per inning.
- c. If a player who is in the batting order is used for a courtesy runner and that player's turn to bat comes up while that player is still on base, that batting position will become an automatic out and the courtesy runner will remain on base.
- d. If the courtesy runner is injured while on base, the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner ran can replace the courtesy runner, or a legal substitution can be made. The injured courtesy runner cannot participate in the game in any shape or form until after that half-inning.

**NOTE:** If a legal substitution is made for an injured courtesy runner, then the pitcher/catcher is considered to have left the game and can re-enter if he/she has a re-entry privilege remaining.

- e. Using a courtesy runner for either the pitcher or catcher does not affect the re-entry status of those two players.

### **Sec. 9 GUEST PLAYER:**

In a non-postseason tournament, a team may invite a player not on their official roster to play with them as a guest player. The declared guest player may not pitch. A team may only have one guest player per tournament. The guest player must have parental consent and meet the appropriate age requirement to be eligible to play. The guest player must be declared before the tournament begins.

## **RULE 4 - THE GAME**

**Sec. 1 The choice of the first (visitor) or last (home) at bat** in the inning shall be decided by the single toss of a coin unless otherwise stated in the rules of the tournament or organization under which the schedule of games is being played.

Note: It is recommended when using the Double Elimination Format: In the championship game(s) the undefeated team will be awarded their choice of taking "Home" or "Visitors" in the first game. In the "if" game, "home" or "visitor" will be decided by a coin flip.

**Sec. 2 The fitness of the grounds** for a game shall be decided by the Tournament Director, Tournament Umpire-In-Chief, and/or the Home Plate Umpire.

**Sec. 3 Regulation Game:** A regulation SOFTBALL NATION game shall consist of seven (7) innings or the expiration of the allotted time limit if a time limit is being used.

### **EXCEPTIONS:**

- a. A full seven (7) innings need not be played if the home team scores more runs in six innings than the visiting team does in seven innings, or scores a run or runs in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning before the third out is made that causes the home team to take the lead.
- b. SOFTBALLNATION will use the 12, 10 and 8 run rule in all tournament play. If one team is 12, 10 or 8 runs ahead after 3, 4 or 5 innings respectively, the team with 12, 10 or 8 runs will be declared the winner. If the home team is ahead by 12, 10 or 8 or more runs after 2 ½, 3 ½ or 4 ½ innings respectively, the home team shall be declared the winner.
- c. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings will use the International Tie-Breaker Rule: This would involve the last batter of the previous inning whose turn at bat had been completed, assuming a position on second base to start the extra inning. This would be done at the beginning of each half-inning until, at the conclusion of a full inning, a winner is determined. A game that is tied at the end of the time limit must complete the full inning if the time elapses during any part of an inning. No new inning will start after the allotted time limit has expired, unless rules to the contrary are established for a tournament. Once an inning begins, that inning must be completed unless the home team is ahead when the time limit expires. The visiting team's half-inning must be completed.
- d. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other causes which place the patrons or players in peril.

e. These provisions do not apply to any acts on the part of the players or spectators, which might call for the forfeiture of the game. The umpire may forfeit the game if attacked physically by any team member or spectator.

f. The umpire shall forfeit a game in favor of a team not at fault in the following cases:

1. If a team fails to appear on the field, or while being on the field, refuses to begin a game at the time the team is scheduled to play, or within a time set for forfeitures (grace period) by the organization in which the team is playing.
2. If after the game has started, one team refuses to continue play unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
3. If after the umpire has suspended the game, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "play ball".
4. If a team uses unsportsmanlike tactics to delay or to hasten the game.
5. If after being warned by the umpire, any one of the rules is willfully violated.
6. If the order for the removal of a player, coach, or manager from the game is not obeyed within one minute.
7. If, because of an injury or the removal of a player by the umpire or for any reason a team cannot produce eight (8) batters in the batting line-up.
8. The score of a forfeited game will be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

g. During tournament play, if a game is suspended or postponed due to rain or any other cause which interrupts a game, the game must be resumed at the exact point where it was stopped, unless the teams mutually agree to accept the existing score as the final score.

**NOTE:** Players not available when the resumption of play occurs, but were in the line-up when play was suspended, may be substituted for.

h. In the event that a tournament cannot be completed, an official game may be called after 5 innings of play or 4 1/2 innings of play, if the home team is ahead.

**Sec. 4 The winner of the game** shall be the team which scores the most runs in a regulation game. 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 more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.

**Sec. 5 A run shall not be scored** if the third out of the inning is a result of:

- a. The batter-runner being put out before LEGALLY touching first base
- b. A base runner being forced out due to the batter becoming a base runner
- c. A base runner leaving the base before a pitched ball to home plate leaves the pitchers hand
- d. An appeal play at first base on the batter/runner for the third out of the inning
- e. A Live Ball appeal is legally made on any runner (Time Play)
- f. A runner is properly tagged out while off base (Time Play)

**Sec. 6 No succeeding runner** shall score a run when a preceding runner has been declared the third out of an inning.

**Sec. 7 A base runner shall not score a run** ahead of the base runner preceding him/her in the batting order if the preceding runner has not been put out.

**Sec. 8 Charged Defensive Conference:** There shall be a limit of one charged conference between the manager or any other team representative from the dugout and any defensive player in any half-inning. The second and all subsequent charged conferences in a half-inning will result in the removal of the current pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. A pitcher removed by this rule is allowed to play another defensive position. Note: A starting or substitute pitcher must pitch to at least one batter until that batter reaches base, is put out, there has been a third out in the inning, an injury has occurred to the pitcher, or the pitcher is disqualified by the umpire.

**Sec. 9 Charged Offensive Conference:** There shall be a limit of one charged conference between the manager or any other team representative, on or off the field, and any offensive player in any half-inning. The umpire should deny all requests for subsequent charged conferences. If a manager or team representative demands multiple charged conferences in a half-inning, the second and all subsequent charged conferences will result in a strike being called on the current batter.

**Sec. 10 The SOFTBALL NATION Official Roster signing date** will be the day prior to the scheduled date of the state championship tournament. All teams qualifying to play in the SOFTBALL NATION Fast Pitch Nationals are required to have an official roster in their Area Director's office by this date.

## **RULE 5 - PITCHING REGULATIONS**

**Sec. 1 Before starting the delivery** (pitch), the pitcher shall comply with the following:

a. The pitcher shall take a position with a portion of the pivot foot on top of and touching the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot either touching or behind the pitcher's plate and wholly or partially within the 24 inches of the pitcher's plate. The hands shall be separated or in the process of being separated when the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate.

The pitcher shall hold the ball in either the glove or the pitching hand.

b. While in this position, the pitcher shall take, or simulate taking, a signal/sign from the catcher.

**NOTE:** The act of looking at the catcher is sufficient evidence that a sign has been delivered to the pitcher.

c. The pitcher shall bring the hands together or touch them together for no more than five (5) seconds.

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

e. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitching plate without having the ball in his/her possession.

**Sec. 2 The pitch starts** when the hands are separated or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his/her wind-up. The hands may only be separated one (1) time per pitch. If the pitcher takes a step back with the non-pivot foot, the step must begin prior to or as the hands come together. The pitcher may remove himself/herself from the pitching position by stepping backwards off the pitcher's plate before the pitch starts. If both feet are on the plate, either foot may be removed first.

