



SOFTBALL

2006

Rules and Interpretations



NCAA[®]

**2006
NCAA
SOFTBALL
RULES**

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



[ISSN 1089-0106]

THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 6222
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November 2005

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Points of Emphasis

All the NCAA Softball Rules Committees have taken extraordinary pride in the development of the intercollegiate fastpitch rules, which were introduced in 1997 and are updated annually. The points of emphasis are topics that the rules committee wants to emphasize but are not necessarily rules changes. We hope this gives you insight into current issues for the sport.

Sportsmanship and Misconduct

Sportsmanship is a primary concern of the Softball Rules Committee because of an increased number of ejection and suspension reports filed during the 2005 season. The committee believes that the growth of this great game has been partly predicated on an image of good sportsmanship and fair play, and the loss of this attribute could stunt the growth and interest enjoyed in intercollegiate softball in recent years. All participants in the game, including student-athletes, coaches, umpires and spectators, are asked to take personal responsibility in 2006 to ensure good sportsmanship is indeed a description of intercollegiate softball.

Two specific instances of misconduct are detailed in Rule 13 and are included here for emphasis. It is misconduct to contact or spit on an umpire, and either action will result in ejection and a two-game suspension. As a reminder, an umpire has the power to forfeit a game if a coach continues to display unsportsmanlike conduct after being ejected.

Speeding Up the Game

Game times in softball can vary because of the score, the weather, the pitcher, team rituals and countless other ways. Likewise, countless options to speed up the game have been considered by the rules committee over the last two years and two approaches will be attempted.

First, the committee has addressed the pitcher and batter. Both players need to be in position within 10 seconds of the pitcher receiving the ball. After the batter is in the box and the pitcher is on the pitcher's plate, the pitcher will have five seconds to start her motion. The five seconds to begin

the pitch starts when both players are set, so it might occur before the 10-second mark. The NCAA Umpire Improvement Program is going to spend time in its clinics and emphasize in its communication that these rules, like all other playing rules, need to be enforced.

For the first time, the rules committee asked coaches to examine an experimental rule in fall play that would require the batter to keep one foot in the box except for certain situations, which is a speed-up method used by the Amateur Softball Association and NCAA baseball. Coaches will be asked for feedback on the experimental rule in the annual rules survey in April. Feedback will be valuable in determining if this experimental rule should be adopted for regular-season play in the future.

Bat List in Color

It is highly recommended that host institutions supply a color list with the visual of each bat model to the umpire and opposing team. The color document allows for easy identification of the bat color scheme as opposed to the list by name only, which is required to be updated weekly and provided. This document is available at www.softball.org under Certified Equipment and is titled: Non-Approved Bat List with Pictures.

Helmet, Catcher's Equipment Checks

Umpires will no longer be checking helmets and catching equipment before games. Coaches and institutions are ultimately responsible for equipment, not umpires. It is important that coaches be vigilant in regularly checking equipment. Umpires may still identify and remove cracked or not certified helmets during a game, whenever found.

Foreign Substances

Pitchers shall be allowed to apply moisture or a foreign substance to hands, but all substances, including dirt or resin, must be wiped off before contact with the ball. In all circumstances, residue may not be transferred to the ball by the pitcher or any other player.

Rules Committee Report

The rules committee meets one time annually, usually in July, to make recommendations for rules changes and review rules issues. Playing rules made by the committee are to be used by all NCAA member institutions for regular-season and championships play. The playing rules are the same for all divisions.

During the 2005 meeting in Indianapolis, the committee discussed at length the obstruction rule. Feedback from coaches during the 2005 season indicated concern for the rule and some desire to return to the previous rule. The rules committee had not made a change to obstruction, but asked the NCAA Umpire Improvement Program to reinforce the rule as written and call obstruction the way it has been written in the rules for years. This directive was heard by umpires and acted upon. Although obstruction may have been called more often at the beginning of the season than ever before, the committee believes by the middle and end of the season this rule was enforced as needed, and coaches and student-athletes had adjusted habits accordingly. The object for 2006 is to stay the course enforcing this rule and evaluating its appropriateness in the intercollegiate fastpitch game, recognizing that other rules books, such as for high school and for Amateur Softball Association (ASA) play, have made changes in their obstruction rule.

Bat technology and equipment issues continue to be at the forefront of the committee's agenda. While a future goal of the group would be to eliminate the need for coaches to print the bat list each Monday, this is not an option yet for 2006. It is important to continue to print the list because the list was updated during the season in 2005. The committee will be requesting funding from the Championships/Competition Cabinet to do bat compliance testing. This money would allow the committee to verify that the bats being used in our game are indeed performing within the ASA 2004 standard as advertised.

Worth will become the official ball provider for NCAA championships in 2006. This decision is not made or influenced in any way by the rules committee, but is listed in the rules book for informational purposes only. Please note that institutions and conferences are not required to use this ball for regular-season play.

Among the topics the committee will consider in 2006:

1. Re-organizing the rules book to include a fielding chapter and a games management chapter to make the book more user-friendly.
2. Changing the distance between the batter's box and plate to give the pitcher better access to the plate.
3. Speeding up the game by requiring the batter to keep one foot in the box except for certain situations.

If you have an opinion on any of those topics or have other agenda items or rules-change proposals, please contact a member of the rules committee or submit the item during the call for proposals period in January and February. Your feedback is always welcome.

The rules committee is made up of coaches and administrators. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please notify your conference office (Division I) or nominate yourself (Divisions II and III) online at www.ncaa.org under Legislation and Governance, Committees. The terms of current committee members are listed on pages 4-5.

Major Rules Changes for 2006

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

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1-22.h	Catch legal if not contacting dead-ball territory ...	19
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3-2.a, 11-8.d, 11-21	Advance on pitch not contacted with illegal bat allowed.....	46, 130, 139, 142
3-2.b	Color bat list highly recommended	46
3-2.e	No treatment, device to fundamentally change bat allowed.....	46
3-6.a	Non-uniformed personnel rendered ineligible for game	48
3-7.b	No treatment, device to fundamentally change glove allowed.....	49
3-8.d	Permissible face mask on offensive helmet	50
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4-9.e	On-site administrator cannot be coach, undergraduate.....	55
5-4, 15-6.a	Umpires no longer required to check helmets, catchers gear in pregame	57, 211
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<i>Rule-Section</i>		<i>page(s)</i>
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Index to Editorial Changes

Numerous editorial changes were made in the 2006 edition of the NCAA Softball Rules Book. Only those changes which clarified the previous rule or provided interpretation are listed below. Those which are grammatical in nature are not listed.

2006 Editorial Changes

<i>Rule-Section</i>		<i>page(s)</i>
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3-1	NCAA championship ball changed.....	44
3-2.a.11	Bats that are not one piece must be firmly secured	45
3-2.d	A removed bat must be returned	46
3-2.d	Word inappropriate replaced by altered, illegal or non-approved	46
5-6	Players must be on lineup card to be eligible to play	58
5-9	Pregame announcement updated	59
8-1.c	Location of ejected player, coach, personnel moved to misconduct (See Rule 13-1.)	177
9-13	Inadvertent contact explained	102
9-13.a.4.c	Inadvertent contact, interference or obstruction may be called	102
9-18.b.3, 9-18.b.4	No base award if runner advances on her own.....	111
10-10.e	Batter does not receive base award if hit by pitch before ball reach plate	118

Code of Conduct

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

Coaches

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

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current NCAA softball rules.
- b. Ensure their players are legally equipped and properly attired for competition and practices.
- c. Confine discussion with the game officials to the interpretation of the rules.
- d. Honor all game contracts and play through all tournament brackets as scheduled.
- e. Comply wholeheartedly with the spirit and intent of the rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible.
- f. Teach their players to respect the dignity and integrity of the game, opponents, officials, spectators and the institutions they represent.
- g. Prohibit team personnel from using profanity or making personal or malicious remarks toward opponents, officials and spectators.
- h. Refrain from any personal action that might arouse players or spectators to unsportsmanlike behavior.
- i. Be in control of their players at all times in order to prevent any unsportsmanlike act toward opponents, officials or spectators.
- j. Seek help from the on-site administrator or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly students and spectators.
- k. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude toward the game and its participants.

Umpires

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

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current NCAA softball rules and umpire mechanics.
- b. Be fair and unbiased in making decisions, rendering them without regard to the score or the quality of the play on the field.
- c. Honor all assignments and contracts.
- d. Refrain from use of tobacco and alcohol on site.
- e. When in uniform or on site, do not fraternize with players, coaches and/or spectators.
- f. Cooperate with your partner(s) to arrive at decisions that are ultimately correct and fair.
- g. Listen to a coach's concerns and respond in a professional manner.
- h. Refrain from sharing information that might be used by a team's future opponent.
- i. Seek help from the on-site administrator or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly students and spectators.
- j. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude toward the game and its participants.

The Rules

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

In the 2006 Softball Rules, the administrative rules that may be altered by mutual consent of the competing institutions are:

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

Rule 5: Sections 7, 8.

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

Rule 15: Sections 2, 3, 4.

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

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E-mail is the preferred method of communication.

RULE 1

Definitions

Altered Bat

SECTION 1. A legal bat that has been intentionally changed in any way from the specifications established in the ASA bat certification process and as required in Rule 3-2. *Exception:* Marking for identification on the knob, laser etching other than on the barrel and replacing the grip are legal.

Appeal

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

Approved Ruling (A.R.)

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

Backstop

SECTION 4. A barrier behind home plate to stop a ball.

Ball

SECTION 5. The sphere that is pitched, thrown, or struck. A ball also refers to a pitch that does not enter the strike zone, is not struck at by the batter, or is awarded to a batter for a defensive infraction (e.g. illegal pitch, erasing a field line, delaying the game).

Base

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

Base Coaches

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

Base Path

SECTION 8. The imaginary direct line, and three feet to either side of the line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag.

Base Runner

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

Bat

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

Batted Ball

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

Batter

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

Batter's Box

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

Batter-Runner

SECTION 14. The offensive player who started in the batter's box, has completed her turn at bat and has left it in an attempt to reach base safely.

Batting Order

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

Batting Out of Order

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

Blocked Ball

SECTION 17. A live batted, pitched or thrown ball that contacts nongame personnel, game personnel in unauthorized areas, loose equipment or an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area, or dead ball territory.

Bullpen

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

Bunt

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

Bunt Attempt

SECTION 20. Any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn — pulled backward and away from the ball.

Called Game

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

Catch

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

For a legal catch:

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

A catch shall not be credited when:

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

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

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

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

- h. A fielder does not re-establish herself in live-ball territory after contacting dead-ball territory before contact with the ball as long as she maintained contact with live-ball territory and is no longer in contact with dead-ball territory.

A.R. 1-22.h. An outfielder straddles the line marking dead-ball territory waiting to catch a fly ball. As the ball is descending, the player lifts the foot which has been in dead-ball territory into the air as she makes a catch. **Ruling:** This is a legal catch.

Catcher

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

Catcher's Box

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

Checked Swing

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

Coaches' Boxes

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

Conferences

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

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

Crow Hop (Pitcher)

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

Dead Ball

SECTION 29. A ball that is not in play. It is also a term used by the umpire to temporarily suspend play. In either case, the ball is dead until an umpire indicates resumption of play.

Dead-Ball Territory

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

Defense

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

Delayed Dead Ball

SECTION 32. A situation in which a violation of a rule occurs and is recognized by the umpire with a delayed dead-ball signal but not ruled on until the ball becomes dead.

Designated Player (DP)

SECTION 33. The player who is initially listed on the lineup card in the team's batting order but not in the defensive lineup.

Dislodged Base

SECTION 34. A base displaced from its proper position.

Doubleheader

SECTION 35. Two regularly scheduled games played in succession.

Dugout (Bench)

SECTION 36. The area reserved for team personnel engaged in the game.

Effect

SECTION 37. The result or consequence of a rule application.

Ejection

SECTION 38. The exercise of an umpire's authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game.

Extra Inning

SECTION 39. The continuation of play beyond the regulation seven innings in an attempt to break a tie score.

Fair Ball

SECTION 40. A legally batted ball that:

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

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

- g. While both the ball and runner are in fair territory, the runner interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.

Fair Territory

SECTION 41. That part of the playing field within and including the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the home run fence and perpendicularly upwards. Home plate, the foul lines and poles are considered part of fair territory.

Fake Tag

SECTION 42. When a fielder, who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball, obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag which causes the runner to slow down or stop.

Field of Play

SECTION 43. The area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded.

Fielder

SECTION 44. One of the nine players on the defensive team who takes a position on the field and attempts to stop the offensive team from scoring. It may be the pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder or right fielder.

Flagrant

SECTION 45. An act that involves excessive force with an opponent.

Flex

SECTION 46. The player who is initially listed in the 10th spot on the lineup card, may play any defensive position, and may only enter the game on offense in the designated player's batting position.

Fly Ball

SECTION 47. A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that rises into the air.

Force Out

SECTION 48. A putout in which an offensive player, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder holding the ball and touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance. There cannot be a force out when the batter does not become a batter-runner, when a fly ball is not caught, or after the batter-runner or a trailing runner has been put out.

Force Play

SECTION 49. A play in which the base runner loses her right to occupy a base because the batter becomes a batter-runner and before the batter-runner or a trailing runner has not yet been put out. When a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base she last occupied, the force play is reinstated.

Forfeited Game

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

Foul Ball

SECTION 51. A legally batted ball that:

- a. Touches the batter or touches the dirt or home plate and then hits the batter while she is still within the batter's box.

- b. Touches the bat or touches the dirt or home plate and then hits the bat a second time while it is still in the batter's possession and the batter is still within the batter's box.
- c. Settles on or is touched on or over foul territory between home plate and first base or home plate and third base.
- d. While on or over foul territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire or any object foreign to the natural playing surface.
- e. Bounces or rolls past first base or third base on or over foul territory.
- f. First falls or is touched on or over foul territory beyond first or third base.
- g. While both the ball and runner are in foul territory, the runner interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.
- h. Goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than her hand or gloved hand.

Foul Territory

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

Foul Tip

SECTION 53. A batted ball that travels directly, in a straight line, from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike and the ball is live.

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

Ground Ball

SECTION 54. A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that has touched the ground, an object, or person other than a defensive player.

Halted Game

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

Helmet

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

Home Team

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

Illegal Bat

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

Illegal Pitch

SECTION 59. Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules or an effect for a rule violation.

Illegal Player

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

Illegal Re-entry

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

Illegally Batted Ball

SECTION 62. A pitch contacted by the batter:

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

Inaccurate Lineup Card

SECTION 63. Incorrect listing of eligible starting players and substitutes. Inaccuracies could include incorrect or omitted first name, uniform number or position. (See Rule 8-4.b.)

Note 1: First names may be omitted from the written lineup as long as they are printed on the card's roster.