**Sec. 3 A legal delivery** is one in which the ball is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

a. The follow through of the hand and wrist and the release of the ball must be forward past the straight line of the body.

b. The hand must be below the hip, and the wrist must not be farther from the body than the elbow.

c. When a forward step is taken toward the batter, the non-pivot foot must land within, or partially within, the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate.

d. The pitcher's pivot foot must remain in contact with the ground until the non-pivot foot has returned to the ground. The umpire may ignore minor infractions if he/she feels that no advantage is gained when the pitcher loses momentary contact with the ground.

**NOTE:** Such techniques as the "crow hop" and "leap" are illegal.

e. When the pitch is released, the catcher must be within the outside lines of the catcher's box.

f. The catcher must return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch except after a strike out, putout made by the catcher, or to make a play on a base runner.

g. Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the pitcher has fifteen (15) seconds to deliver the next pitch.

**PENALTY:** (f & g above) an additional ball is awarded the batter.

**Sec. 4 A pitcher may use any wind-up** desired providing:

a. There is no motion made to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

b. A rocker action is not used in which, after having the ball in both hands in the pitching position, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.

c. No wind-up is used in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.

d. There are no more than one and one-half (1-1/2) revolutions of the pitching arm in the windmill pitch.

The pitching arm may be dropped to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip.

e. The pitcher makes no continuous wind-up after taking the forward step, which is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

**Sec. 5 While in the pitching position,** the pitcher may not deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from striking it.

**Sec. 6 During the game,** the pitcher may not use tape or other substances on the ball, pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any player apply any foreign substance to the ball. With the umpire's approval, powdered resin may be used to dry the hand. The wearing of any item on the pitching hand, wrist, or arm that may be distracting to the batter will not be allowed.

**PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL PITCH:** Any infraction of Sec. 1 through Sec. 8 constitutes an illegal pitch. If not previously covered, the umpire will indicate a delayed dead ball and verbally declare an illegal pitch. A ball is awarded to the batter. Runners may but do so with liability to be put out. If the illegal pitch is hit and all runners including the batter-runner, advance at least one base, the play stands. If all base runners including the batter-runner do not advance at least one base, the offensive coach has the option of taking the result of the play or the penalty for the illegal pitch. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

**Sec. 7 The umpire will declare 'no pitch' when:**

a. A pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

b. A runner is declared out for leaving the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

c. The pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched the base occupied after a foul ball and the ball is dead.

d. The pitcher attempts a quick return pitch before the batter has taken his/her position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch.

e. An offensive player, manager, coach, or bench personnel calls "time" or employs any other word or phrase or commits any act for the purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit any illegal pitch.

**PENALTY:** For articles a through d, the ball is dead and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. For article e, if the batter tries to cause the pitcher to commit an illegal pitch, the ball remains alive if the pitch is legal.

**Sec. 8 The umpire will declare an illegal pitch** when a fielder, other than the catcher, is outside the playing field (foul territory) at the moment of the pitch.

**NOTE:** The foul line is considered in fair territory.

**Sec. 9 At the beginning of each half inning** or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one (1) minute may be used to deliver not more than five (5) pitches to the catcher or other teammate.

The one minute starts the instant the third out is made in the previous half-inning. Play shall be suspended during this time. Each pitcher may only warm up one (1) time per inning.

**PENALTY:** A pitcher will be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five (5).

**NOTE:** Under the discretion of the home plate umpire, the pitcher may be authorized more pitches due to inclement weather, injury, or other circumstances.

**Sec. 10 If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand** during the windup or during the backswing, a ball shall be called on the batter (unless swung at), and the ball remains in play and runners may advance at their own risk.

**Sec. 11 After assuming the pitching position**, the pitcher may not throw to a base while a foot is in contact with the pitching plate.

**PENALTY:** An illegal pitch is declared.

**NOTE:** An illegal pitch will be declared if any fielder takes a position in the batter's line of vision or deliberately acts in a manner to otherwise distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be delivered or released.

**Sec. 12 There shall be only one charged conference** between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with each and every pitcher or defensive player in a half-inning.

**PENALTY:** See Rule 4 Section 8

**NOTE:** A starting or substitute pitcher must pitch to a batter until the batter reaches a base, is put out, the half-inning ends, the pitcher is injured, or the pitcher is removed by rule by the umpire.

**NOTE:** The rules for a charged conference do not change in extra innings.

## **RULE 6 – BATTING**

**Sec. 1 The batter shall take his/her position** within the lines of the batter's box.

a. The batter shall not have his/her entire foot touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or touching home plate when the ball is hit.

b. The batter shall not step directly across in front of the catcher to the other side of the batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch and the ball is alive.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 1 (a-b) The ball is dead, the batter is out, base runners may not advance.

c. The batter shall not enter the batter's box with an illegal bat.

**EFFECT:** The batter is out.

d. The batter shall not enter the batter's box with an altered bat.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, the batter is out, and without warning is removed from the game.

Base runners may not advance.

e. The batter must take his/her position within ten (10) seconds after the umpire has called "play ball". He/she must have both feet within the lines of the box before the start of the pitch. He/she may touch the line, but no part of his/her foot may be outside of the lines prior to the pitch.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead. The umpire will call a strike on the batter and will also issue a warning to the batter to take his/her position or risk being called out. If the batter refuses to take his/her position after the warning, he/she will be called out. The warning will be given to a batter only one time per game. Any repeated violation during the game by the player will result in an out being called. This rule is intended to speed up play.

Umpires, while using good judgment in enforcement of this rule, must prohibit the batter from delaying the game by taking an excessive or unnecessary amount of time entering the batter's box.

f. The batter shall keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches. If the batter fails to keep a foot in the batter's box, the penalty will be a team warning the first time. For the second and each additional infraction, the umpire will call a strike on the batter.

**NOTE:** At the umpire's discretion a penalty may not be called if the batter is outside the batter's box and NOT delaying the game.

**Sec. 2 Each player of the side at bat shall** become a batter in the order in which his/her name appears on the score sheet. The batting order of each team must be on the line-up card or score sheet and delivered by the manager or captain to the home plate umpire. The batting order must be followed throughout the entire game unless there is a substitution. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the player he/she is replacing in the batting order. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the preceding inning.

**EFFECT:** Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made by the defensive team only.

a. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter takes his/her place and legally assumes any balls and strikes.

- b. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has batted and before the next pitch to the following batter, the player who should have batted is out. Any advance or score made because of a batted ball by the improper batter (hit, error, base on balls, fly out, etc.) shall be nullified. Outs made on runners other than the improper batter shall stand. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.
- c. If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter becomes legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.
- d. No base runner shall be removed from the base he/she is occupying to bat in his/her proper place. He/she merely misses his/her turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following him/her in the order becomes the legal batter.
- e. When the third out of the inning is made before the batter has completed his/her turn at bat, he/she shall be the first batter in the next inning and shall have the ball and strike count on him/her canceled.

**Sec. 3 Members of the team at bat** shall not interfere either physically or vocally with a player attempting to field either a fair or foul ball. This includes a base coach and the on-deck batter.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners may not advance.

**Sec. 4 The batter shall not hit a fair ball** a second time with the bat in fair territory.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners may not advance.

**EXCEPTION:** If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hands, it is a foul ball even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory

**NOTE:** If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against a stationary bat in fair territory and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play. The stationary bat is considered part of the playing field.