Note 2: Omitting the last name makes the player ineligible, not the card inaccurate.

In Flight

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

In Jeopardy

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

Infield

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

Infield Fly Rule

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

Infielders

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

Inning

- SECTION 69. a. That portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three putouts for each team.
- b. Half inning. Each team's respective time at bat or in the field. The interval during which one team is on offense and the other is on defense. A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning, the winning run is scored.
- c. Extra inning. One that extends the game in an attempt to break a tie score.

Intentional Base on Balls

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

Interference

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

Leap (Pitcher)

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

Line Drive

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

Lineup Card

SECTION 74. The card that contains the first and last names, uniform numbers and positions of all starting players, listed in the order in which they are to bat and the first and last names and uniform numbers of all eligible substitutes. Also see inaccurate lineup card definition. (See Rule 8-4.b.)

No Contest

SECTION 75. When a team fails to fulfill its contract to play and does not appear, a forfeit is not recorded. This is not a forfeit as there can be no forfeit of a contest until the umpire has assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

No Game

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

- a. If the team last at bat is at bat in the last half of the fifth inning and equals, before the completion of that inning, the score of the side first at bat, the umpire shall declare the contest legally tied.
- b. If the team last at bat shall have scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the team first at bat has scored in five completed innings, the umpire shall award the game to the team second at bat and it shall count as a legal game.

- c. If the teams have previously agreed to play by the halted-game rule. (See Rule 6-17.)

Non-Approved Bat

SECTION 77. A bat that does not meet the ASA specifications and has been placed on the current non-approved bat list.

No Pitch

SECTION 78. Declaration by an umpire that halts play and nullifies the pitch.

Obstruction

SECTION 79. The act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, is fielding a batted ball or is about to receive a thrown ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional.

Offense

SECTION 80. Player or team at bat attempting to score runs.

On-Deck Batter

SECTION 81. An offensive player entitled to occupy the on-deck circle.

On-Deck Circle

SECTION 82. A circular area 5 feet in diameter in which the on-deck batter is restricted for warm-up swings.

Out

SECTION 83. A declaration by the umpire indicating an offensive player has been retired. Each team is entitled to three outs per inning.

Outfield

SECTION 84. That portion of fair territory that is grass or an artificial grass surface and normally defended by the outfielders.

Outfielder

SECTION 85. Fielders (usually three) who defend the grass portion of the field between the skinned infield and home run fence. They typically include the left fielder, center fielder and right fielder.

Overslide

SECTION 86. The act of a base runner who, when sliding, loses contact with a base or passes it.

Overthrow

SECTION 87. A thrown ball that goes beyond its intended target. The ball is live unless it enters dead-ball territory or becomes a blocked ball.

Pinch Hitter

SECTION 88. A player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of the batter. The pinch hitter will stay in the lineup until she is replaced by the player for whom she batted or another substitute.

Pinch Runner

SECTION 89. A player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of a base runner. The pinch runner will stay in the lineup until she is replaced by the player for whom she ran or another substitute.

Pitch

SECTION 90. A live ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher with a legal underhand motion.

Pitcher

SECTION 91. The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters.

Pitcher's Pivot Foot

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

Pitcher's Stride Foot

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

Play

SECTION 94. An attempt by a defensive player on a batted or thrown ball to retire a runner or a batter-runner. A pitch is not a play except as it relates to an appeal play (See Rule 7).

“Play Ball”

SECTION 95. The directive given by the umpire to begin the game or to resume play. It also is the instruction given by the umpire to indicate that the defensive players are in position, the batter is ready to bat and the pitcher may now deliver the pitch.

Protest

SECTION 96. The formal inquiry into the decision of an umpire.

Quick Pitch

SECTION 97. A pitch delivered with the obvious intention of catching the batter off balance or otherwise unprepared to bat.

Regulation Game

SECTION 98. Seven innings constitutes a regulation game unless:

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

Run

SECTION 99. The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.

Runner

SECTION 100. See Base runner.

Rundown

SECTION 101. The act of the defense attempting to put out a base runner who is caught off base between two or more defensive players and who may either attempt to advance or return to the previous base.

Safe

SECTION 102. A declaration by the umpire indicating that a runner is not out or has successfully taken possession of a base and is no longer in jeopardy.

Slap Hit

SECTION 103. A batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. The two most common types of slap hits are:

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

Starter

SECTION 104. The first nine or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order.

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

Strike

SECTION 105. Any pitch that either enters the strike zone without first touching the ground or is swung at by the batter and missed. A strike also may be called by the umpire for the batter's failure to enter the batter's box when so directed or when a member of the offense erases a line.

Strike Zone

SECTION 106. The area above home plate between the top of the batter's forward armpit and the top of her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. When the top of the ball is on or within the horizontal plane and either side of the ball is on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone, a strike is called unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate.

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

Substitute

SECTION 107. A player not listed on the lineup as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first nine or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. A substitute who is replaced may not re-enter the game at any time for any reason.

Suspension

SECTION 108. The exercise of authority to remove a coach or player from participation in subsequent games.

Tag

SECTION 109. The act of a defensive player in:

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

Team Representative

SECTION 110. The head coach and his/her designee.

“Time”

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

Timing Play

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

Turn at Bat

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

Umpires

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

Unreported Player

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

Visiting Team

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

Warm-Up Pitch

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

Without Liability to be Put Out

SECTION 118. Reference to a player who cannot be put out as a result of a defender's action. However, the player can be declared out for violation of baserunning rules (such as missing a base, passing a runner, etc.).

RULE 2

Field of Play

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

Backstop

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

Base Distance

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

Baseline

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

Bases—First, Second and Third

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

Batter's Boxes

SECTION 5. The batter's boxes, one on each side of home plate, shall measure 3 feet by 7 feet, including the lines. The outer edge of the lines of the batter's box shall be 6 inches from home plate. The front line of each box shall be 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate. The four lines must be drawn (see diagram).

Bullpen

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

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

Catcher's Box

SECTION 7. The catcher's box shall be 7 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batters' boxes and shall be 8 feet, 5 inches wide, including the lines (see diagram). The lines must be drawn.

Coaches' Boxes

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

Dugouts

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

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

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

Fences

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

Fitness of the Field

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

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

Foul Pole

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

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

Ground Rules

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

Home Plate

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

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

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

Infield

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

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

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

Layout

SECTION 16. For the layout of the playing field, refer to the drawing showing official dimensions.

All new fields should be oriented with consideration to the following factors: protection of players, comfort of spectators, season of use (February-June), latitude (north to south), east-west geographical location within time zone, prevailing winds, daylight savings time, background and obstacles or barriers. In general, those considerations will lead to home plate being located in the southwest corner of the field and a line drawn through home plate, the center of the pitcher's plate and out to centerfield will extend to the northeast.

When constructing a softball diamond, first designate a point for the rear

tip of home plate. Secondly, with the aid of the above guidelines, locate the desired direction of second base. Measure 84 feet, 10¼ inches in this direction. This is the center of second base. With the tape still in this position, locate the pitcher's plate 43 feet from home plate toward second base. With the tape still fastened to the rear point of home plate, measure 60 feet toward first base and scribe a short arc. Also measure 60 feet toward third base and scribe a short arc. Now fasten the tape at the center of second base and measure 60 feet toward first and third base, respectively. Scribe a short arc each time. The back edges of first and third bases are located where the respective arcs intersect. The skinned area should be determined by measuring a 60-foot arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate.

Lines (Markings)

SECTION 17 a. Lines (foul lines, running lane, pitcher's circle, dead-ball areas, coaching, batter's and catcher's boxes) denote spaces to which players or coaches are restricted. The outermost edge of each line is the restricting boundary and shall meet the dimensions defined in the rules. To be considered "within" the space, the player or coach must not have any part of the foot extend beyond the outermost edge of the line. To be considered "on the line," the foot of the player or coach may extend over the boundary as long as the foot is in contact with the line. In either case, a player or coach must not have an entire foot in contact with the ground completely outside the line that defines the space.

The outside edge of the first and third base lines and their extensions should correspond with the outside edge of first and third base.

All lines on the playing field shall be marked with chalk or material that is not injurious or irritating to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited. All lines must be 2 to 4 inches in width.

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

A.R. 2-17: Deliberately covering a line with infield material is considered removing the line.

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

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

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

c. A coach shall not intentionally remove any lines in the batter's box or elsewhere on the field.

EFFECT—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection.

Nonregulation Field

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

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

On-Deck Circle

SECTION 19. The on-deck circle shall be a circular area with a 2½-foot radius in which the on-deck batter is restricted for warm-up swings. It is located to the side and away from home plate (see diagram).

Pitcher's Circle

SECTION 20. The pitcher's circle shall be a circular area with an 8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate (see diagram).

Pitcher's Plate

SECTION 21. The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber or other suitable material, 24 inches long and 6 inches wide (see diagram). It shall be fixed in the ground, and the top of the plate shall be level with the ground surface. The nearer edge of the pitcher's plate shall be 43 feet from the back point of home plate (see diagram).

Runner's Lane

SECTION 22. The runner's lane is bounded by a 30-foot line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3 feet from the first base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and the back edge of first base (see diagram). The runner's lane should be skinned.

Scoreboard

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

Sideline Territory

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

Tarp

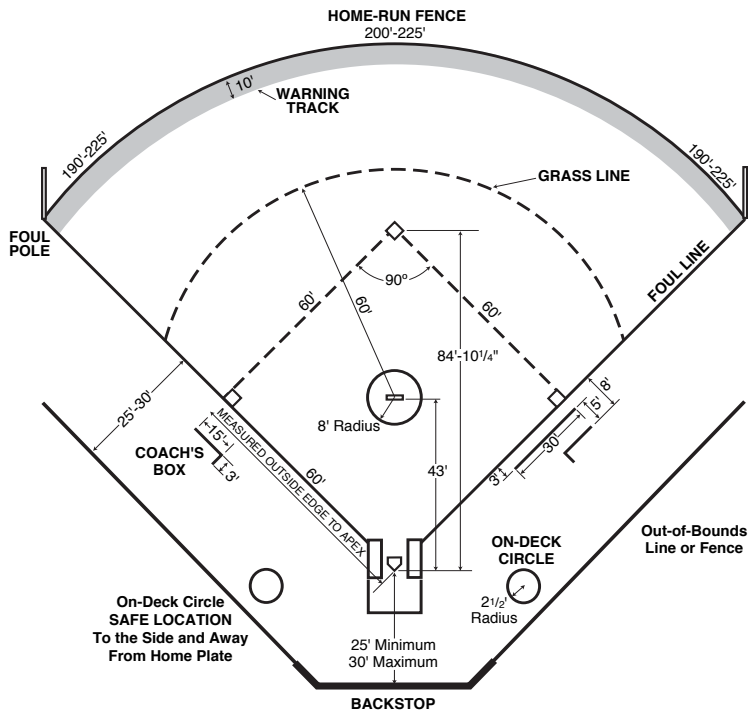
SECTION 25. Whenever possible, a tarp should be stored off the field and in dead-ball territory. If a tarp is stored in the field of play, thrown and batted balls rebounding off the tarp remain in play unless they become lodged in the tarp or its roller. A fielder attempting to catch a fly ball near the tarp may not have either foot on the tarp.

Video, Audio, LED Matrix Boards

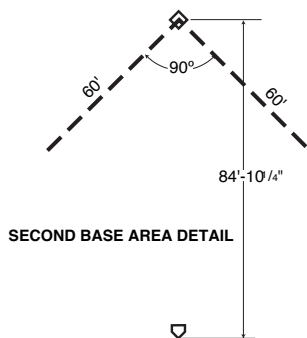
SECTION 26. It is recommended the use of video, audio and LED matrix boards follow the guidelines established in Appendix F.

Warning Track

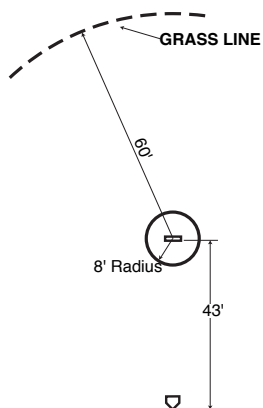
SECTION 27. It is recommended that a warning track be constructed in front of the home-run fence and/or sideline fence. The warning track should be at least 10 feet in width.



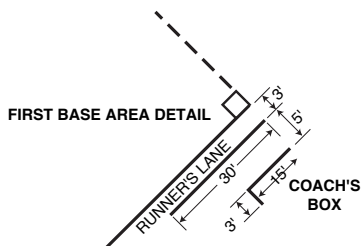
Field-marking lines must be drawn.



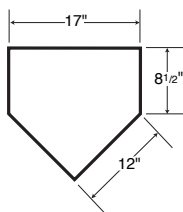
SECOND BASE AREA DETAIL



CIRCLE AREA DETAIL



FIRST BASE AREA DETAIL



HOME PLATE DETAIL

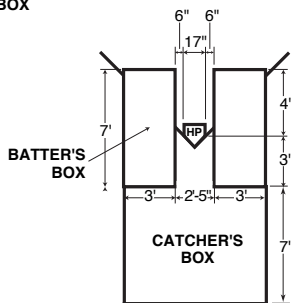


PLATE AREA DETAIL

Field-marking lines must be drawn.

Dimension Table

Area	Dimensions
Backstop	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from home plate
Bases	15 inches square and 1.5 to 3.5 inches thick
a. home plate to first/third	a. 60 feet from back point of home plate to the back of the base
b. home plate to second	b. 84 feet 10 1/4 inches from back point of home plate to the middle of the base
Batter's boxes	6 inches from home plate; 3 feet wide by 7 feet long; front lines 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate
Catcher's box	7 feet in length from rear outside corners of the batters' boxes; 8 feet, 5 inches wide
Coaches' boxes	Marked by two lines. The first is a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first and third base lines extended from the back edge of the bases toward home plate; the second is a line 3 feet long drawn perpendicular to the end of the 15 foot line closest to home plate (see diagram)
Fences*	190-225 feet* from home plate down the left- and right-field line; 200-225 feet* from home plate to centerfield; minimum of 4 feet high*
Foul pole*	Extend a minimum of 10 feet* above the ground; screening* attached to fair side at least 6 inches wide*
Home plate	Front edge 17 inches wide; sides are parallel to the inside lines of batter's boxes and are 8 1/2 inches long; sides of the point facing the catcher are 12 inches long
Infield	Center of second base is one corner of 60-foot square and the measurement to first and third bases is to the back edge of each base; all measurements made from the apex or back point of home plate
Skinned portion*	60-foot* arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate
Lines (markings)	2 to 4 inches wide
On-deck circle	5 feet in diameter; 2 1/2 feet in radius
Pitcher's circle	8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate
Pitcher's plate	24 inches long by 6 inches wide; 43 feet from the back point of home plate
Runner's lane	30-foot line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3 feet from the first base line, starting halfway between home plate and the back edge of first base
Sideline territory	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from the foul lines extended to a point down the line as deep as the home run fence
Warning track*	A minimum of 10 feet wide*
*Recommended	

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

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

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

RULE 3

Equipment and Uniforms

The NCAA Softball Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport and establishing specifications for its equipment.

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

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

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

All equipment used in intercollegiate competition should be of a nature commonly available to the general public through retailers. Institutions are responsible for ensuring that the equipment used in competition meets the prescribed industry standards of safety and legality. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that their players are legally

equipped and properly attired. Uniforms, accessories and equipment (including batting gloves) must be worn properly and as designed.

Exception: Sunglasses may be worn as desired. Defective equipment must be repaired or replaced immediately.

Ball

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

Minimum circumference: $11\frac{7}{8}$ inches; maximum circumference: $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Minimum weight: $6\frac{1}{4}$ ounces; maximum weight: 7 ounces

Maximum COR (coefficient of restitution): .47

Maximum compression: 350 ± 50 .

- b. The home team shall be responsible for providing a minimum of five game softballs of the same specifications and manufacturer. Each game shall begin with two new game balls (one rubbed by each team, so the manufacturer's gloss is removed) and three additional (new or game quality) balls.
- c. The use of any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of balls is prohibited and renders the equipment altered and unsuitable for play.

EFFECT (a-c)—No contest shall be declared. Games shall not be played with softballs that exceed the required specifications.

Note 1: The balls should be stored at room temperature and humidity levels (72 degrees and 50 percent, respectively) to achieve performance similar to those in laboratory testing.

Note 2: The official game ball for the NCAA Divisions I, II and III Women's Softball Championships is the Worth NC12L.

Bats—Game

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

1. Shall be made of one piece of hardwood, or formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive in such a way that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat.

2. Shall be metal, plastic, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic, titanium or any other composite material.
3. May be laminated but must contain only wood or adhesive and have a clear finish (if finished).
4. The barrel shall be round and smooth. If the barrel end has a knurled finish, the maximum surface roughness shall not be more than 250 micro-inches if measured by a profilometer or 41,000 if measured by a spectrograph.
5. Shall not be more than 34 inches (87.0 cm) long nor exceed 38 ounces (1,100.0 g) in weight.
6. Shall not be more than 2¼ inches (6.0 cm) in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of ½ inch (0.90 mm) is permitted to allow for expansion on the round bat.
A.R. 3-2.a.6: If the bat ring goes over the bat, it should be considered a legal bat in terms of diameter.
7. There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the large end.
8. Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of burrs and cracks.
9. The handle must be cylindrical (round or oblong) and may not be wood if the barrel is metal.
10. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The safety grip shall not be less than 10 inches (25.0 cm) long and shall not extend more than 15 inches (40.0 cm) from the small end of the bat. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the safety grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only. It may not exceed two layers. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral but need not be a solid layer.
11. If made from a product other than wood and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other approved material insert firmly secured and permanently affixed so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer without damaging or destroying it.
12. Shall have a safety knob of a minimum of ¼ inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A “flare” or “cone” grip attached to the bat

will be considered altered. The knob may be taped as long as there is no violation of this section.

13. Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read because of wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.
14. Shall not have dents or flat spots that prevent a bat ring from passing over the length of the bat. In determining whether a bat is legal, the ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.
15. Bats shall bear either the permanent ASA 2000 or 2004 certification seal and, in either case, not be listed on the non-approved bat list on the ASA Web site (www.softball.org) indicating noncompliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.

EFFECT—If a batter enters the batter’s box with an illegal or non-approved bat, the bat shall be removed from the game (i.e. not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters the batter’s box with an altered bat, the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed in addition to the batter being ejected from the game.

Exception: Advance is legal on a non-contacted pitch or ball four.

- b. Upon arrival to the field, the umpire crew and visiting coach shall receive from the host coach or school, a printed copy of the non-approved bat list as made available on the ASA Web site the preceding Monday. It is highly recommended that the color bat list by picture be provided.
- c. The umpires shall inspect all bats for legal specifications and an ASA certification seal. Bats with the seal are legal if not listed on the ASA list provided by the host. Bats without either the ASA 2000 or 2004 seal shall not be legal for use.
- d. Bats deemed altered, illegal or nonapproved (pregame or during play) shall be removed from the team's possession and secured from either team for the duration of the game.
- e. The use of any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of bats is prohibited and renders the equipment altered and unsuitable for play.

EFFECT (c-e)—If the removed bat is re-discovered while the batter is in the batter's box or following her turn at bat and before a pitch to the next batter, the batter (or now batter-runner if the turn at bat is completed) shall be declared out and ejected and any advance by base runners shall be nullified.

If a pitch has been thrown to the next batter, the batter who used the equipment and is now the runner, shall be declared out if on base and, in any case, shall be ejected. Advance by base runners shall stand.

In all cases, the head coach is ejected and the umpire crew shall remove the bat for the game, return the bat at the conclusion of the game, and file an incident report (see Appendix C) with the Secretary-Rules Editor.

Bats—Warm-Up

SECTION 3. The warm-up bat must weigh not less than 39 ounces and have a minimum barrel diameter of 2 inches. The bat shall be of one-piece construction and shall have a safety grip 10-15 inches from the knob and securely affixed. Attachments to a bat (such as sleeves, donuts and fans) are not allowed in the on-deck circle.

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

Casts/Braces/Splints/Prostheses

SECTION 4. Casts, braces, splints and prostheses may be worn by players as long as the equipment is well-padded to protect not only the affected player, but also her opponents. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard, must be properly padded.

Casts, braces, splints and prostheses on a pitcher's nonpitching arm shall not be distracting as determined by the umpire. Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. In addition, any such device must be neutral in color so as not to be distracting and must function in such a way that it does not alter the natural motion of the pitching arm.

Catcher's Equipment

SECTION 5. Body protectors and baseball/softball shin guards that offer protection to at least the foot-to-knee area must be worn by the catcher. The catcher must wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. In addition, the catcher must wear a protective facemask with a built-in or attachable throat guard. A built-in throat guard must extend far enough to adequately protect the throat. An attachable throat guard shall be commercially manufactured, unaltered and securely attached to the mask. The catcher's headgear must bear a permanent mark (molded in, embossed or by indestructible seal) indicating compliance with the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) combined helmet and mask standard.

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

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

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

Electronic Equipment

SECTION 6. a. Nonuniformed team personnel may sit in the stands for the purpose of videotaping a contest, recording pitch speeds, or charting pitches, but in doing so, renders themselves ineligible for the game.

- b. Scouting information obtained from outside the dugout involving current opponents shall not be relayed or given to the playing field or to team personnel during the contest.
- c. A team may film or videotape only contests in which it is playing, but may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game which is or will be televised.
- d. Statistical information may be entered into electronic equipment but may not be accessed or retrieved during the game.
- e. Cell phones and pagers are not allowed on the field but may be used in the dugout for purposes other than coaching or scouting.

EFFECT (a-e)—When brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach.

If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected.

Gloves/Mitts

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

Palm width: 8 inches; top opening of web: 5 inches; web top to bottom: 7¼ inches; thumb top to bottom edge: 9¼ inches; highest finger top to bottom edge: 14 inches.

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

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

Gloves/mitts worn by players may not be the color of the ball but may be any combination of other colors. The pitcher's glove may be tan, brown, grey or black or any combination of those colors. Glove lacing may be any color other than that of the ball.

Adding adhesive or creating a sticky or tacky coating to a legal glove, renders the glove illegal.

- b. The use of any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of gloves is prohibited and renders the equipment altered and unsuitable for play.

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

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

Helmets

SECTION 8. a. **Offense.** While batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle, each offensive player is required to wear a double-earflap protective helmet approved by NOCSAE. All helmets must be the same color and the permanent NOCSAE mark and exterior warning label must be legible.

EFFECT—If an umpire observes a player wearing a damaged or illegal helmet before coming to bat, while at bat, or while on base, the umpire shall direct the player to change to a legal helmet without penalty. Failure to wear a legal helmet when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection. Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or intentionally removing the helmet while the ball is live shall result in the player being declared out but shall not remove a force play.

- b. **Catcher.** The catcher is required to wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. The catcher's headgear must bear a permanent mark (molded in, embossed or by indestructible seal) indicating compliance with the NOCSAE combined helmet and mask standard.

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

- c. **Defense.** A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets must be the same color. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a nonglossy finish.
- d. **Face mask.** An offensive player may wear a helmet with a commercially manufactured protective face mask attached. The face mask should meet the NOCSAE standard for the mask and helmet combination and must be permanently attached by the manufacturer or attached by a procedure approved by the manufacturer. In addition, any defensive player may wear a face mask, whether attached to a helmet or not.

Shoes

SECTION 9. Shoes are considered equipment and are therefore not subject to the uniform logo rule (see Rule 3-10.f). All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal spikes. Spikes must not extend in excess of 3/4-inch from the sole and may not be round. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

Uniforms

SECTION 10. All eligible players shall be attired with uniforms (jersey, pants, shorts and socks) of the same style, color and trim. Uniform accessories (i.e., foul weather wear, head gear, knee/shin pads, undershirts and undershorts)

are optional parts of the uniform and may be mixed styles. Uniforms, all accessories and protective equipment must be worn properly and as designed. *Exception:* A uniform part that must be changed because of saturation of blood shall not cause the player to be penalized.

- a. **Coaches' uniform.** Coaches must be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.
- b. **Foul-weather wear.** Sweatshirts, sweat pants, nylon windbreakers and jackets may be worn. Foul-weather garments worn by multiple players should be of the same style, color and trim but must not be distracting, interfere with the game or pose a safety risk to the player(s) or her opponents.
- c. **Headgear.** Visors, headbands and caps are uniform accessories and may be mixed. All headgear must be of the same predominant color and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Plastic visors, bandannas and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear even if covered or worn under a cap or helmet. *Exception:* The catcher's headgear may be of different color than other defender's headgear.
- d. **Jersey.** It is the responsibility of the visiting team to ensure their jersey is of contrasting color to that selected by the home team. All uniform jerseys must have a whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back. The number(s) or its outline shall be of contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. It is recommended that new jerseys have 3- to 4-inch high numbers of contrasting color on the front of the jersey. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number.

A.R. 3-10.d.1: 0 and 00 are considered the same number.

A.R. 3-10.d.2: Securing sleeves to simulate a sleeveless jersey is considered wearing the uniform improperly.

Note: For NCAA championship play, the respective NCAA divisional softball committees may elect to create a different method to select contrasting jersey colors, provided it is formally declared before the start of the championship round.

- e. **Knee/shin pads.** Knee, sliding or shin pads, if worn, must all be the same color.
- f. **Logos.** A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the playing field, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:

1. Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, softball bats, gloves, batting gloves) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public.
 2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including socks, warm-ups) and all other uniform accessories (e.g., headbands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 2¼ square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo.
- g. **Pants/shorts.** The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, but all players on the same team must be attired the same way.
- h. **Undershirts/undershorts (sliders).** It is not required that players wear undershirts or undershorts, but if more than one player wears one, the apparel must be the same in color. Shirt style and sleeve length may vary. Visible undergarments must be in solid colors and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn or slit).

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



RULE 4

Game Personnel

Assistant Coach

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

Authorized Personnel on the Field

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

Bands

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

Base Coach

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

Note 1: Unlike most other sports, the base coach is in the field of play and, therefore, must be reasonably mobile.

Note 2: Helmets are not required for base coaches.

Head Coach

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

- a. The team's conduct;
- b. Observance of the official rules;
- c. Ensuring that all players are legally and safely equipped and properly attired; and

- d. All communication with the umpire whether initiated by assistants or other team personnel. If the head coach leaves the field, he or she should inform the umpire of his/her temporary replacement.

Media

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

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

Medical Personnel

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

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

Official Scorer

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

On-Site Administrator

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

- a. Determining within one hour of game time and with the assistance of participating coaches, the fitness of the field in the event of unsatisfactory weather or facility conditions;
- b. Ensuring the existence of proper sporting conditions and behavior of spectators throughout competition;
- c. Informing the umpire crew of severe weather conditions and providing spectators with appropriate information.
- d. Making him/herself known to umpires and opposing coaches before the contest but not later than the pregame meeting.
- e. The on-site administrator shall not be a member of the softball coaching staff nor an undergraduate student of the competing teams.

Public-Address Announcer

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

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

Team Manager

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

Umpires

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

RULE 5

Pregame Procedures

Playing Conditions

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

Game Balls

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

Pregame Practice

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

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

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

Note: The visiting team's head coach must first appeal to the on-site administrator or home team's head coach for a correction of the condition of the bullpen. If the condition is still unsatisfactory, the visiting coach may request use of the home team's bullpen and involve the umpire crew to supervise the time, if necessary.

Umpires' Duties

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

- a. Before each game, the umpires shall inspect the bats for grip, size, current ASA certification and any obvious damage. Umpires should make certain that dented, bent, altered or illegal bats, are not available for use during the game (i.e., not allowed in the dugout). To determine whether a bat with dent(s) or a flat spot is legal, a bat ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.

EFFECT—See Rule 3-2 for illegal, altered or non-approved bats.

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

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

Lineup

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

Notes:

1. *Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*
2. *All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*

A.R. 5-5: First names may be omitted from the written lineup as long as they are printed on the card's roster.

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

Pregame Meeting

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

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

EFFECT—If either the name, number or position of a player is incorrect, it is handled as an appeal play (see Rule 7-1.a for process and 8-4 for effect.).

- c. Review ground rules with both teams.
- d. Review special game rules (e.g., halted game, tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules).
- e. Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.
- f. Collect a minimum of five game softballs, including one new ball rubbed up by each team and three additional balls from the home team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play.

Ground Rules

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

Pregame Suggested Protocol

SECTION 8. It is recommended the following protocol be followed: 1) team infields and/or shuttle balls; 2) pregame meeting; 3) introductions; 4) national anthem (if applicable); 5) pregame announcement; and 6) play.

Pregame Announcement

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

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

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

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

RULE 6

The Game

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

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

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

Scoring of Runs

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

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

Note: An appeal can be made after the third out.

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

Game Winner

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

- a. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team has scored an equal number or more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- b. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.
- c. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault. *Exception:* If the game is regulation and the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score and all game stats shall stand and be credited as played.

Starting the Game

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

Positions of the Offensive Team

SECTION 4. The offensive team:

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

EFFECT (d-e)—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, if in the lineup, she shall

be ejected from the game and if not, the violator shall be ejected from the facility.