**Sec. 5 The umpire shall call a strike:**

- a. For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone before touching the ground and at which the batter does not swing.
- b. For each pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter. This includes a ball that is swung at but hit the ground first.
- c. For each foul tip held by the catcher. The batter is out if it is the third strike.
- d. For each foul ball not legally caught; this does not include a 3rd strike.
- e. For each pitched ball swung at or bunt attempted and missed which touches any part of the batter.
- f. When any part of the batter's person is hit with his/her own-batted ball when he/she is in the batter's box and he/she has less than two (2) strikes.
- g. When a pitched ball hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 5 (d-g) The ball is dead and base runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out.

- h. When a batter holds the bat as if attempting to bunt and does not withdraw the bat before the ball reaches home plate.

**Sec. 6 The umpire shall call a ball:**

- a. For each pitch that does not enter the strike zone, hits the ground, or touches home plate, and is not swung at by the batter.
- b. For each illegally pitched ball..
- c. When a pitch hits the batter outside of the strike zone. The batter is awarded first base. This would include a ball that hits the ground and then hits the batter.
- d. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
- e. When the pitcher fails to pitch within fifteen (15) seconds.
- f. For each excessive warm-up pitch.

**NOTE:** Intentional Base on Balls (walks) may be granted without pitches being thrown when the coach, pitcher or catcher makes the request to the plate umpire. The request may be made before any pitch, regardless of the count on the batter. At that point the ball becomes dead and runners cannot advance unless forced.

**Sec. 7 A fair ball is a legally batted ball which:**

- a. Settles or is touched on fair ground between home and first base or home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over fair ground.
- c. Touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base.
- d. While on or over fair ground, touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player.
- e. First falls on fair ground beyond 1st or 3rd base. A fair fly ball must be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, regardless of whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time he/she touches the ball.
- f. Hits home plate and remains in fair territory.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 7 (a-f). The ball is in play and base runners are entitled to advance any number of bases with liability to be put out. The batter becomes a base runner unless the infield fly rule applies.

- g. While on or over fair ground, the ball lands behind a fence or in the stands beyond the outfield fence. This is a home run.
- h. Hits a foul pole on the fly. If the ball hits the pole above the fence level, it shall be a home run.

**Sec. 8 A foul ball is a legally batted ball which:**

- a. Settles on foul ground between home and 1st base or between home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over foul ground.
- c. First touches on foul ground beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d. While on or over foul ground touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player, or the ball is blocked.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 8 (a-d) The ball is dead. A strike is called on the batter for each foul ball (with less than two strikes), and base runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out.

**Sec. 9 The batter is out:**

- a. When the 3rd strike is struck at, missed and touches any part of the batter's person.
- b. When a batter appears in the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered, non-approved or an illegal bat prior to hitting the ball. The batter is also ejected from the game for using an altered bat or non-approved bat.
- c. When a fly ball is legally caught.
- d. Immediately when he/she hits an infield fly and the umpire has declared "Infield Fly." (See Definitions for Infield Fly Definition)

**NOTE:** It is still an Infield Fly even though it is not immediately declared by the umpire.

- e. If a fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, including a line drive, and an attempted bunt which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort with 1st, 1st & 2nd, 1st & 3rd or 1st, 2nd & 3rd bases occupied with less than 2 outs.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, the batter is out, and base runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. This does not apply to an infield fly. The dropped ball remains alive on an infield fly.

**NOTE:** A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

- f. If a preceding unretired runner, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball, or is attempting to throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play on the batter-runner; the preceding runner and the batter-runner are both declared out.
- g. Any batter-runner who carries the bat during a live ball and legally reaches or touches 1<sup>st</sup> base while still holding the bat, will be declared out. Should this be the 3rd out of the inning, no preceding runner shall score.

**EFFECT:** If less than two outs, a delayed dead ball signal will be given and the ball will remain alive.

- h. When the batter attempts a bunt on the 3rd strike and the bunt becomes a foul ball.
- i. On a legally caught missed 3rd strike or foul tip.

**NOTE:** If, with less than two outs and 1st base is unoccupied or with two outs, the batter is not out unless the 3rd strike is caught. If the ball is not caught, the batter becomes a batter-runner and is allowed to attempt to reach 1<sup>st</sup> base before being tagged out or thrown out.

Runners occupying any other base (s) may also advance with liability to be put out.

**NOTE:** Any foul tip that is caught is a strike and the ball is in play.

j. When hit by his/her own-batted ball, in fair territory, outside the batter's box.

k. When the batter hinders the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.

l. When the batter intentionally hinders the catcher while standing within the batter's box.

m. When the batter intentionally interferes with a thrown ball in or out of the batter's box.

n. When the batter interferes with a play at home plate.

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

**EXCEPTION:** If no play is being made and the batter accidentally interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and a runner(s) advances safely; the umpire should call time and return the runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

o. When the batter obviously concedes his/her right to advance on a legally batted fair ball, base on balls, dropped third strike, or catcher's obstruction by entering dead-ball area.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the infraction.

p. if he/she cannot complete his/her turn at bat and there is no legal substitute.

**Sec. 10 The batter or base runner is not out** if a fielder making a play on him uses an illegal glove. The manager of the offended team has the option of having the batter bat over and assuming the ball and strike count he had prior to the pitch he/she hit (base runners return), or taking the result of the play. The umpire will signal a delayed dead ball and the illegal glove must be replaced.

**Sec. 11 On-deck batter:**

a. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the current batter in the batting order.

b. The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of either on-deck circle without blocking the view of any manager or coach.

c. The on-deck batter may loosen up with two official softball bats, an official warm up bat, or the player may use an approved warm up product. Nothing else may be attached such as a donut, fan, etc. when loosening up.

d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle when he/she becomes the batter or to direct base runners advancing from 3rd to home plate.

e. When the on-deck batter interferes with the defensive player's opportunity to make a play on a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference is declared out.

f. The provision of Rule 6. Sec. 3 shall apply to the on-deck batter.

**RULE 7 – BASE RUNNING**

**Sec. 1 The base runner must touch the bases** in legal order (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Home Plate).

a. A base runner may not run the bases in reverse order, either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead and the runner is out.

b. Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

**EFFECT:** The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.

c. When a base runner must return to a base while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.

**EFFECT:** The ball is in play and base runners must return with liability to be put out.

- d. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, he/she may hold the base until he/she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.
- e. When a runner passes a base, he/she is considered to have touched that base.
- f. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither he/she nor the succeeding runners in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position. The ball is in play and runners may advance with liability of being put out.
- g. Failure of a preceding runner to touch a base or to leave a base legally on a caught fly ball and who is declared out does not affect the status of a succeeding runner who touches the bases in proper order. However, if the preceding runner were to be called out for the 3rd out of the inning, no succeeding runner may score a run.
- h. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left illegally after a following runner has scored.
- i. When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base, a base he/she has left after he/she has left illegally, even after the ball becomes alive. However, when a dead ball occurs, a runner may return to a missed base if he/she is required to by the umpire in the awarding or determination of bases. The runner is not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he/she is required to by the umpire in the awarding or determination of the bases. The runner is not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he is required to return to.
- j. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left illegally once he/she enters his/her dugout or bench area.
- k. When the umpire has called four (4) balls. Base runners do not advance unless forced or successful in an attempt to steal.
- l. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases. Awarded bases must also be touched in proper order.

## **Sec. 2 The batter becomes a batter-runner:**

- a. As soon as he/she legally hits a fair ball.
- b. When the umpire has called four balls. Base runners do not advance unless forced or successful in an attempt to steal.
- c. When a legal or illegally pitched ball hits the batter's person or clothing and the ball is completely in the batter's box, provided the batter does not strike at the ball. This includes a ball that hits the ground and then hits the batter. The Ball is dead.

**EXCEPTION:** If the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the hitting of the batter is disregarded. The pitch will be called a strike or ball depending on the location of the pitch. Unless ball four is called on the batter forcing runners to advance, all runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

- d. When, with less than 2 outs and 1st base unoccupied, a dropped 3rd strike occurs, the batter may attempt to advance to 1st base The batter becomes a batter-runner when the third strike touches the ground before being caught.
- e. With 2 outs and a dropped 3rd strike occurs, the batter may attempt to advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base. The batter becomes a batter-runner when the third strike touches the ground before being caught.
- f. When the catcher or any other fielder obstructs or hinders the batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball:

**EFFECT:** The umpire shall call "Obstruction" and signal "Delayed dead ball". The offensive team manager has the option of taking the base awarded the batter for catcher obstruction, or he may take the result of the play. If the batter reaches 1st base safely and all other runners advance at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled and no other options are given.

- g. When a fair ball strikes the umpire or base runner on fair ground:

**EFFECT:** If the ball hits the umpire or base runner after passing an infielder other than the pitcher or touches an infielder including the pitcher, the ball is in play. If the ball hits the umpire or base runner before passing an infielder, the ball is dead and the batter is entitled to 1st base without liability of being put out. Runners not forced by the batter-runner must return.

## **Sec. 3 Base runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out when:**

- a. The ball leaves the pitcher's hand on the delivery
- b. A thrown ball or fair batted ball is not blocked.
- c. A thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- d. A fair batted ball strikes an umpire or a runner after passing an infielder other than the pitcher or having been touched by an infielder including the pitcher. The ball shall be in play.
- e. A legally caught or dropped fly ball is first touched by any defensive player.
- f. A ball gets lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.
- g. A batter who has received a base on balls attempts to steal second base immediately.

**Sec. 4 A player forfeits his/her exemption** from liability to be put out:

- a. If, while the ball is in play, he/she fails to touch the base he/she is entitled to before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at 1st base, or any other runner forced to advance because of the batter-runner at 1st base or any other runner forced to advance because of the batter becoming a runner, this is a force out.
- b. If after over running 1st base, the batter-runner attempts or feints to continue to the next base.
- c. If after dislodging a base, the batter-runner attempts to continue to the next base.

**Sec. 5 Base runners are entitled to advance** without liability to be put out:

- a. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.
- b. When a fielder obstructs a base runner from making a base unless the fielder is trying to field a batted ball or has the ball in his/her possession.

**EFFECT:** When obstruction occurs, the umpire shall call "Obstruction" and signal a delayed dead ball.

(1) If a play is being made on the obstructed runner or if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching 1st base, the ball is dead and all runners advance without liability to be put out to the bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, if there had been no obstruction.

(2) If no play is being made on the obstructed runner at the time of obstruction, the play shall proceed until the play is completed. The umpire shall call "time" and impose such penalties, if any, as in his/her judgment, will nullify the act of obstruction.

(3) If a fielder without the ball fakes a tag, this is a form of obstruction and the umpire shall award the obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached, had there been no fake tag.

**NOTE:** In the case of a fake tag, the fielder will be automatically ejected from the game.

c. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base for catcher obstruction.

d. When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with his/her cap, glove, or any part of his/her uniform while detached from its proper place.

**EFFECT:** A runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. In either case, runners may advance further, at their own risk. If an illegal catch was made of a fair ball; that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded. The umpire will signal a delayed dead ball.

e. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the established boundary lines), or is blocked.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead. Awarded bases shall be determined by the position of the base runner(s) at the time of the throw. All base runners will be allowed to advance one (1) base on a pitched ball that goes directly out of play.

**EXCEPTION:** For offensive equipment causing a blocked ball, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball becomes blocked. **NOTE:** If no play is being made, then no one is called out but runners must return.

1. In all cases where a thrown ball goes into the spectators seats, goes over, through, or under any fence surrounding the playing field or hits any person or object not engaged in the game, goes into the players' benches, including bats lying near benches, whether the ball rebounds onto the playing field or not; or remains in the meshes of any wire screen, each and every base-runner shall be awarded two (2) bases from the last base occupied at the time of the release of the thrown ball.

2. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag and the ball enters a dead ball area or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one (1) base from the last base touched at the time the ball enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked.

**NOTE:** If a runner touches the next base and returns to his/her original base, the original base he/she left is considered the “last base touched” for the purpose of an overthrow award.

f. When a fair ball bounds or rolls into a stand, over, under, or through a fence, or bounds out of play unintentionally off a defensive player; or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead and all base runners are awarded two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.

g. The ball becomes dead when a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into a dead ball area. All base runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters the dead ball territory. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time he/she entered the dead ball area.

**NOTE:** A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have intentionally carried it there. A dead ball line is considered in play.

h. When any pitched ball goes directly out of play (through, over, under fence/backstop).

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead and all runners advance one base from the time of the pitch.

**NOTE:** On ball four (4) the batter/runner is awarded 1st base only.

i. When there is spectator interference with any thrown or fairly batted ball.

j. When the ball gets lodged in the umpire’s equipment or clothing or in an offensive player’s clothing.

**EFFECT (i-j):** The ball is dead and all runners are awarded the bases they would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had the ball remained in play.

### **Sec. 6 A base runner must return to his/her base:**

a. When a foul ball is illegally caught and so declared by the umpire.

b. When the umpire declares an illegally batted ball.

c. When a batter or base runner is called out for interference. Other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

d. When a pitched ball that is swung at and missed touches any part of the batter’s person.

e. When a foul ball is not caught.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead, and base runners must return to base, except when forced by the batter becoming a base runner. Base runners need not touch the intervening bases in returning but must return promptly. Runners must be allowed sufficient time to return.

### **Sec. 7 The Batter-Runner is out:**

a. When after a fair ball is hit, he/she is legally touched with the ball before he/she touches 1<sup>st</sup> base.

b. When after a fair ball is hit, the ball is securely held by a fielder touching 1st base with any part of his/her person (including an empty glove or mitt) before the batter-base runner touches 1st base.

c. When after a fly ball is hit, a fielder catches the ball before the ball touches the ground or any object other than a fielder.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 7 (a-c). The ball is in play and the batter-runner is out.

d. When after a fair ball is hit, a dropped third strike, a base on balls is awarded, a hit batter occurs, or there is catcher’s obstruction, he/she fails to advance to 1st base and enters his/her team area or any dead ball area.

**EFFECT:** The ball is dead and all runners must return to the last base occupied at the time of the infraction.

e. When he/she runs outside the three (3) foot running lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at 1st base; however, he/she may run outside the three (3) foot line to avoid contacting a fielder attempting to field a batted or throw ball.

**NOTE:** Running on the line with a foot partially outside the line is considered to be within the running lane. The running lane applies only when the play is being made on the batter-runner at the first base and the throw comes from the vicinity of home plate.

f. When he/she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or interferes (intentionally) with a thrown ball. If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home is also out.