Positions of the Defensive Team

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

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

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

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

- d. All personnel, except the nine defensive players on the field, must remain in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is in play.
- e. Between innings and during pitching changes, warm-ups shall be limited to:
 1. Pitching from the pitcher's circle to home plate;
 2. Throwing and catching with one ball among no more than four players in the infield;
 3. Throwing and catching among any number of players in the outfield; and
 4. Warm-up running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

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

Team First in Field

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

Live Ball

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

Delayed Dead Ball

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

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

Dead Ball

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

- b. A dead ball is also ruled when a fielder contacts a ball in live-ball territory when any part of her body is in contact with dead-ball territory. *Exception:* A fielder's foot may be on a line marking dead-ball territory.
- c. While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of: 1) acts that occurred while the ball was live (such as, but not limited to, an illegal pitch, interference, obstruction, an overthrow, a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field); or 2) as a result of a dead-ball appeal.
- d. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is dead need not touch intervening bases.

Suspension and Resumption of Play

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

umpire lowers his/her hand signifying "Play ball."

1. Players and coaches will not be granted "Time" when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.
 2. The umpire shall not call "Time" until a play has been completed.
 3. After a base on balls, the umpire shall not call "Time" until the batter-runner has stopped at first base and each other runner forced to advance has stopped at her next base.
- b. "No pitch" shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire is holding play.
- c. A runner, who is touching a base when "Time" is called, may not advance nor return during the suspension of play.
- d. After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher takes her place on the pitcher's plate with the ball in her possession, the catcher is in the catcher's box, all runners have reoccupied the base they occupied at the time of the pitch and the umpire signals "Play ball."
1. The pitcher must allow sufficient time for the runner to return to her base.

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

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

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

Conferences

SECTION 11. a. Charged defensive conference.

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

Note: Conferences are not cumulative.

The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when a defensive conference has been charged and record the inning on the team's lineup card. A charged defensive conference begins when the team representative(s) delays the game or suspends play to deliver a message to the defense, and ends when the team representative(s) returns to the dugout.

EFFECT—The umpire shall not permit more than one defensive conference per inning. The team representative(s), who holds or attempts to hold another charged conference, shall be immediately ejected.

Exception: The following are not charged defensive conferences:

1. Giving instructions from the dugout area to the defense without requesting a suspension of play.
2. Requesting a suspension of play in order:
 - a. To remove the pitcher from the pitching position (provided the umpire is informed of the change before the representative steps over the foul line) or to make a defensive substitution.
 - b. To confer with the defense during a charged offensive conference or during a suspension of play.

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

- c. To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.
 - d. To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
 - e. For a defensive player to make an equipment change.
- b. **Charged offensive conference.**
1. There may be only one charged offensive conference per inning. The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when an offensive conference has been charged and record the inning on the team's lineup card. A charged offensive conference begins when the team representative(s) delays the game or suspends play to deliver a message to the offense (player or coach), and ends when the team representative(s) returns to the coaches' box or dugout.

EFFECT—The umpire shall not permit more than one offensive conference per inning. The team representative(s), who holds or attempts to hold another charged conference, shall be immediately ejected.

Exception: The following are not charged offensive conferences:

1. Giving instructions to the offense without requesting a suspension of play.
2. Requesting a suspension of play in order:
 - a. To make an offensive lineup change.

- b. To confer with the offense during a charged defensive conference or during a suspension of play.

Note: The offensive team may be charged with an offensive conference if not ready to play after the umpire's declaration.

- c. To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.
- d. To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
- e. For a batter or base runner to make an equipment change.
- f. For a base runner to put on a jacket/sweatshirt.

Regulation Game

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

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

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

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

Eight-Run-Rule Game (Regulation)

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

Note: The eight-run rule may not be set aside by competing teams, league, conference or tournament rule.

Exception: For NCAA tournament play only, the respective NCAA divisional softball committees may elect to remove the eight-run rule for the

championship game, provided it is formally declared before the start of the tournament.

Tie Game (Regulation)

SECTION 14. A regulation tie game shall be declared by the plate umpire if the score is tied when the game must be called after five or more equal innings, or if the home team is at bat when the game is terminated and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs as the visiting team.

Notes:

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

Tiebreaker Rule

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

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

Called Game

SECTION 16. a. A regulation called game shall be declared by the plate umpire if, after five or more innings have been completed, he or she terminates play (for reasons such as lightning, darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger). The

score shall be that of the last equal inning played, except that in the following circumstances, the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:

1. If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in their five offensive half-innings.
 2. If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.
 3. If the home team is at bat when the game is called and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs or more runs than the visiting team.
 4. If a team is ahead by eight or more runs after five innings, or if the home team is at least eight runs ahead after four and one-half innings.
- b. After consultation with the on-site administrator, the game may be called at any time because of facility problems, crowd behavior or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger.

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

Halted Game

SECTION 17. a. A halted game shall be declared by the plate umpire if play must be temporarily suspended with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. Before the restart of a halted game, the plate umpire shall conduct a pregame meeting to verify the lineup information remains correct (i.e., note uniform number changes necessitated by a change in jerseys, personnel no longer available, etc.). When play resumes after having been temporarily suspended, it must start at exactly the point of being halted. The lineups and batting orders of both teams must be exactly the same as they were, subject to the rules of substitution, and any player who played or was announced as a substitute before the game was halted, must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game.

- b. Whether or not the halted-game rule will be used must be determined at the pregame meeting. Use of the halted-game rule also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.
- c. During the regular season, if a game is both halted and regulation, regulation will take precedence assuming the reasonable efforts made to complete the game have failed.

Note 1: If the halted-game rule is not utilized, a game stopped with the score tied is considered a regulation tie game (if it qualifies under Rule 6-12) or no game (Rule 6-18), not a halted game, and may not be resumed.

Note 2: See Appendix E for Lightning Safety Standards.

No Game

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

Exceptions:

1. If the home team scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning, or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the visiting team has scored in their five offensive half-innings, the umpire shall award the win to the home team, and it shall count as a regulation game.
2. Teams previously have agreed to resume a halted game.

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

Forfeited Game

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

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

- b. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.
Exception: If the game is regulation and the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score and all game stats shall stand and be credited as played.

Notes:

1. All game umpires must concur in order to declare a game forfeited.
2. If the umpire crew declare the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (Appendix C), in writing, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game.
3. When a game is forfeited under postgame administrative actions, neither the outcome nor the statistics in any completed contest are reversible. The actual results of the game and the statistics shall be entered as such in both teams' all-time records, the coaches' records and in individual statistics. Games later forfeited shall be denoted by an asterisk and a footnote. If such a forfeit is declared while a game is in progress, all statistics (other than won-lost records and coaches' records) are voided, unless the game has progressed to a "reasonable point of conclusion" (five innings), in which case all statistics shall count and shall be reflected in all records. The team's won-lost record shall include the forfeit, but if the statistics are voided, all averages in future rankings shall be computed without inclusion of the forfeited game.

No Contest

- SECTION 20. a. When a team does not appear, a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered as "no contest."
- b. There shall be no forfeit of a contest until the umpires have assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

Doubleheaders

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

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

RULE 7

Appeals and Protests

Appeals

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

1. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at or overrunning first base (See 12-6.a).
 - a. Must be a live-ball appeal.
 - b. Must be made before the runner returns to first base.
2. Missing a base. (See 12-19 and 12-26.b.)
 - a. May be a live- or dead-ball appeal.
 - b. Must be made before the next pitch, whether legal or illegal.
 - c. Must be made before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory, and the catcher has clearly vacated her normal fielding position.
 - d. Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.
 - e. A runner is assumed to have touched the base and if a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
 1. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire shall make a safe signal and declare "No tag." If a proper appeal is made, by tagging the plate or runner before the runner returns to the plate, the runner shall be declared out.
 2. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made before she returns to first base.
3. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (See 12-8.c and 12-25.)
 - a. May be a live- or dead-ball appeal.
 - b. Must be made before the next pitch, whether legal or illegal.

- c. Must be made before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and left fair territory, and the catcher has clearly vacated her normal fielding position.
 - d. Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.
4. Participation by an improper player: batting out of order, player who is listed inaccurately on the lineup card, unreported substitute and illegal player. (See Rule 8-4 and Appendix B.)
 - a. Must be a dead-ball appeal.
 - b. Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.
5. Switching base runners on occupied bases. (See Rule 12-8.e.)
 - a. After the ball has been put in play, it may be a dead-ball appeal.
 - b. Must be made before the end of the half inning.
 - c. Must be made before the umpires leave the field.

Note: When teams line up for high fives, there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line; umpires can leave the game at this point.

b. Appeals may be made when the ball is live or dead.

1. Live-ball appeal:

- a. A live-ball appeal is made by touching the base the runner missed or left before a fly ball was first touched or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided she is still on the playing field, and indicating to the umpire what is being appealed (if necessary).
- b. Runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play.
- c. A live-ball appeal can be made after a play on a runner.
- d. When the ball goes out of play, a live-ball appeal cannot be made.

2. Dead-ball appeal:

- a. Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called or the ball has become dead, a coach or any fielder (with or without the ball) may ask the umpire to make a decision on the appealed play.
- b. Runners may not advance as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.
- c. When the ball goes out of play, the dead-ball appeal cannot be made until the umpire places a new ball into the game.
- d. If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitching plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.

- e. When “Play ball” has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher, coach, or a fielder then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call “Time” and allow the appeal process.
- c. Appeals may be made after the third out.
- A.R. 7-1.c.1:** The runner misses second base by a step but just touches the corner of third base. Even though an appeal is made at third (the umpire called the runner safe), an appeal may be made at second on the same runner.
- A.R. 7-1.c.2:** Bottom of the seventh inning, two outs, tie score. The batter in the sixth spot in the batting order (average hitter but slow runner) is scheduled to bat, but the coach sends the batter in the ninth spot (fastest runner on the team) to the plate with instructions to strike out for the third out. The defensive coach notices batting out of order, but waits to see the result of her turn at bat. Even though the defense got the strikeout as the third out, they may appeal batting out of order to correct the batting order for the eighth inning when the tiebreaker was to begin.
- d. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left before a fly ball was first touched when:
1. She has left the field of play.
 2. A following runner has scored.
 3. She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed or left before a fly ball was first touched, and “Time” has been called by the umpire.
 4. The ball becomes dead.

Exception: If the runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base missed or left before a fly ball was first touched, she can continue.

- e. With regard to the scoring of runs:
1. If there are two outs before the appeal on a runner, the appeal becoming the third out, no runners following the appealed out shall score. If the appeal is at a base to which the runner was forced at the time of the infraction, no runs can score on the play.
 2. If a runner leaves a base before a fly ball is first touched and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a timing play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner who scored before the legal appeal was made, would count.
 3. An appeal may be made after the third out which could nullify a run.

A.R. 7-1.e.3: With one out and runners on first and third, the batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each runner leaves her base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defensive team then makes an appeal at third base before the infielders leave the infield. The runner on third will then be declared out also, and the run will not count.

Protests

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

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

A.R. 7-2.c: With one out and runners on second and third, the batter flies out. The runner on third base tags up after the catch, but the runner on second does not. The runner on third crosses the plate before the ball is played at second base for the third out. The umpire does not allow the run to score. The questions as to whether the runners left their bases before the catch and whether the play at second base was made before the runner on third crossed the plate, are solely matters of judgment and are not protestable. It is a misapplication of a playing rule and a proper subject for protest, if the umpire fails to allow the run to score.

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

Notes:

- (a) *It is the responsibility of each conference to determine if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
 - (b) *For non-conference games, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to determine if the games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
- e. When a protest is upheld and a game is rescheduled:
- (1) The same lineup card must be used when the game is resumed, a pregame meeting held to verify accuracy (such as changed jersey numbers), and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.
 - (2) If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because she was legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew a suspension.
- f. During play that determines an NCAA qualifier (automatic or play-in) and during NCAA championship play itself, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:
- 1. After input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and non-confrontational manner using a rulebook.
 - 2. The protesting coach has the right to submit a written protest to a protest committee comprised of the "off" umpire, the umpire in chief (if not involved with the call) and an additional member (chair) who is:
 - a. Predetermined by the conference for a conference championship;
 - b. The tournament director for an NCAA play-in;
 - c. The NCAA representative for regional play; or
 - d. A designated member of the women's softball championship committee for the NCAA championship series.

3. If the protesting coach proceeds with the protest:
 - a. The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game is being suspended pending the results of the protest.
 - b. The protesting coach must complete the appropriate protest form (provided in Appendix C, on the NCAA Web site or in the championship handbook) and state the rule in question at the time of the action or incident that caused the protest.
 - c. All protests must be ruled upon immediately by the protest committee. The committee shall confer with the umpires (and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, if available) before making its decision, and the games committee chair shall make a written report to the chair of the respective women's softball committee and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

RULE 8

Players and Substitutes

Players on a Team

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

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

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

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

Designated Player/Flex

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

DP (Designated Player)

a. Lineup Card

1. One player in the starting lineup may be batted for by a designated player (DP), provided the DP is declared on the lineup card before the game.

Flex

a. Lineup Card

1. The player for whom the DP bats is called the flex. There cannot be a DP without a flex. The flex must be declared on the lineup card before the game.

DP (Designated Player)

2. The DP's name, uniform number and position must be placed in one of the first nine batting positions in the lineup.

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

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

b. Primary Role

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

c. Uncharged Substitution

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

Flex

2. The flex's name, uniform number and position number must be placed in the 10th (non-batting) position in the lineup, immediately after the batting order.

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

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

b. Primary Role

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

c. Uncharged Substitution

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

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

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

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

e. Re-entry

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

Flex**d. Charged Substitution**

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

e. Re-entry

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

DP (Designated Player)

in the field for her, the DP can (a) return to just playing offense for the flex; (b) play offense for the flex and defense for another batter in the order; or (c) leave the game and let a player come off the bench to become a substitute DP. If the flex re-enters to play offense and defense, the DP must leave the game.

3. A substitute DP may not re-enter once removed from the game offensively.

f. Options

1. The DP may play offense only (for the flex).
2. The DP may play both offense and defense for the flex.
 - a. The flex must leave the game, and it counts as a substitution for the flex.
 - b. It does not count as a substitution for the DP.
 - c. The number of players in the game is reduced to nine and, if the flex does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.

Flex

return to the 10th position in the lineup and play defense only, anywhere on the field; or she may assume the position in the batting order occupied by the DP or a substitute flex, and play both offense and defense.

3. A substitute flex may not re-enter once removed from the game defensively.

f. Options

1. The flex may play defense only.
2. The flex may play both offense and defense for the DP.
 - a. The DP must leave the game, and it counts as a substitution for the DP.
 - b. It does not count as a substitution for the flex.
 - c. The number of players in the game is reduced to nine and, if the DP does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.
 - d. The flex must leave the 10th position in the lineup and assume the DP's spot in the batting order.