**NOTE:** If the batter-runner is already out when he/she interferes, then the base runner closest to home shall be called out.

g. When a batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate; in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate. The runner is also out.

h. When he/she moves back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 7 (e-h), the ball is dead and the batter-runner is out. Other base runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.

### **Sec. 8 The Base Runner is out:**

a. If, while the ball is in play, he/she is legally tagged by a fielder in possession of the ball while not in contact with a base.

Exception: The Batter-Runner may legally overrun 1<sup>st</sup> base and not be tagged out.

b. When, on a force play, a fielder tags him/her with the ball or tags the base before the runner legally obtains the base.

c. When in running to any base, he/she runs more than 3 feet from a direct line between that base and the next base, in regular or reverse order, to avoid being touched by the ball in the hands of a fielder. When a play, such as a rundown is made on a runner who has “rounded” a base, and that runner is outside a direct line between bases, the runner establishes his/her baseline as a direct line between him/her and the next base in regular or reverse order.

d. If the base runner fails to return to touch the base he/she previously occupied when play is resumed after suspension of play.

e. If a base runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.

f. When anyone, other than another base runner, physically assists a base runner while the ball is in play.

g. When the base runner leaves his/her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has been touched by a fielder, provided the ball is returned to a fielder and legally held on that base or a fielder legally touches the base runner before he/she returns to his/her base.

h. When the base runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is in play and legally held on that base or the base runner is legally touched while off the base he/she missed.

i. When the batter-runner legally overruns 1st base, attempts or feints to run to 2nd base, and is legally touched while off the base.

j. In running or sliding for home plate, he/she fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in his/her hands while touching home plate and appeals to the umpire for a decision.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 8 (g-j) These are appeal plays and must be made either while the ball is alive or after the ball is dead and before the next pitch is made. The defensive team loses the privilege of putting the base runner out if the appeal is not made before the next legal or illegal pitch. If an appeal is made after the ball is dead and before the next pitch is made, the ball remains dead and runners may not advance. Any manager, coach, or player may then make an appeal by announcing to the umpire, which runner is being appealed, which base has been missed, or which base has been left too soon. Any player in the game may also make an appeal while the ball is still alive and before the ball becomes dead by tagging the runner or the base being appealed with the ball.

k. When the base runner interferes with a fielder attempting to initially field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the base runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out.

Note: A fielder is considered to be making an initial play on the ball when he/she (1) has a reasonable chance to gain control of a ground ball that no other fielder (except the pitcher) has touched; (2) has a reasonable chance to catch a ball in flight or catch the ball in flight after it has

touched another fielder; or (3) fails to gain control of the batted ball and is within a step and a reach (in any direction) of the spot of the initial contact.

l. When a base runner is struck with a fair-batted ball in fair territory while off base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher.

m. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

n. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect at or around a base which a base runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. This includes the batboy or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.

o. When any base runner runs the bases in reverse order to confuse the defensive team or to make a travesty of the game. This includes the batter-runner moving backwards towards home plate to avoid or delay a tag.

p. If a coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

q. When the coach near 3rd base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The base runner nearest to 3rd base shall be declared out.

r. When a runner, after being declared out or after scoring, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall also be called out.

**EFFECT:** Sec. 8 (k-r). The ball is dead, and the base runner is out. Other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.

s. When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner remains on his/her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player; the runner is declared out. The ball is dead and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision, unless Sec. 8(j) or Sec. 8(s) applies. **PENALTY:** If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender is ejected from the game.

t. When a base runner fails to keep contact with his/her base until a legally pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. The ball is dead, "NO PITCH" is declared and the base runner is declared out.

u. When he/she abandons a base, does not attempt to advance to the next base, and "LEAVES THE FIELD OF PLAY"; the base runner shall be called out immediately "UPON LEAVING THE FIELD OF PLAY". The ball is declared dead and all other runners must return to the last base held at the time of the infraction.

v. If hit by an infield fly when not in contact with the base. The ball is dead, and the runner and the batter are both declared out. Other runners must return to the base occupied, without liability to be put out, at the time of the pitch.

w. Look Back Rule: When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or play and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the sixteen (16) foot circle, the runner may stop once, but then must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or return to the last base touched. Failure to immediately return non-stop to the base or precede non-stop to the next base will result in the runner being declared out.

**EXCEPTION:** The runner is not out if a play is made by the pitcher (a fake throw is considered a play).

**NOTE:** When a walk or a dropped third strike occurs in which the batter is entitled to run, it is treated the same as a batted ball. If the pitcher has possession of the ball in the sixteen (16) foot circle, the batter-runner may continue past first base and is entitled to run toward second base as long as he/she does not stop at first base. If he/she stops after rounding first base, then that runner must comply with Sec. 8 (w).

x. When prior to a pitch to the next batter, it is discovered that the base runner used an altered or illegal bat. **EFFECT:** The base runner is out. If the bat was altered, the player is ejected from the game. Any outs made on the play shall stand. All other base runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.

### **Sec. 9 Base Runner is not out:**

a. When a base runner runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder who is attempting to field the ball in the baseline.

- b. When a base runner does not run a direct line to the base, providing the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in his/her possession.
  - c. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the base runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.
  - d. When a base runner is hit with a fair-batted ball that has passed through an infielder, excluding the pitcher and another fielder is not in position to field the ball and make an out.
  - e. When a base runner is touched with a ball not securely held by a fielder.
  - f. When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play until after the next pitch.
  - g. When a batter-runner overruns 1st base after touching it and makes no attempt to advance to the next base.
  - h. When the base runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, he/she shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher pitches the ball. The umpire shall call no pitch.
  - i. When a runner, who has legally started to advance, cannot be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while in the pitching circle.
  - j. When a base runner holds his/her base until a fly ball touches a fielder, and then attempts to advance.
  - k. When the runner is in contact with the base, and is hit by a batted fly or ground ball in fair territory (unless he/she intentionally interferes with the ball), the base runner is not out and the ball is dead.
- EFFECT:** Ball is dead, and all runners advance one base if forced.
- l. When a base runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper place. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
  - m. When a fielder makes a play on a batter or base runner while using an illegal glove. See Rule 6, Sec. 10 for option given to the manager of the offensive team.
  - n. When the base runner is hit by a fair-batted ball after it touches any fielder, including the pitcher.

### **Sec. 10 Double First Base Rules:**

- a. The defense must use the white (fair) portion and the batter-runner must use the colored (foul) portion when a play is being made on the batter-runner.  
Penalties – (1) The batter-runner is out when a play is being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion provided the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to touch either the white or colored portion of the double base. (2) The batter-runner is out for interference when there is a force play and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white portion. (3) Obstruction is called on the defense where there is a force play on the batter-runner, who touches only the colored portion, and collides with the fielder about to receive a thrown ball, while also touching only the colored portion.
- b. The defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or the colored portion: (1) On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base; (2) On any errant throw that pulls the defense off the base into foul territory; (3) When the defense uses the colored portion of first 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, is not out for interference unless the umpire rules the act as intentional interference.
- c. Once the batter-runner has physically passed first base, then the double first base rules as defined above in (a) and (b) no longer apply. That is, the double first base is considered one base and the offense and defense can touch either portion of the base as if it were a single base.
- d. The double first base is highly recommended for youth play but not mandatory.

## **RULE 8 - DEAD BALL/BALL IN PLAY**

### **Sec. 1 The ball is dead and not in play:**

- a. When a ball is pitched illegally.
- b. When the ball is batted illegally.
- c. When the umpire declares "No Pitch".

- d. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. (This includes a batter's attempt to swing at the ball)
- e. When a batter steps from one side of the box to the other when the pitcher is ready to pitch.
- f. When a foul ball is not caught.
- g. When any part of the batter's person is hit by his/her own-batted ball while he/she is in the batter's box.
- h. When the batter enters the batter's box with or uses an illegal or an altered bat.
- i. When the batter is hit by his/her own-batted ball in fair territory outside the batter's box.
- j. When a base runner fails to keep in contact with their base until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- k. If an accident to a runner prevents him/her from preceding to a base which he is awarded. A substitute runner shall be permitted for the injured player.
- l. When a runner runs the bases in reverse order.
- m. When the offensive team causes interference.
- n. When the ball is outside the playing limits of the playing field. A ball is considered "out of play" when it touches the ground, person on the ground or object outside the playing area.
- o. In case of interference with the batter or fielder.
- p. When a blocked ball is declared.
- q. When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he/she reaches 1st base.
- r. When a caught fair ball, including a line drive, which can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped with less than two (2) outs and with runners on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases.
- s. When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- t. When a fair ball, prior to passing a fielder, strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground.
- u. When the umpire calls time.
- v. When the umpire calls time and an appeal play follows, the ball remains dead throughout the appeal.

**Sec. 2 The ball is in play:**

- a. At the start of each half inning when the pitcher has the ball in his/her pitching position and the umpire has called "Play Ball".
- b. When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- c. When the infield fly rule is enforced.
- d. When a thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
- e. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground after passing or touching an infielder.
- f. When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- g. When the umpire calls the base runner out for failure to return and touch the base, when play is resumed after a suspension of play.
- h. When a live ball strikes a groundskeeper, photographer, policeman, etc. assigned to the game.
- i. When the base runners have reached the bases that they are entitled, when the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
- j. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- k. When no play is being made on an obstructed runner. The ball shall remain alive until the play is over.
- l. When a base runner must return in reverse order while the ball is already in play.
- m. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out.
- n. When a runner runs out of the base line in regular or reverse order to avoid a tag by a fielder.
- o. When a runner is forced or tagged out.
- p. When a base is dislodged while runners are running the bases.
- q. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
- r. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the judgment of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play.

- s. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
  - t. When a thrown ball strikes a base coach.
  - u. As long as there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This would include an immediate live ball appeal before the umpire has called time". Once the umpire has called "time" however, the ball will continue to be dead during a subsequent appeal play.
  - v. When, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach touches and physically assists a runner; or when a coach near 3rd base, runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline, while the fielder is attempting to make a play, and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- EFFECT:** A delayed dead ball signal will be given and play shall continue. The assisted runner shall be ruled out and all other subsequent play will be ruled upon accordingly.

# BASEBALL GENERAL PLAYING RULES

BaseballNation will use the Official Rules of Major League Baseball as the guidelines for all play with the following addendum.

## The Season

The official season will run from September 1st to August 31st.

## Age Cut-off:

Whatever age the player is on May 1<sup>st</sup> of the “official season” is the age group at which he may participate in that season.

## General Rules

1. Teams may use an unlimited batting order and free defensive substitutions.
2. **COURTESY RUNNER:** When the pitcher or catcher of record (played in the last half-inning, or, in the top of the first inning, appears on the lineup card as a starter in those positions) attains a base by any means, the offensive manager/coach has the option to insert a courtesy runner in place of that pitcher or catcher, and continue to run for that player until he/she scores, is put out, or until the half-inning ends. The courtesy runner can be any player on the roster that is not in the game or the batter at the plate when the last out was made. The decision to use a courtesy runner may be made anytime the pitcher or catcher is on base.
  - a. Once a courtesy runner is used, that player must complete the running assignment (i.e. there can never be a substitute or courtesy runner for a courtesy runner).
  - b. A player can be a courtesy runner more than once per inning.
  - c. If a player who is in the batting order is used for a courtesy runner and that player’s turn to bat comes up while that player is still on base, that batting position will become an automatic out and the courtesy runner will remain on base.
  - d. If the courtesy runner is injured while on base, the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner ran can replace the courtesy runner, or a legal substitution can be made. The injured courtesy runner cannot participate in the games in any shape or form until after that half-inning.  
**NOTE:** If a legal substitution is made for an injured courtesy runner, then the pitcher/catcher is considered to have left the game and can re-enter if he/she has a re-entry privilege remaining.
  - e. Using a courtesy runner for either the pitcher or catcher does not affect the re-entry status of those two players.

## Run Ahead Rule

All divisions: 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs after 5 innings

## Field Requirements

- 1) 9U: 44’/or 46’ mound distance/65’ base paths
- 2) 10U: 46’ mound distance/65’ base paths
- 3) 11U: 50’ mound distance/70’ base paths
- 4) 12U: 50’ mound distance/70’ base paths
- 5) 13U: 60’6” mound distance/90’ base paths
- 6) 14U: 60’6” mound distance/90’ base paths
- 7) 15U: 60’6” mound distance/90’ base paths

## Pitching

- 1) **Charged Defensive Conference:** There shall be a limit of one charged conference between the manager or any other team representative from the dugout and any defensive player in any half inning. The second and all subsequent charged conferences in a half-

inning will result in the removal of the current pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

A pitcher removed by this rule is allowed to play another defensive position. Note: A starting or substitute pitcher must pitch to at least one batter until that batter reaches base, is put out, there has been a third out in the inning, an injury has occurred to the pitcher, or the pitcher is disqualified by the umpire.

- 2) Pitcher may return to the pitching position provided:
  - a) pitcher has not been removed from the line-up
  - b) pitcher has not exceeded pitching limits
  - c) was not removed after two visits in the same inning
- 3) Pitching Limits: 9u – 12u: 6 innings per day, 8 innings per tournament  
13u – 14u: 7 innings per day, 10 innings per tournament  
15u and up: Unlimited

The pitching record will be kept by the home plate umpire. During a pitching change, the umpire will make the change on the card. At the conclusion of the game, the umpire will get with both managers, ask them to review it for correctness, and sign it. The record will then be taken to the tournament director. Upon receipt, the director will record that information on the master sheet, which will be located on the table with the bracket sheets. This information will be kept open for anyone who wishes to look at it. If a manager feels that a violation has occurred, then the manager must protest the game. The tournament director will check the pitching records to see if a violation has occurred. If it is deemed that a violation of the pitching limits has taken place, then the manager and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision of the tournament director is final.

### **Batting**

- 1) Batter must keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches  
Failure to do so is subject to a strike penalty per umpire judgment
- 2) One offensive conference per inning  
**Charged Offensive Conference:** There shall be a limit of one charged conference between the manager or any other team representative, on or off the field, and any offensive player in any half-inning. The umpire should deny all requests for subsequent charged conferences. If a manager or team representative demands multiple charged conferences in a half-inning, the second and all subsequent charged conferences will result in a strike being called on the current batter.