DP (Designated Player)

3. The DP may play offense for the flex and defense for another player in the batting order—not the flex.
 - a. The player for whom the DP plays defense just bats/runs and is not considered to have left the game because she remains in the batting order.
 - (1) The DP is now playing offense for the flex and defense for the position player.
 - (2) The position player is just playing offense.
 - (3) The flex is still just playing defense (batted for by the DP).
 - b. No one is charged with a substitution as no offensive player has left the batting order and the flex has not left the defensive lineup.

g. Limitations

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

Flex

3. The flex may play defense only, and both the DP and the flex may play defense at the same time.

g. Limitations

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

Improper Player

SECTION 3. a. **Batting Out of Order** (See also Rule 11-11). A player is batting out of order when she fails to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

EFFECT—(a) If reported by the offensive team, or if the defensive team is in violation but the player has not made a play, or after the offending player has made a play on defense but after a pitch (legal or illegal) has been delivered to the following batter, or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory, the coach may correct the error without penalty by reporting the correct first name, position, or number to the umpire.

Note: If the player in violation is the pitcher, delivering a pitch is considered making a play.

- (b) If reported by the offensive team immediately after the offending player makes a play on defense, and before the next pitch, the lineup card shall be corrected, and the offensive coach shall have the option to:
- (1) Nullify the play. The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the infraction was reported and continues her turn at bat. Each runner returns to the last base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
 - (2) Take the results of the play and disregard the violation.
- (c) If reported by the defensive team during the offending player's turn at bat:

- (1) The error may be corrected without penalty.
 - (2) All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
 - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (d) If reported by the defensive team while the offending player is on offense, after she has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:
- (1) The offending player shall be called out.
 - (2) Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the offending batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, walk, dropped third strike or a base hit, shall be nullified.
 - (3) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the offending player.
 - (4) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (e) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense, after she has completed her turn at bat and a pitch has been delivered to the following batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:
- (1) The turn at bat is legal.
 - (2) All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
 - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (f) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense as a pinch runner or the tiebreaker runner, and it follows a pitch in which the runner has advanced one or more bases and before the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown.
- (1) The offending player shall be called out.
 - (2) Any advance by other runners is nullified.
 - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (g) In all other cases regarding runners who have not batted but are base runners, the error is correctable without penalty.

c. **Unreported substitutions** (See also Appendix B). The following regulations govern unreported substitutions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. If the unreported player is reported by the offense before the defensive coach in violation informs the umpire, and:

- (a) The unreported player has made a play, but the next pitch (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory, or it is the last play of the game, and the umpires have not yet left the field.

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

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

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

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

Notes:

1. *If an unreported player is also an illegal player, the penalty for an illegal player applies.*

2. *Violation of the unreported player rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*
 3. *If the player in violation is the pitcher, delivering a pitch is considered making a play.*
- d. **Illegal Player(s)** (See also Appendix B). 1. Players who compete in the game but are not entitled to play include:
- (a) A starter who has entered or re-entered the game in a position to which she is not entitled.
 - (b) A nonstarter who has entered the game a second time.
 - (c) A player who is not listed on the lineup card.
 - (d) An ejected player entering or re-entering the game.
 - (e) In the tiebreaker, a runner other than the player scheduled to bat ninth in the inning or her substitute (reported or unreported) who is placed on second base.
 - (f) The flex entering the game on offense in a batting order position other than that of the DP.
2. The following regulations govern illegal players:
- (a) If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, all play stands, regardless of the length of time the illegal player was in the game.
 - (b) If the illegal player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is thrown (legal or illegal).
- EFFECT (a-b)—The illegal player is ejected. Any advance by the batter-runner or base runners on the pitch (legal or illegal) immediately before the report shall be nullified. Any advance on previous pitches shall be legal.**
- (c) If the illegal player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:
 - (1) A pitch has been thrown, but the illegal player is still at bat.
 - (2) The illegal player has completed her turn at bat, but a pitch (legal or illegal) has not been thrown to the next batter, or the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.
- EFFECT (1-2)—The illegal player is called out and ejected. Any advance by the batter-runner or base runners**

on the pitch (legal or illegal) immediately before the report shall be nullified. Any advance on previous pitches shall be legal.

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

EFFECT—The player is called out if on base and ejected. Any advance by base runners while the illegal player was at bat because of her becoming a batter-runner is legal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—The player is ejected. The offensive team has the option of:

- a. taking the result of the play, or
 - b. nullifying the play and having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count she had before the report of the illegal player and each runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.
- (2) The illegal player has made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown in the half inning.
- (3) The illegal player has not made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown in the half inning.

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

Note:

1. Violation of the illegal player rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.
2. If the player in violation is the pitcher, delivering a pitch is considered making a play.

Starting Player

SECTION 4. a. Once the lineup card has been reviewed and submitted to the umpire, it becomes official.

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

Substitute Player

SECTION 5. a. **Player substitutions.** Player substitutions shall be governed by the following:

1. Any player may be substituted for at any time when the ball is dead.
2. The coach of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game. Projected re-entries are not allowed.
3. Substitutes shall be considered officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
4. The substitute must take the place of the replaced player on the team's lineup card.

5. The plate umpire shall record any substitutions on the lineup card and announce immediately, or cause to be announced, any such substitutions.
 6. The plate umpire shall report the change to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, the official scorer, and the public-address announcer (if applicable) before the next pitch.
 7. When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game simultaneously, the coach shall immediately designate to the plate umpire the position of each in the team's batting order.
 8. The batter may be removed before having received a pitch, whether or not she has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
- b. **Pitcher substitutions.** Pitching substitutions shall be governed by the following:
1. The pitcher may be removed from the pitching position before having delivered a pitch, whether or not the first batter facing her has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
 2. After a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw no more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.
EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch in excess of five. Exception: This penalty does not apply if the pitching change is necessitated by an injury to the pitcher.
 3. A pitcher is not entitled to warm-up pitches if she returns to pitch in the same half inning.
EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch.
- c. **Injured player substitutions.** The following regulations govern substitutions for an injured player:
1. Substitutes for an injured player must be allowed adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.
 2. If an injury to a batter-runner or runner prevents her from proceeding to an awarded base, the ball is dead and substitution may be made. The substitute must legally touch all awarded or missed bases not previously touched.

Re-entry

SECTION 6. Any of the starting players, including a designated player and the flex, may be substituted and re-entered once, providing players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the order. The starting player and her substitute(s) may not be in the lineup at the same time. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.

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

Notes:

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

RULE 9

Blocked Ball, Interference and Obstruction

Blocked Ball

Equipment Blocked Ball

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—The ball is live.

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

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

Notes:

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

Foul Batted Blocked Ball

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

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

Fair Batted Blocked Ball

SECTION 3. A fair batted ball becomes blocked:

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

EFFECT—The ball is dead.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Live Thrown Blocked Ball

SECTION 4. A live thrown ball becomes blocked:

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

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

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

Notes:

1. *The direction that a runner is headed when an overthrow occurs has no bearing on the award. (A.R. 9-4.a: When an overthrow is made on a runner returning to a base, she is awarded two bases from that base. If she was returning to first base and the throw was from the outfield, and it left the outfielder's hand before the runner got back to first base, the runner would be awarded third base.)*
 2. *When a runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.*
 3. *If two runners are between the same bases when an overthrown ball leaves the fielder's hand, the award is based on the position of the lead runner (i.e., two runners between first and second will be awarded second and third; however, if two runners are between second and third, both will be awarded home).*
- b. When it contacts loose offensive equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

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

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

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

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

fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

Pitched Blocked Ball

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

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

Catch and Carry Blocked Ball

SECTION 6. A live batted or thrown ball becomes blocked when it is caught by a fielder and carried into dead-ball territory. This is commonly referred to as a “catch and carry.”

EFFECT—See Rule 12-11.

Game Personnel in Unauthorized Areas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Interference

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

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

Batter Interference

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

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

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

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

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

Exceptions:

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.
2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.
3. If the catcher is not making a play on a baserunner but the batter interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the runner advances safely, the umpire should call time and return the runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Batter-Runner Interference

SECTION 9. a. The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a fair ball,

contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory. For example:

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

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

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

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

Exceptions:

1. If the bat is out of the batter's hands (on the ground), the ball rolls against the bat, and in the umpire's judgment there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live, no one is out for interference, and base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.
 - (a) If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, it remains live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball.
 - (b) If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
2. If the batter, after contacting a fair ball, is still holding the bat in her hand(s) and is still within the batter's box when she contacts the ball a second time in fair territory, a foul ball is ruled; the ball is dead; and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
3. The batter may not throw the whole bat into fair territory and thereby interfere with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

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

Notes:

1. If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder, the ball remains live, and there is no interference.

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

Note: If both players' actions are appropriate to the situation and contact could not be avoided, it is inadvertent contact and neither interference nor obstruction. (A.R. 9-9.c: It is not interference if the batter-runner unintentionally kicks the ball which had deflected off the catcher who attempted to field a dropped third strike.)

- d. The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder's attempt to throw or to receive a thrown ball. For example:
1. The batter-runner may not slide into first base to interfere with the play or another runner, and
 2. The batter-runner may not run outside the runner's lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. *Exception:* The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coach Interference

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nongame Authorized Personnel Interference

SECTION 11. When a live batted or thrown ball accidentally hits nongame personnel (e.g., media, field attendants), the ball remains live. It is not interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming. No nongame personnel may intentionally interfere with a live batted or thrown ball (i.e., kick or push the ball). (See Rule 4-6.)

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

On-Deck Batter Interference

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

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

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

Runner Interference

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

1. The base runner may not contact a fair batted ball, while off base, before it touches a fielder or before it passes an infielder (other than the pitcher) who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
2. The base runner may not contact an untouched, fair batted ball after it passes an infielder if another fielder has a chance to make a play.
3. The base runner may not intentionally kick a ball that an infielder has missed.
4. Physical contact by the base runner with a fielder attempting to field a fair batted ball shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play and was prevented from doing so.

Note: If both players' actions are appropriate to the situation and contact could not be avoided, it is inadvertent contact and neither interference nor obstruction.

- (a) When the defensive player, while watching the flight of a ball, bumps a runner who is standing on a base and fails to make a catch on a catchable ball, the runner shall not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional. A runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. This is an exception to the rule that defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field without being hindered.

- (b) Merely running in front of the fielder or jumping over the ball while proceeding to the next base is not interference, even though it may be distracting to the fielder or screen her view of the ball. The runner may not at any time unnecessarily wave her arms or verbally distract the fielder.
- (c) It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to make a play, and the runner contacts the fielder. *Exception:* If the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact, interference or obstruction.
- (d) If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball, and that fielder only is entitled to protection.
- (e) Interference occurs when the ball ricochets off one defensive player, and another player still has the opportunity to make a play, but the runner intentionally interferes with the second fielder.

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

Exceptions:

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

EFFECT—The ball is dead, a foul ball is charged to the batter and the offending runner is out. Each other runner must return to the base touched at the time of the pitch. If the foul ball is a bunt attempt with two strikes on the batter, the batter is also declared out if there are less than two outs. If there are two outs at the time of the interference on the foul bunt, the at-bat is scored as a

fielder's choice. In either case, the first batter in the next inning is the batter who was in the on-deck circle at the time of the foul bunt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A.R. 9-13.e: Runners are on first and third bases with one out. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop who throws to second base for the second out. During the attempt to throw out the batter-runner, the runner who started on first base interferes with the throw. Meanwhile, the runner on third base has crossed home plate (before the interference). On the interference, the runner closest to home is called out (the batter-runner). Since the batter-runner is the third out, the run does not score.

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

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

Exceptions:

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

Notes:

- 1. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (within three feet), or return to the previous base touched.*
 - 2. Should an act of interference (offensive) occur after any obstruction (defensive), enforcement of the interference penalty would take precedence provided both violations involve the same base runner. For example, if an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out for interference.*
- g. It is not interference, and the runner is not out:**
- 1. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.**
 - 2. When the runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher) and, in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play. When said ball contacts the runner while still in flight it shall be considered a ground ball; it cannot be caught as a fly ball.**
 - 3. When the runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.**
 - 4. When a batted ball is misplayed, the ball bounds away or past the**

fielder, and then the fielder and runner collide. This is considered inadvertent contact.

5. When the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder.
6. When the runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball (that has not touched or passed a base) while standing in foul territory and no infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

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

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

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

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

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

Spectator Interference

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

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

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

Team (Offensive) Interference

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Umpire Interference

SECTION 16. Umpire interference occurs:

- a. When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equip-

ment, or clothing of an umpire before passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), or after passing an infielder (including the pitcher) but another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Obstruction

Obstruction

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

Notes:

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

EFFECT—Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner or not, obstruction shall be called and delayed dead ball signaled.

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

Note: If other runners are advancing and an umpire calls “Time” after an out on an obstructed runner (who did not reach the base she would have reached, in the umpire’s judgement, had she not been obstructed), the other runners would be awarded the next base provided they had advanced more than halfway to the next base. If not, they must return to the previous base unless forced to advance.

- b. An obstructed runner is still required to touch all bases in proper order, or she could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.
- c. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed unless one of the following occurs:
 1. The obstructed runner, after being obstructed, safely obtains the base she would have been awarded, in the umpire’s judgement, had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play on a different runner. The obstructed runner is no longer protected if she leaves the base.
 2. When another violation is being played upon.

A.R. 9-17.c.2. A runner who leaves second base too soon on a touched fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second and third base. If the runner would not have returned safely to second base before the throw arriving, she would remain out.
3. The obstructed runner commits an act of interference.
4. The obstructed runner passes another runner.
5. A proper appeal is made for leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched.
6. A proper appeal is made for missing a base.

A.R. 9-17.c.6. A runner who misses a base or leaves a base before a fly ball is first touched and is obstructed while advancing would not be protected when returning to the base missed or left too soon; however, she would be protected while trying to return to the base.

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

A.R. 9-17.f. A batter-runner rounds first base and is obstructed as she is returning to first base. At the same time, the throw from the outfield to second base is overthrown. The catcher picks the ball up and throws to second for the apparent put out of the batter-runner attempting to advance. **RULING:** The batter-runner is returned to first base because she was obstructed between first and second base and, because of the obstruction, is not liable to be put out.

Types of Obstruction

SECTION 18. Obstruction includes:

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached that base even if she missed it.

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

- (a) The batter is awarded first base and an error is charged to the catcher.
- (b) If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
Exception: If the catcher steps on or in front of home plate

or touches the batter or her bat while a pitched ball is on the way to the plate and there is a runner on third attempting to score on a squeeze play, each base runner advances one base without liability to be put out whether forced or not.

Notes:

1. *If a batter, during preliminary loosening-up swings, hits the catcher or the catcher's glove/mitt, the umpire should immediately call "Time" and not obstruction. The pitch or swing should not be allowed since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected. Catcher's obstruction involving a batter should be called only on the batter's attempt to make contact with the pitch.*
 2. *If an umpire requests a catcher to move farther away from the batter to avoid injury or obstruction, the catcher must comply.*
- b. **Fielder Obstruction.** 1. A fielder who is not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, shall not impede the batter, batter-runner or runner.
2. A fielder shall not fake a tag (a tag without the ball) on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

EFFECT (1-2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance. Also see Collisions (Rule 12-12).