### **Leading Off**

- 1) 9U: There will be a ten foot mark at first, second and third base. The runner can take a lead, but cannot cross the 10 foot mark until the ball crosses home plate. If the runner is beyond the ten foot mark prior to the ball crossing home plate, then the runner will be out. No Balks will be called. If a pitcher attempts a pick-off, then the runners may advance to the next base at their own risk.
- 2) 10U: Leads, Balks will be called (1 warning per team per game)
- 3) 11U – 15U: Leads, Balks will be called (No warning will be given)

### **Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike**

- 1) 9U: No dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike
- 2) 10U – 15U: Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike

### **Cleats**

- 1) 9u – 12U: No metal cleats are allowed
- 2) 13U – 15U: Metal cleats are allowed if allowed by the field owner.

### **Bats**

- 1) 9U – 12U: 2 ¼ and 2 & ¾ bats will be allowed, wood bats are allowed
- 2) 13U – 14U: 2 5/8 bats are allowed, wood bats are allowed, No 2 ¼ bats will be allowed.
- 3) 15U and above: Baseball-Nation will follow National High School Federation rules regarding bats.

# UMPIRE GUIDELINES

Failure of umpires to follow these guidelines shall not be grounds for protest.

**Sec. 1 POWERS AND DUTIES:** The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization for the particular game that they have been assigned. They are authorized and required to enforce the rules contained in this book. The umpires have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or refrain from doing, any act that is necessary to enforce any of these rules; and to inflict any penalties prescribed.

**NOTE:** An umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e. player, coach, official scorekeeper, or sponsor).

- a. The umpire should inspect the playing field, equipment, and clarify all ground rules to both teams and managers/coaches prior to the start of the game.
- b. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed anytime during playing time or suspension of play until the game is over.
- c. No umpire has the authority to set aside or question decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his/her respective duties.
- d. An umpire may consult with his/her partners at any time; however, the final decision shall rest with the umpire whose authority it is to make the decision and who requested the opinion of the other umpires.
- e. The plate and base umpires shall have equal authority to:
  - (1) Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon.
  - (2) Call "time" for suspension of play.
  - (3) Remove a player, manager, coach, or other team member from the game for violation of the rules.

**NOTE:** Unless appealed, the plate umpire shall not call a player out for having failed to touch a base, leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, batting out of order or making an attempt to go to second base after reaching first base, as provided in these rules.

## **Sec. 2 THE PLATE UMPIRE:**

- a. Shall take a position behind the catcher and have full responsibility for the proper conduct of the game
- b. Shall call all balls and strikes
- c. Shall be in agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire(s) call on plays, fair or foul balls, legally or illegally caught balls. On plays, which require the base umpire to leave the infield, the plate umpire shall assume the duties that the base umpire is normally required to cover.
- d. Shall determine and declare whether a batter chops or bunts a ball, whether a batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter, and also whether a fly ball is an infield fly
- e. Shall render decisions on the bases when required by the instruction in the umpire's manual
- f. Shall determine when a game is forfeited.
- g. Shall have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules.
- h. Shall rectify any situation in which an umpire's decision that was reversed has placed either team in jeopardy or at a disadvantage.

## **Sec. 3 THE BASE UMPIRE:**

- a. Shall take a position(s) on the playing field that will afford the best possible starting position to make a call on any ensuing play.
- b. Shall assist the plate umpire in every way to enforce the rules of the game.
- c. Can call an Infield Fly.
- d. Fast Pitch: the base umpire can call an illegal pitch.

## **Sec. 4 CHANGING OF AN UMPIRE:**

Umpires cannot be changed during a game unless injury or illness incapacitates an umpire.

**Sec. 5 UMPIRES JUDGMENT:**

There shall be no appeal of any decision of any umpire on the grounds that he/she was not correct in his/her decision that a batted ball was fair or foul, a base runner was out or safe, a pitched ball was a ball or a strike, or any other play involving accuracy of judgment. Any argument is grounds for a player or coach to be ejected from the game. No decision of an umpire shall be reversed, except when he/she is convinced it is in violation of a rule. If the manager, captain, or either team does not seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question, shall, if in doubt, confer with his/her associates before taking any action. But under no circumstances shall any player or person, other than the manager or captain of either team, have any legal right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules. Under no circumstances should any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by his/her associates, nor shall any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of his/her associates, unless asked to do so.

**Sec. 6 SUSPENSION OF PLAY:**

- a. An umpire may suspend play when, in his/her judgment, conditions justify such action.
- b. Play shall be suspended when the plate umpire leaves his/her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly related with the calling of a play.
- c. The umpire shall suspend play whenever the batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- d. The umpire shall not call "Time" after the pitcher has started his/her pitching motion, or while play is in progress. "Time" shall not be called until all action, in progress by either team, has been completed.
- e. When in the judgment of the umpire, all immediate play is apparently completed should he/she call "Time".

**Sec. 7 VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES:**

- a. Players, managers, coaches, or other team members shall not make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about any opposing players, officials, or spectators; or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
- b. There shall be no more than two (2) coaches for each team to give words of assistance and direction to the members of the team while at bat. One coach shall be stationed near first base and the other near third base. Each coach must remain in the coach's box.
- c. For the first unsportsmanlike violation, a player, manager, or coach may be warned. For a second offense by the same youth player, the penalty is prompt removal of the offender from the game. For a second offense by the same coach, manager, or adult player, the offender shall go directly to an area away from the field. Failure to do so will warrant a forfeiture of the game. The offending adult must be out of sight and out of sound of the playing area.
- d. Any player or coach who leaves his/her position on the field, including the dugout, to argue balls and strikes, or to argue whether a batter stepped on or over home plate, will be ejected.

**Sec. 8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:**

Umpires who work fast-pitch softball (especially the home plate umpire) should wear a chest protector and shin guards. Male umpires must wear an approved protective cup. It is mandatory for the home plate umpire to wear a facemask (with a throat protector). It is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that the mask be a black mask with black or natural pads.

Hockey style masks are considered approved umpire equipment. The Hockey mask must be free of ANY decorations other than the manufacture's logo(s).

**NOTE:** An official umpire cap must be worn under any mask (other than the Hockey style) at all times and must remain on the head when the mask is removed.

### **Sec. 9 SLOW PITCH UMPIRE UNIFORM:**

Any uniform item sold by SOFTBALL NATION that has an official SOFTBALL NATION logo must be purchased only from an outlet designated by the SOFTBALL NATION National Office. An umpire will wear an Official SOFTBALL NATION umpiring uniform consisting of the following:

- (a) Official SOFTBALL NATION umpire shirt w/embroidered logo
- (b) Any clothing worn under the official umpire shirt may be white, black or gray. Long sleeve shirts under the umpire shirt must be black.
- (c) No other logo or printing is allowed on this clothing.
- EXCEPTION:** The embroidered official SOFTBALL NATION mock turtleneck
- (d) Black trousers with belt loops
- (e) Black jacket w/official SOFTBALL NATION logo
- (f) Black shoes
- (g) Black mock or regular turtleneck
- (h) Black socks with trousers and/or black shorts.
- (i) Black rain gear (top and bottom)
- (j) Black shorts with belt loops
- (k) Silver/Black cap w/official SOFTBALL NATION Logo
- (l) Black ball bag w/official SOFTBALL NATION logo or no logo.

**NOTE:** Ball bag must be worn on the hip or slightly to the rear of hip.

**NOTE:** Trousers do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants, or other pants or slacks that would not be considered dress trousers.

**NOTE:** Black official (umpire) shoes bearing the white logo, trademark or manufacturers name is legal. (Optional) Black shorts, with belt loops, may be worn at all levels of SOFTBALL NATION sanctioned slow pitch play.