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

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

each other runner forced to advance. The awards shall be to the base beyond the base where obstruction occurred unless the runner safely advances further on her own, in which case no award is given.

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

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

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

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

RULE 10

Pitching

Defensive Positioning Required for a Legal Pitch

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

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

Pitching Procedure

Taking the Signal from the Catcher

- SECTION 2. a. Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following:
1. Both feet must be on the ground in contact with the pitcher's plate and at least half of the pivot foot must be on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
 2. Shoulders must be in line with first and third base.
 3. Hands must be separated.
 4. The ball must be held and remain in one hand, either bare or gloved.

Note 1: Rolling (not tossing) the ball is legal as long as contact is maintained with the hand including the wrist.

Note 2: A ball dropped by the pitcher before her hands have come together and then separated shall be live and baserunner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.

5. The ball may be held in front of, at the side of or behind the body.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher must take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.
- c. After receiving the catcher's signal, the pitcher's hands must come together in view of the plate umpire for not more than five seconds.

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

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

Start of the Pitch

SECTION 3. The pitch officially begins and cannot be discontinued once the hands have separated after coming together.

Pitching

The pitching motion consists of the step/stride, the windup and the delivery. (See diagram at end of chapter.)

Step/Stride

- SECTION 4. a. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must push off with the pivot foot from the pitcher's plate and take one step/stride forward toward the batter and within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
- b. The rear, pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times before the forward step.
 - c. It is not a step when the pitcher turns her pivot foot to push off or slides her foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact with the plate is maintained. No rocking or lifting movement that pulls the foot off the pitcher's plate is allowed.
 - d. Having pushed off from the pitcher's plate, the rear, pivot foot must stay in contact with the ground without creating a second push-off point before the stride foot lands.
 1. No leaping is allowed. The pitcher may not become airborne on the initial drive from the pitcher's plate. The rear foot must slide/drag on the ground.

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

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

The Windup

SECTION 5. The windup phase of the pitch begins when the hands come together and ends when the hands separate. The pitcher may use any windup desired providing she does not, after having taken the signal and bringing her hands together:

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

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

Delivery

SECTION 6. The delivery phase of the pitch begins when the hands separate and ends with release of the pitch. In delivering the ball to the batter, the pitcher must comply with the following:

- a. Once the hands have separated and the pitching arm begins the clockwise motion that will result in the release of the pitch, not more than 1½ revolutions of the pitching arm may occur.
- b. The step/stride and delivery of the ball to the batter must take place simultaneously.
- c. The pitched ball must be released underhand.
 1. The hand must be below the hip.
 2. The wrist must not be farther from the hip than the elbow.
- d. The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- e. The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.

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

The Pitch

Dropped During Pitch

SECTION 7. a. When the ball is dropped by the pitcher before her hands have come together and then separated.

EFFECT—The ball is live. There is no penalty. Baserunner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.

b. When the ball accidentally slips from the pitcher's hand during the act of delivering the pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is live. A defensive player may retrieve the ball immediately as long as the batter does not have an opportunity to hit the ball. A ball is awarded to the batter. Baserunner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.

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

EFFECT—Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).

Illegal Pitch

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

EFFECT—The plate umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for the catcher and batter to hear. The base umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for nearby players to hear. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

Simultaneously, the umpire gives the delayed dead-ball signal and waits to call "Time" until the pitch has reached the plate, or the play has been completed.

1. If the batter reaches first base safely and each other runner advances at least one base, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached the base, whether missing the base or not.
2. If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any runner fails to advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team may choose the result of the play or the standard effect for an illegal pitch, which is that a ball is awarded to the batter, and each runner advances one base.
3. If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
4. If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.

The umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to both the pitcher and her coach if requested.

Quick Pitch

SECTION 9. A quick pitch, intended to catch the batter by surprise, shall be ruled to be "No pitch."

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

No Pitch

SECTION 10. "No pitch" shall be declared when:

- a. The pitcher pitches while play is suspended.
- b. A base runner is legitimately off base (i.e., after a foul ball), and the pitcher fails to allow sufficient time for the runner to return.
- c. The pitcher delivers a quick pitch.
- d. A runner is called out for leaving her base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- e. The batter is hit by a pitch out of the batter's box assuming she did not swing or attempt to bunt.

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

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

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

Regulations Governing Pitching Situations

Discontinuing a Pitch/Stepping Off the Pitcher's Plate

SECTION 11. a. The pitcher may legally remove herself from the pitching position by stepping backward (not forward or sideways) off the pitcher's plate before beginning the pitch.

- b. The pitch officially begins and cannot be legally discontinued once the hands have separated after coming together.

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

Ball Rotation

- SECTION 12. a. A minimum of two new game balls (one rubbed up by each team, so the manufacturer's gloss is removed) and three additional (new or game quality) balls are required at the start of a game. Once the game has started, additional balls must be furnished (as needed) by a home team or tournament representative. All game balls must be of the same specifications and manufacturer and meet the specifications of Rule 3-1.
- b. As a general rule, the current game ball is in play until such time as it leaves the playing field or is rejected by an umpire because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play. However, each pitcher shall have a choice of game balls at the start of her respective half-inning and may request a different ball at anytime.
1. If the pitcher does not like the ball she has, she must return it to the plate umpire before receiving a different ball.
 2. The pitcher may not hold more than one ball at a time for trial purposes.
 3. The game shall not be unduly delayed (e.g., to retrieve a particular ball that has been fouled away from the playing field).

Foreign Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher

SECTION 13. a. Under the supervision and within view of the umpire, a resin (any drying agent) may be used. If foreign substances (including resin) are applied, the pitcher's hands and fingers must be wiped off to avoid defacing the ball or transferring substances to the ball. No other player or member of team personnel may apply moisture or a foreign substance to the ball nor do anything else to deface the ball.

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

- b. The pitcher who brings a resin bag to the pitching circle is responsible for removing it each half inning as she leaves the field.
- c. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or thighs that an umpire considers distracting. This includes a batting glove, sweatband and loose lacing on a glove, or ball-colored logos. *Exception:* The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.
- d. Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a haz-

ard must be properly padded. In addition, any such device must be neutral in color so as not to be distracting and must function in a way that does not alter the natural motion of the pitching arm.

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

Intentionally Pitching at a Batter

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

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

Intentional Base on Balls

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

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

Returning a Pitched Ball to the Pitcher

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

Exceptions:

1. When there is a runner(s) on base.
2. When the batter becomes a runner.
3. After a strikeout.
4. After a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.
5. When a checked swing is appealed on a third strike.
6. When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.
7. An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

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

On the first offense, the offending player shall be warned. On subsequent offenses, the offender shall be ejected from the game. *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter.

Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher's Plate

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

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

EFFECT—Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).

Time Allowed Between Pitches

SECTION 18. The pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate and the batter in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." After both the pitcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has five seconds to begin her pitching motion.

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

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

Warm-Up Pitches Allowed

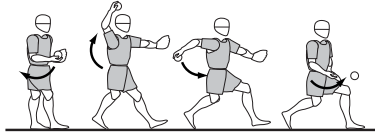
SECTION 19. a. At the beginning of each half-inning, the pitcher may throw not more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.

- b. After a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw not more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher shall not be allowed warm-up pitches if returning to pitch in the same half-inning.

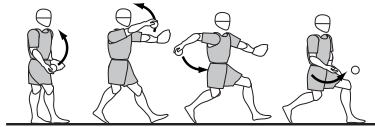
EFFECT (a-b)—A ball shall be awarded to the first batter faced for each excessive warm-up pitch.

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

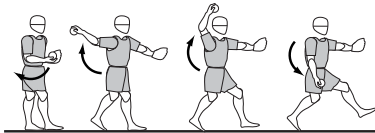
Legal Pitching Motions



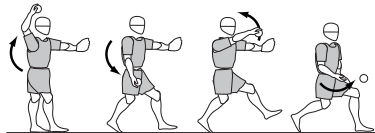
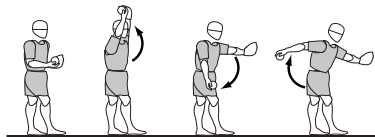
Straight Backswing



Straight Upswing



Rocker Windmill



Pendulum Windmill

RULE 11

Batting

Batter

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

On-Deck Batter

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

- b. The on-deck batter may have not more than two bats in the on-deck circle. The on-deck batter may loosen up with: one or two official softball bats; one approved warm-up bat; or one official softball bat and one approved warm-up bat.
- c. The warm-up bat used by the on-deck batter must meet the specifications of Rule 3-3.
- d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle to take her turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

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

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

Batting

Legal Position in the Batter's Box

SECTION 2. a. The batter must be in the batter's box and the pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." After both the pitcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has five seconds to begin her pitching motion.

EFFECT—If the batter does not comply, the ball is dead. A strike is called. If the pitch is the third strike, the batter is declared out.

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

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

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

EFFECT—A strike shall be called on the batter.

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

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

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

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

If the pitcher stops or hesitates in her delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box, holding up her hand or using any other action as if requesting time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. Since both the pitcher and batter have violated the rule, "No pitch" shall be declared.

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

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

- e. At the moment of bat-ball contact, the batter may not contact the pitch when any part of the foot is touching home plate, even though she may be touching the lines of the batter's box. In addition, the batter may not contact the pitch when an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box.

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

Notes:

1. *The batter's hands may leave the bat before bat-ball contact.*
2. *In cases where there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.*

Balls and Strikes

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

1. The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher.
 2. The pitch shall be judged a strike or a ball in relation to the batter's natural position as the pitch crosses home plate.
- b. **Called ball.** A ball is awarded to the batter:
1. When a legal pitch that is not struck at by the batter does not enter the strike zone on the fly, touches the ground before reaching home plate or touches home plate.

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

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

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

EFFECT—See Rule 10-8 (Illegal Pitch).

3. When the pitcher fails to deliver the ball to the batter within the allowable time.

EFFECT—See Rule 10-18.

4. For each excessive warm-up pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 10-19.

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

Exceptions:

- (a) When there is a runner(s) on base.
- (b) When the batter becomes a runner.
- (c) Following a strikeout.
- (d) Following a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.
- (e) When a checked swing is appealed on a third strike.
- (f) When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.
- (g) An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter, the ball is dead, and the runner(s) may not advance. On the first offense, the offending player shall be warned. On the second offense, the offender shall be ejected from the game. Exception: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter.

c. Called strike. A strike is charged to the batter:

1. For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground. The top of the ball must be on and within the horizontal plane and either side of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike.
2. For each legally pitched ball that is swung at by the batter and missed.

EFFECT (1-2)—The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

3. For each foul tip.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.

4. For each foul ball when the batter has fewer than two strikes.

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

5. When the batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

6. For each pitched ball that touches any part of the batter's person as she swings and misses.
7. For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter's person or clothing when she is in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.
8. For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.

EFFECT (6-8)—The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. Each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

9. When the batter fails to take her position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed to by the plate umpire.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown. Each runner must remain on the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Fair Ball

SECTION 4. A fair batted ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted. See Rule 1-40.

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

Foul Ball

SECTION 5. A foul fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted. See Rule 1-52.

Foul Tip

SECTION 6. a. A batted ball that travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher.

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

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

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

AR 11-6. A ball travels directly from the bat, in a straight line, to the glove or bare hand and is deflected straight up into the air. If the catcher then legally catches the ball without moving her feet forward or sideways it is a foul tip. If it is not caught by the catcher or the rebound is off a body part other than the catcher's glove or bare hand, it is a foul ball, not a foul tip.

Hits, Bunts, Slaps

SECTION 7. a. Hit. A hit is a legally batted fair ball.

1. No intent to contact the ball is necessary.
 2. The batter becomes a batter-runner as soon as she legally hits a fair ball.
 3. The ball is live.
 4. The batter is liable to be put out.
 5. Base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.
 6. If a fair-hit ball should touch a runner or umpire while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.
- b. **Bunt.** A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat.
1. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn — pulled backward away from the ball.
 2. On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third strike rule applies.
 3. If, with fewer than two strikes, the batter's attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike, and the ball is dead. With two strikes, the batter is declared out, and the ball is dead.
 4. A bunt that is caught in the air remains live and in play, regardless of the number of strikes on the batter, and whether it is fair or foul.
- c. **Slap.** A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

Regulations Governing Batting

Bat

SECTION 8. a. **Altered bat.** A batter shall not take an altered bat into the batter's box. Any bat that has been altered shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout). See Rule 1-1.

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

- b. **Broken bat.** When the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder, the ball remains live. It is not interference. If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
- c. **Illegal bat.** A batter shall not take an illegal bat into the batter's box. See Rules 1-58 and 3-2.
- d. **Non-approved bat.** A batter shall not take a non-approved bat into the batter's box. See Rules 1-77 and 3-2.

EFFECT (c-d)—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).

Exception: Advance is legal on a non-contacted pitch or ball four.

- e. **Thrown bat.** When a bat is thrown into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called.

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

Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing

SECTION 9. When a batted ball hits the batter or hits the dirt or home plate, and then hits the batter, the ball is dead immediately.

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

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

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

When the batter is:	And the batted ball is:	The effect is:
In the box	Fair or foul	Foul ball
Out of the box	Foul	Foul ball
Out of the box	Fair	Batter out

Batting Order

SECTION 10. The batting order that is delivered to the plate umpire must be followed throughout the game, except that a starting player may be replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the starting player in the batting order. In addition, the flex may bat for the designated player. The first batter listed on each team's lineup card shall lead off her respective team's half of the first inning. After the first inning, the first (lead-off) batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed her full turn at bat in the preceding inning. If the third out in an inning is made before a batter completes her turn at bat, she shall be the first batter in the next inning, and she shall start with a 0-0 count.

Batting Out of Order (See also Appendix B).

SECTION 11. a. A player is batting out of order when she fails to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

Batting Practice

SECTION 12. See Rule 5-3 (Pregame Practice) for specifications on batting practice.

Checked Swing

- SECTION 13. a. A pitched ball should be called a strike when it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.
- b. A pitched ball should be called a ball when the plate umpire is in doubt or blocked out, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.
- c. If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help, the plate umpire must ask for help.

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

Dropped Third Strike Rule

- SECTION 14. a. When with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground.

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

- b. When with two outs or fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground.

EFFECT—The ball is live, the batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

Hitting Ball a Second Time

- SECTION 15. a. The batter may not, after contacting a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

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

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

If the bat is out of the batter's hand(s) (on the ground), the ball

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

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

Hitting the Ball a Second Time

Batter	Bat	Batted Ball	Effect
In box	In hands	Fair or foul	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Fair	Batter out
Out of box	In hands	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Foul (intentional)	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Fair	Live
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Foul	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Fair	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (intentional)	Batter out

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

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must

return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Hit Batter (by Pitch)

SECTION 16. a. A batter is awarded first base when a pitched ball neither swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Runners may not advance unless forced.

Notes:

1. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.
2. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.
3. If a player swings and the ball hits her hands which sends it into fair territory, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter.

b. The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:

1. The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch or obviously tried to get hit by the pitch.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The batter is hit by a pitch out of the batter's box, assuming she did not swing or attempt to bunt.

EFFECT—"No Pitch."

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

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

Illegally Batted Ball

SECTION 17. An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter contacts the pitch and:

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

EFFECT (a-b)—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out immediately, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

- c. An altered bat is used.

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

- d. An illegal or non-approved bat is used.

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

Infield Fly Rule

SECTION 18. The infield fly rule is in effect when immediately declared by the umpire because the batter hits a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second base or all three bases are occupied, and there are fewer than two outs.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if the batted ball is fair.

Each runner may tag up and advance with the liability to be put out once the batted ball is touched (before it is caught), the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is dropped intentionally or allowed to fall untouched, the ball is live, and the batter-runner is out which removes all force plays, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. A runner need not retouch her base(s).

Notes:

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

Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball

SECTION 19. a. An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball. A ball that is trapped shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

- b. An infielder may not intentionally drop a fair fly ball, a line drive or a bunt when there are fewer than two outs and runners are on first; first and second; first and third; or first, second and third.

EFFECT (a-b)—The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule (see Rule 11-18) applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

Stepping Out of the Box

SECTION 20. a. The batter shall not step from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the pitching position.

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

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

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

- c. Once the pitcher has taken the sign and started her windup (brought her hands together and separated them), she must deliver the pitch, and the batter shall not leave her position in the batter's box.

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

If the pitcher stops or hesitates in her delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box, holding up her hand or using any other action as if requesting time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. Since both the pitcher and batter violated the rule, "No pitch" shall be declared.

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

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

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

Exceptions:

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.

2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.
3. If the catcher is not making a play on a baserunner but the batter interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the runner advances safely, the umpire should call time and return the runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

Batter is Out

SECTION 21. The batter is out when:

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

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

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

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

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

EFFECT (c-d)—If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal or non-approved bat, the bat shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters the batter's box with an altered bat, the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed, in addition to the batter being ejected from the game.

Exception: Advance is legal on a non-contacted pitch or ball four.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- j. The batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory (See Rule 11-15).

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

the batter's hand(s), a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.

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

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

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

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

- l. The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. Runners may tag and advance with liability to be put out.

If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- m. The batter's third strike is a foul tip.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Runners may advance without tagging but with liability to be put out.

- n. A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- o. The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is occupied.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- p. A pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person, including her hands, as she swings and misses for a third strike.

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

- q. The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

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

- r. The batter hinders the catcher or any fielder from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or intentionally hinders a player (e.g., on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

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

Exceptions:

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.
 2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.
 3. If the catcher is not making a play on a baserunner but the batter interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the runner advances safely, the umpire should call time and return the runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.
- s. The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

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



RULE 12

Base Running

Batter-Runner

Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner

SECTION 1. The batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out:

- a. When with two outs or fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground. (See Rule 11-14.)

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out; the ball is live; and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- b. After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- c. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).

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

- d. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT (a-d)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

Base Awards

In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for baserunning violations.

SECTION 2. a. **First base.** The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

1. After "ball four."

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. The batter may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

2. After catcher obstruction (see Rule 9-18.a for details and effect).
3. After being hit by a pitch (see Rule 11-16 for details and effect).
4. When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching a fielder (including the pitcher) or before passing a fielder (other than a pitcher).
5. When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), but another fielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT (4-5)—The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

6. When a runner intentionally kicks the ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and the runner is out. Each other runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

7. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher) who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
8. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT (7-8)—In general, the ball is dead, and the batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.

If off base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is out, and each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base she legally touched at the time of the interference. If forced, each other runner advances one base without liability to be put out. The ball is dead.

If on base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is not out. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. If the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If forced, each runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- b. **Second base.** The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:
1. When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.
 2. When a fair batted ball bounces over, wedges under or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field, or becomes blocked.
 3. When a fair batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.
 4. When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory (excluding a ball deflected over the home-run fence in fair territory), or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT (1-4)—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and is credited with a two-base hit (double). Each other base runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- c. **Third base.** The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:
1. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.
 2. When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, might become fair.

EFFECT (1-2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter is awarded third base and credited with a three-base hit (triple), but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner is awarded home plate.

- d. **Home plate.** The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:
1. When a fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.
 2. An illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home-run fence in flight.

Note: The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

EFFECT (1-2)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.

- e. **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate when a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes her.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18).

- f. **Two bases.** When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

Batter-Runner Is Out

SECTION 3. The batter-runner is out:

- a. When she hits a fair ball and is legally put out before reaching first base.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

- b. When she hits a fair or foul ball, other than a foul tip, and it is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.
- c. When she is legally put out before reaching first base when the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out.

EFFECT (b-c)—The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- d. When she does not proceed to first base after a fair batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- e. When she does not proceed to first base after:
 - 1. A base on balls.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- 2. Being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary medical treatment.) Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- 3. Catcher obstruction (see Rule 9-18.a).

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.

- f. When, after reaching a base safely, a batter-runner or runner(s) abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout (e.g., believing she was put out), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—The ball is live, the batter-runner or runner(s) is out, and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- g. When she hits an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect. (See infield fly rule, Rule 11-18.)

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

- h. When either of her feet is completely outside the runner's lane, in contact with the ground, and, in the judgment of the umpire, she interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. *Exception:* She may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

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

- i. When, with fewer than two outs and first, first and second, first and third, or first, second and third bases are occupied, an infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive which could have been caught with ordinary effort.

Note: An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped. A ball that has been guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* The batter is not out when the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it takes precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

- j. When she runs the bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

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

- k. When she steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

- l. When she interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out.

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

- m. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box, makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base or interferes with a dropped third strike.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner being played on also shall be called out.

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

- n. When the immediate preceding runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play.

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

- o. When, after hitting a home run, providing her team previously was warned for a first offense, the individual is touched by any member of the offensive team other than the base coaches, before touching home plate.

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

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

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

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

Base Runner(s)

Base Runner May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out

SECTION 4. A runner may advance with liability to be put out:

- a. When a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand (whether pitched or dropped).
- b. After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- c. After a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).
- d. After a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.
- e. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- f. When a pitched or thrown ball hits an umpire.
- g. When a pitched or thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.
- h. When a foul tip is legally caught.

Note: No tag-up is necessary.

- i. When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.

EFFECT (a-i)—The ball is live.

Base Runner Awards

In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for baserunning violations.

SECTION 5. In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

- a. **One base.** A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:
 1. If forced to vacate a base because of a one-base award to the batter.

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances one base if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

2. When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, provided the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is awarded a ball. If the pitch is “Ball four” or the batter is hit by the illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base.

3. When a pitched ball is blocked (i.e., lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball. Each runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

4. When a live ball is carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory (“catch and carry”).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.

5. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead-ball area or becomes blocked.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked.

b. **Two bases.** A base runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

1. If forced to vacate a base because of a two-base award to the batter.

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances two bases if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

2. When a fair ball deflects off a defensive player and enters dead-ball territory.
3. When a fair ball deflects off a runner or umpire and enters dead-ball territory after having passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), provided no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT (2-3)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner and each other runner are awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

Exceptions:

1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead-ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball became blocked.

Note: If a runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.

2. If the ball becomes blocked because of offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead, and each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, the runner being played on is called out. (If this player has scored before the blocked ball was ruled, the runner closest to home is called out.)
5. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.

- c. **Two or three bases** (see Rule 9-18.c for details and effect).
- d. **Home plate.** A base runner is entitled to advance to home plate with no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three- or four-base award to the batter.
- e. **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:
 1. When a fielder not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball fakes a tag without the ball or impedes her.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violations by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18).

Notes:

1. *Base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.*
2. *An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed. For exceptions, see Rule 9-17.c.*
2. No spectator(s) shall reach out of the stands or enter the field and interfere with a play. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator. *Exception:* It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence.

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

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

Base Runner Forfeits Exemption From Liability to Be Put Out

SECTION 6. A base runner forfeits exemption from liability to be out:

- a. If, after making the turn at or overrunning first base, the batter-runner feints or attempts to continue to second base.
- b. If, after dislodging a base, the runner attempts to reach the next base.
- c. If, while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball, if she is standing on a base beyond the base she missed, or left too soon when "Time" has been called.

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

- d. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching an awarded base, attempts to advance farther.
- e. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching base safely, abandons her base (e.g., obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another batter/runner was put out to end the inning).

Base Runner Is Out

SECTION 7. The base runner is out:

- a. When, on a force play, a fielder (1) contacts the base while holding the ball, (2) touches the ball to the base, or (3) tags the runner before she reaches the base.
- b. If the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

Exceptions:

1. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Other runners may advance with liability to be put out.

2. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides may immediately return without liability to be put out, provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second.
3. When a runner reaches a base safely but the tag is applied with excessive force which causes the runner to lose contact with the base.
- c. When she physically passes (i.e. completely overtakes) a preceding runner before that runner has been put out, **unless the passed runner was obstructed.**

Note: If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding runner would count.

A.R. 12-7.c: With fewer than two outs, if a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding runner, the batter is out, but all preceding runners score. With two outs, only those preceding runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. This is a timing play, not an appeal play.

- d. When, after play has resumed, she fails to return to touch the base she previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.
- e. When anyone, other than another runner who has not yet crossed the plate, physically assists her while the ball is in play.
- f. When she is running to any base in regular or reverse order, and she attempts to avoid or delay a tag by running out of the basepath.

EFFECT (a-f)—The ball is live. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

Exception: It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the runner's proper path, and the runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

- g. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the runner being played on shall also be called out.

Notes:

1. *If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make a play, the runner will be ruled out if she intentionally interferes with the second fielder.*
 2. *If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play, and only that fielder is protected from interference by the runner. The runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.*
- h. When she is struck with a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out. If the runner is off a base and hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when hit by an infield fly, she is not out.

- i. When the umpire rules intentional interference (with the ball or fielder making the play) as she is struck by a batted ball while in contact with a base.
- j. When she intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT (i- j)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

- k. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.
- l. When a coach, while in the coach's box, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

Note: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live and in play.

- m. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and draws a throw to home plate.

EFFECT (k-m)—The ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

- n. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player.

Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall also be ejected.

- o. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

Note: Members of a team include all persons authorized to be in the team's dugout.

EFFECT (n-o)—The ball is dead. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

- p. When she leaves the base she is occupying before the pitch is released.
- q. When a runner is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, she fails to immediately return to her base or attempt to advance to the next base.
- r. When, once she returns to a base for any reason, she leaves the base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

EFFECT (p-r)—The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- s. When, after reaching a base safely, she abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another batter runner was put out to end the inning.
- t. When a runner uses a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

EFFECT (s-t)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

Base Runner Is Out After a Proper Appeal

SECTION 8. The base runner is out after a proper appeal:

- a. When she fails to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the runner or the missed base may be tagged.

Note: No runner may return to touch a missed base after a trailing runner has scored or after leaving the field of play.

- b. When she fails to retouch her base before a fielder tags her or the base, after a fair or foul ball is legally caught.
- c. When she leaves her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball first touches the fielder. Either the runner or the base may be tagged.

Notes:

1. *Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.*
 2. *No runner may return to touch a base which she left too soon if she has left the field of play or if a trailing runner has scored.*
- d. When she legally overruns first base, but attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
 - e. When, after a conference, base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied, the ball has been put back in play, and before the end of the half inning.

EFFECT—Each runner on the improper base shall be declared out and ejected. In addition, the head coach shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike behavior.

Base Runner Is Not Out

SECTION 9. The base runner is not out:

- a. When she is hit with a fair batted ball over foul territory, and, in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When she is hit with a fair, batted ball that has passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- c. When she is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.

- d. When she is hit by a batted ball while touching her base, unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- e. When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- f. When she fails to return to a base at the end of playing action because she is not given sufficient time. She will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. "No pitch" will be called by the umpire.
- g. When she keeps contact with her base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- h. When she has legally started to advance. She may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, nor by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.
- i. When she does not run in a direct line to a base, provided a fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
- j. When she runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
- k. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.
- l. When she slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
- m. When she is touched while off a base:
 - 1. With a ball not securely held by a fielder.
 - 2. With a hand or glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player's other hand.
- n. When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
- o. When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove/mitt.
- p. When she returns to a base left too soon or missed before an appeal being made, or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

Regulations Governing Base Running

Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases

SECTION 10. No batter-runner or runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

- a. Not proceeding to first base after a fair batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- b. Not proceeding to first base after a base on balls.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- c. Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary medical treatment.) Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced.

- d. Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction (see Rule 9-18.a).

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the coach elects to take the result of the play, the batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.

- e. After reaching a base safely, obviously heading toward her position or the dugout (e.g., believing she was put out, the batted ball was foul, etc.), or leaving the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner or runner(s) is out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

Catch and Carry

SECTION 11. A fielder may not catch or field a live ball and carry it into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded one base, without liability to be put out, from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory. *Exception:* If the ball is a legally caught fly ball, the batter is out.

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally kicks, pushes, pitches or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory, the ball is dead, and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

Notes: When a line is used to determine dead-ball (out-of-play) territory, the line is considered in play.

1. If a fielder's foot is touching the line or is in live-ball territory, she is considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball with no effect.
2. If a player's entire foot is beyond the line and touching dead-ball territory at the time she catches, fields or throws the ball, she has entered dead-ball territory, no play is allowed, and the effect is applied.
3. If a player has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, she legally may catch, field or throw the ball until and unless her entire foot contacts the ground in dead-ball territory, at which time the ball becomes dead, no play is allowed, and the effect is applied.
4. If a player contacts dead-ball territory with any part of the body, including the foot, she is considered out of play. No play is allowed, and the effect is applied.

Collisions

SECTION 12. The rules committee is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions with the catcher at home plate and with infielders at all bases. The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions, whenever possible.

- a. A defensive player shall not block the base, plate or baseline without possession of the ball or not in the immediate act of catching the ball.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Obstruction is called and the runner is declared safe. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. *Exception:* If

the base runner collides flagrantly, the ball is dead and although the runner is declared safe on the obstruction call, the player is ejected.

- b. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if she remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the runner's lane, the runner would be called out) or return to the previous base touched.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The runner is called out for deliberately crashing into a fielder, even if the ball is dislodged. If the runner deliberately crashed into a fielder holding the ball before she was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the offender and player being played on shall both be declared out. If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out. If an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out.

Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected.

- c. Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

Note: If both the fielder and base runner are within their legal rights, neither player shall be penalized for the incidental contact.