It is up to the discretion of the Tournament Director to allow umpires to wear shorts or slacks during all post-season play. It is recommended that umpires, in cooperation with the Umpire-In-Chief, coordinate their uniforms to look alike, i.e. one wears shorts, both wear shorts. This is the same for slacks. When shorts are worn, solid black socks must be worn.

**NOTE:** The top of the sock must be at least two inches above the show line and/or above the ankle.

**NOTE:** No player during the course of any SOFTBALL NATION sanctioned softball event may wear any part of SOFTBALL NATION official umpire's uniform.

### **Sec. 10 FAST PITCH UMPIRE UNIFORM:**

Any uniform item sold by SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION that has an official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION logo must be purchased only from an outlet designated by the SPORTSNATION National Office. An Umpire will wear an Official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION Umpiring uniform, consisting of the following:

- (a) Official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION Umpire Shirt w/embroidered logo
- (b) Any clothing worn under the official umpire shirt may be white, black or gray. Long sleeve shirts under the umpire shirt must be black.
- (c) No logo or printing is allowed on any part of the Umpire's uniform or clothing other than the licensed SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION logo.
- (d) Heather gray or charcoal gray slacks with belt loops
- (e) Black Jacket w/official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION Logo
- (f) Black Shoes
- (g) Black Socks
- (h) Black Belt
- (i) Black Ball Bag, plain or w/official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION Logo - A ball bag must be worn on the hip or slightly to the rear of hip.
- (j) Black mock or regular Turtleneck
- (k) Black Rain Gear (top and bottom)
- (l) Black cap w/official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION Logo (Plate Umpire Only)

(m) Gray cap w/official SOFTBALL NATION/SPORTSNATION Logo (Base Umpire Only)

EXCEPTION: If a hockey style mask is used, the black plate cap is not required.

**NOTE.** Trousers do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants or other pants or slacks that would not be considered dress trousers.

**NOTE:** Black Official Shoes (Umpire) bearing the white logo, trademark or manufacturers name are legal.

**NOTE:** An Official Umpires Uniform shirt, jacket, or cap may not be worn by any player.

# PROTESTS

**Sec. 1 PROTESTS MAY INVOLVE** the interpretation of a playing rule or the eligibility of a player.

**Sec. 2 A PROTEST INVOLVING A PLAYING RULE** may only be made based upon a Rule Interpretation and may not be made based on the judgment of an umpire.

**NOTE:** Examples of protests which will not be considered are: whether a pitch was a ball or a strike; whether a ball was fair or foul; or whether a runner was safe or out.

**Sec. 3 PROTESTS THAT SHALL** be received and considered concerning matters of the following types:

- a. Misinterpretation of a playing rule to a given situation
- b. Failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule to a given situation
- c. Failure to impose the correct penalty for a given violation
- d. Whether a player is legally rostered on a team

**Sec. 4 THE NOTIFICATION** of intent to protest must be made immediately before the next pitch.

**EXCEPTION:** Player eligibility protests must be made before the end of the game being protested.

- a. The manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire will then notify the scorekeeper and the opposing manager. In tournament play, the protest must be resolved immediately.
- b. It is the umpire's responsibility to record the surrounding conditions to aid in the correct determination of the issue. (i.e. inning, outs, names of players involved, runners on base, score, etc.)

**Sec. 5 THE OFFICIAL** protest must be filed within a reasonable time:

- a. In league play, forty-eight hours after the scheduled time of the contest is generally considered a reasonable amount of time. In tournament play, all play ceases until the protest is resolved.
- b. In tournament play, a protest concerning player eligibility must be filed before the end of the game being protested.
- c. A protest fee of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) cash must be paid in all tournaments sanctioned by SOFTBALL NATION. In tournament play, the fee must be paid immediately before the protest can be heard. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee shall be returned. If protesting player eligibility, the fee is \$75.00 per player.

**NOTE:** The Tournament Director/Coordinator or Tournament UIC may require a copy of the birth certificate or picture I.D. at anytime. Play ceases until the protest is resolved. **ALL PLAYERS MUST CARRY A GOVERNMENT ISSUED PICTURE ID ON HIS/HER PERSON AT ALL TIMES DURING TOURNAMENT PLAY.**

**Sec. 6 THE FORMAL** written protest should contain the following information:

- a. The date, time, and place of the game.
- b. The names of the umpires and scorekeeper.
- c. The rule and section of the Official Rules or local rules under which the protest is based.
- d. The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision.
- e. All essential facts involved in the matter protested.

**Sec. 7 THE DECISION** made on a protested game must result in one of the following:

- a. Protest denied: The game/play stands as played/called.
- b. Protest Upheld: the game is replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made with the decision corrected.
- c. Eligibility Protest: When protest for eligibility is upheld, the team in violation of the eligibility rule shall forfeit the game.

## **Qualifying for the SoftballNation/BaseballNation National Championship Tournaments**

For Dates and Locations of the SoftballNation and Baseball-Nation National Championship Tournaments in your respective Division of play, please visit the National website: [www.sportsnation.org](http://www.sportsnation.org)

### **Qualifying Guidelines:**

To qualify for participation in the SoftballNation or Baseball-Nation National Championship Tournaments in your team's respective division your team must:

1. Be in good standing with the organization and all other National Sanctioning organizations. (SoftballNation/BaseballNation reserves the right to accept or reject teams that have been suspended from other national, regional or local sanctioning organizations for any reason.)
  2. Participate in the SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation Tournament Qualifying program. Please visit [www.sportsnation.org](http://www.sportsnation.org) for participation guidelines for your respective division of play.
  3. Be sanctioned with SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation for the current season.
  4. Have a completed and approved roster that can be read and understood clearly.
  5. Participate in your State Championship Tournament for your respective state and division of play. If there is no State Championship Tournament held in your respective state or division of play, your team may request a waiver to participate from the National Office.
  6. Meet any other "local" guidelines as required by a local or area director.
- Complete detailed guidelines may be found on the national website: [www.sportsnation.org](http://www.sportsnation.org)

### **Team Classification**

It is the responsibility of each Area Director to properly classify the teams from his/her area. It is the mission and intent of SoftballNation/Baseball-Nation to encourage teams to participate at the highest and most competitive level of competition for that team's ability.

SOFTBALLNATION/BASEBALLNATION will use every method possible to determine each team's proper classification and may re-classify a team to a higher or lower level at any time during the season, including just prior to the National Championship Tournaments.

SOFTBALLNATION/BASEBALLNATION reserves the right to remove a team from any sanctioned event at any time if it is determined by opinion of the Tournament Official(s) in charge that the team in question is not participating at an appropriate level of competition. If a team is removed from competition for any reason, the team forfeits any rights to any refund of entry fees or expenses.

By sanctioning with SoftballNation/BaseballNation, each team agrees to abide by the rules in this rule book and the guidelines set forth.

### **Tournament Entry Refund Policy**

If a SportsNation/SoftballNation/BaseballNation tournament is canceled due to inclement weather, the following policy will be adhered to when providing refunds:

- 1) If the tournament is canceled prior to a team beginning 1 game, then the team will receive all entry fees minus \$50 administration fee,
- 2) If the tournament is canceled after the team plays 1 game, then the team will have 50% of their entry fee returned,
- 3) If the tournament is canceled after the team plays 2 games, then no refund will be given.