EXAMPLES:

A.R. 12-12.c.1: The right-handed batter who lays down a bunt in front of home plate is on a collision course with the catcher if she runs in a direct line to first base. Each player at this point is within legal rights — the batter taking a path in a direct line to first base, and the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball. The questions that have to be answered are: (1) Did the batter alter direction in any way and draw contact in an attempt to receive an obstruction call? (2) Did the catcher alter her attempt to field the ball in any way so as to draw an interference call? and (3) Could the catcher actually make an out on the play?

A.R. 12-12.c.2: The batter-runner collides with the first baseman who is attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line (toward home plate). The runner has a right to the base line in this case, and the first baseman has the right to field an errant thrown ball. This is the result of the “normal” flow of the game, and the play should be ruled incidental contact with no effect.

Dislodged Base

SECTION 13. a. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- b. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs.
- c. At the conclusion of play, "Time" shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

Fake Tag

SECTION 14. A fake tag occurs when a fielder who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag which causes the runner to slow down or stop. A fielder may not fake a tag on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner, or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance.

Hit by a Batted Ball

SECTION 15. An umpire or base runner is considered hit by a batted ball when the ball contacts his/her person, attached equipment or clothing:

- a. When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is struck by a fair batted ball after it has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is unavoidably struck by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by a fielder

(including the pitcher), and no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT (a-b)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

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

- c. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, she is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or the fielder making a play. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.

EFFECT—If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the closest defensive player is behind the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, credited with a base hit, and each other runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the runner are out. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

- d. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and (1) before the ball touches an infielder, including the pitcher, (2) before the ball passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play, or (3) after passing an infielder, including the pitcher, and another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—Runner interference.

The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out.

If the runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when struck by an infield fly, she is not out.

e. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

f. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball over foul territory and, in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live and in play. The runner who was struck and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

Illegal Glove/Mitt Used to Make a Play on Batter, Batter-Runner or Runner

SECTION 16. A fielder shall not make a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove or mitt.

EFFECT—The coach of the offended team shall have the option to:

a. Nullify the entire play.

1. The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the pitch and continues her turn at bat.

2. Each runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

b. Take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.

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

Note: If the illegal glove/mitt does not meet specifications (see Rule 3-7), it shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).

Leading Off Base

SECTION 17. Once a runner returns to a base for any reason, she may not

leave the base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with her base at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. *Exception:* When the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a runner to return to a base, the runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, “No pitch” is declared, and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Look-Back Rule

SECTION 18. a. The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base, there are one or more runners, and the pitcher has possession (that is, holds the ball in her hand or gloved hand) and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both her feet are within the circle or on the lines.

- b. When a runner is legally off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and she is in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner may continue moving forward in the direction she is going without stopping; or she may immediately and directly go back in the other direction. If the runner is stopped as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner must immediately and directly go forward or back. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a base hit as long as the batter-runner continues past first base.
- c. Once the runner has determined a direction, she may not reverse direction unless the pitcher:
1. Throws the ball from within the pitcher's circle.
 2. Carries the ball outside the pitcher's circle.
 3. Has one foot completely outside the pitcher's circle, on the ground, and is in possession of the ball.
 4. Sets the ball on the ground or no longer has the ball in her hand or gloved hand.
 5. Loses possession of the ball, including handing it to another player.
 6. Makes a play on the runner or another runner.

Note: When the pitcher's circle is not visible, the umpire must use good judgement.

- d. The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

1. She fakes a throw.

Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher's arm moves forward.

2. She makes any aggressive body movement toward the base runner (e.g., steps toward the runner, head and body fakes toward the runner).
- e. There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the runner to comply with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the runner.
- f. When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:
 1. A runner standing off her base must immediately return to the base she last occupied or advance to the next base.
 2. A runner who starts back to the base she last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.
 3. The batter-runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.
 4. The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.
 5. The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return non-stop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, she must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the runner is heading back toward first within the basepath extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended basepath in foul territory commits the runner to first base while stepping beyond the basepath toward the second-base side commits the runner to second base.

EFFECT (1-5)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two runners are off base and both runners are called out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first as it is not possible to obtain more than one out under the look-back rule. The ball is dead when the first runner is called out, and the other runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.

Missing a Base (Missing a base is an appeal play. See Rule 7-1.a.)

SECTION 19. a. A runner must touch each base in order when she is advancing or returning to a base and the ball is in play. Missing a base is an appeal play. The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.

- b. A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
 - 1. If a runner misses home plate and the fielder misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire should make a safe signal and declare "No tag." If an appeal play is made (i.e., by tagging either the runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.
 - 2. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
- c. An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.
- d. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. *Exception:* A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- e. A runner may not return to touch a missed base if:
 - (1) She has left the field of play;
 - (2) A trailing runner has scored;
 - (3) She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed, and "Time" has been called by the umpire; or
 - (4) The ball becomes dead.

Note: If the runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, she can continue.
- f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch a base (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order.
- g. Any runner, who misses the first base to which she is advancing and who is later called out, shall be considered as having advanced one base.

Occupying Bases

- SECTION 20. a. A runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner.
- b. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it, unless forced to

advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball or glove/mitt holding the ball.

Note: If a runner is being run down between bases and the trailing runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner, however, returns safely to the base she left and both runners then are occupying the same base, the second runner is out if touched with the ball.

- c. A runner, who is touching a base when “Time” is called, may not advance nor return during the suspension of play.

Overrunning or Oversliding Bases

SECTION 21. a. When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher’s circle, the batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return non-stop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, she must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the runner is heading back toward first within the basepath extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended basepath in foul territory commits the runner to first base while stepping beyond the basepath toward the second-base side, commits the runner to second base.

- b. If the runner feints or makes an attempt to advance to second, she may be tagged out (while she is off base) by a defensive player with the ball. This is an appeal play. (See Rule 7-1.a.)
- c. A batter-runner or runner may round a base and go directly to the next base without stopping. If, however, she stops after rounding a base, and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher’s circle, she must comply with the look-back rule.

Note: A batter, who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike, is treated the same as if she batted the ball.

- d. A runner may overrun or overslide home plate after legally touching it without liability to be put out.

EFFECT (b-d)—This is an appeal play. (See Rule 7-1.a.)

Pick-Off Attempt

SECTION 22. On a decision regarding a pick-off attempt, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with his/her partner.

Running Out of the Base Line or Out of the Runner’s Lane

SECTION 23. a. The traditional path traveled by a runner, who is

attempting to advance to the next base, is defined by the imaginary direct line, and three feet to either side of the line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The offending runner is out, but each other runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out.

Exceptions:

1. A runner is not out when she runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base line in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
 2. The runner is not out when she fails to run in a direct line to a base provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
- b. The batter-runner shall not run outside the runner's lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. This is an interference violation.

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

Exceptions:

1. The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
2. The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to touch the base on the last stride.
3. The infraction is ignored if the act does not interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

Notes:

1. *The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is in contact with the ground and is completely outside either line.*
2. *A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

Tag and Force Plays

SECTION 24. a. A batter-runner or runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand(s) or glove/mitt holding the ball.

Exceptions:

1. A batter-runner, who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides it, may immediately return without liability to be put out provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second.
 2. When a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
 3. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.
- b. A batter-runner is out when she legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
 - c. A batter-runner or runner is considered forced out if she must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another base runner, but:
 1. She is legally tagged before she reaches the forced base.
 2. The fielder, while holding the ball, contacts the base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.
 3. The fielder touches the ball to the forced base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.
 - d. The runner is out if she is off base when a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught, and she fails to retouch the base (occupied at the time of the pitch) before a fielder tags her or the base.
 - e. If an appeal is upheld at a base to which a runner was forced to advance and the out is a force out, no runs would score if it was the third out. If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.
 - f. It is still a force out when a runner misses a base to which she was forced to advance and is subsequently appealed after the batter-runner or a trailing runner has been retired.

Note: There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner.

- g. The batter-runner or runner is not out:

1. When touched while off a base with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.

2. When touched while off a base with a fielder's hand or glove/mitt when the ball is in the fielder's other hand.
3. When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt.
4. When an improper live-ball appeal is made. (See Appeals, Rule 7-1.)

Tagging Up after a Caught Fly Ball

SECTION 25. a. The initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch. A base runner is out if she leaves her base too soon. Either the runner or the base (left too soon) may be tagged. This is an appeal play.

- b. An appeal must be upheld even if the base left too soon was before or after an award. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.
- c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order.
Exception: A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- d. A runner may not return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball if: (1) she has left the field of play; (2) a trailing runner has scored; (3) she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon, and "Time" has been called by the umpire; or (4) the ball becomes dead.

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

- e. The failure of a preceding runner to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.
- f. If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a time play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.
- g. A runner may not use a running start from a position behind and not in contact with a base.

EFFECT—The ball is live and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.

Touching the Bases

SECTION 26. a. An advancing runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home). All awarded bases must also be touched, and in legal order.

Note: Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in legal order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

- b. Bases missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing. However, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one she has left too soon on a caught fly ball: (1) once she has left the field of play, (2) once a trailing runner has scored, (3) when she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon and “Time” has been called by the umpire, or (4) when the ball becomes dead.

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

- c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. *Exception:* A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.

EFFECT (a-c)—For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the runner is out if, before she reaches each untouched base, she is legally tagged. If the base is one to which the runner is forced, she is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base she failed to touch (including home plate).

Notes:

1. When a runner does not touch home plate and does not make an attempt to touch it, the fielder may touch either the runner or home plate. When a runner misses home plate and the fielder misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire should make a safe signal and declare “No tag.” When a proper appeal play is made, the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.
2. When a runner is legally returning to tag up after a caught fly ball, the runner can be put out by being tagged, or by the defense touching the base the runner occupied at the time of the pitch. Each other runner may advance or return with liability to be put out.

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

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

- e. The batter-runner may not step back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

- f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch or retouch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

- g. When a runner has legally started to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's plate or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.

- h. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, "Time" shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

- i. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, she is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

EFFECT—The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of the fielder. For example, if a runner is

being run down between bases and the trailing runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner returns safely to the base she left and both runners are then occupying the same base, the second runner is out, if touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

- j. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the runner to return to her base, and the base runner is obligated to return to her base without undue delay.

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

When the ball is dead, the ball will not be put in play until each runner has retouched her base. However, a runner may be declared out if, after being allowed a reasonable amount of time, she fails to retouch the base.

- k. Should “Time” be called while a runner is touching a base, she may not advance during a suspension of play.

RULE 13

Misconduct

The highest standards of good sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Code of Conduct.

Ejection/Suspension

Ejected Player/Coach/Personnel

SECTION 1. a. Umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for just cause. The on-site administrator shall make him/herself available to assist the umpire crew as requested.

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

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

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

EFFECT—Subsequent violation by the same player shall result in a game forfeit.

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

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

Warning/Ejection

Unsportsmanlike Behavior

SECTION 2. No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere:

- a. Incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators.
- b. Use profanity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.
- c. Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials.

EFFECT (a-c)—The offender shall be ejected with or without a warning.

Note: An ejected coach may participate in a limited capacity during a game only to attend to an injured or ill player or to ensure the safety of players when their safety is in question.

- d. Call "Time" or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher throw an illegal pitch. If an illegal pitch is thrown, it shall be declared "No pitch."

EFFECT—"No pitch" (see Rule 10-8.f) and warning. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the offender(s) being ejected from the game.

- e. Take a position in the batter's line of vision or act in any manner to distract the batter.

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

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

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

- f. No fielder shall position herself in the runner's line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit her from seeing the release of the pitch.

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

Equipment Abuse

SECTION 3. a. No player or coach shall deliberately throw or kick a piece of equipment as a result of disgust or frustration.

EFFECT—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual, unless the umpire judges the act to be so flagrant that the offender shall be ejected without warning. Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender.

- b. No player or coach shall use equipment in any way other than what is intended by the manufacturer (i.e., banging bats and balls in a dugout).

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending head coach. Any subsequent violation shall result in the abused equipment being removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).

Intentionally Pitching at a Batter (Pitcher)

SECTION 4. A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter.

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

Use of Video Equipment

SECTION 5. a. Team personnel shall not use television monitoring or replay equipment during a contest.

b. Recording video from one's own team dugout is permissible.

Exception: For NCAA championship play, the respective NCAA divisional softball committees may elect to prohibit video taping from the dugout, provided it is formally declared before the start of the championship round.

c. Electronic equipment may be used to record only games in which the team is a participant.

Exception: A team may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game which is or will be televised.

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

Use of Tobacco Products

SECTION 6. a. The use of tobacco products by student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers is prohibited while on site for practice and competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens, dugouts and the pressbox (or official scorer's area) are considered to be on site.

EFFECT—Student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers who use tobacco products during practice or competition shall be ejected for the remainder of that practice or competition.

Notes:

1. *During regular-season play, it is the responsibility of each institution to enforce the rule for its athletes and game personnel.*
2. *During postseason championship play (regional and championship competition in Divisions I, II and III), umpires shall enforce the tobacco rule. During pretournament meetings, the divisional softball committee shall remind all postseason participants that the rule and penalties (ejection) shall be enforced by game officials.*

b. Umpires, scorers and other game personnel are prohibited from using tobacco products from the commencement of pregame activities until they leave the competition site.

EFFECT—If observed by the umpire or on-site administrator, the offender

shall be directed to immediately dispose of the tobacco product. Failure to comply when directed shall result in ejection.

Use of Artificial Noisemakers

SECTION 7. The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers is prohibited while on site for competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site.

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual. Any subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection. If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning.

Coaches

SECTION 8. Any act of unprofessional behavior that discredits intercollegiate athletics or softball will not be tolerated. Serious misconduct which requires intervention by athletics administration includes:

- Refusal to continue to play because of a dispute with the game officials.
- Physical contact with game officials (or any threat of physical intimidation or harm, including pushing, shoving, spitting, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact).
- Physical abuse of opponents (e.g., any physical abuse of opposing players and coaches, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment in a combative manner).
- Leaving a team area (i.e., dugout, bullpen) or coach's box in order to join a brawl or potential fight.

EFFECT (a-e)—The coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring).

The plate umpire and the offending head coach are each responsible for submitting an incident report (see Appendix C), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty, while serving a suspension.

Exceptions:

1. A coach involved in a fight who was defending himself/herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
2. If a coach makes physical contact with an opponent in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, he/she shall not be ejected or suspended.

Players

SECTION 9. The NCAA Softball Rules Committee believes there is no place in intercollegiate softball for physical abuse of officials or fighting among opponents.

- a. Physical contact with game officials or any threat of physical intimidation or harm, including pushing, shoving, spitting, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact.
- b. Fighting is any physical abuse of an opposing player, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment, in a combative manner.
- c. Leaving a team area (i.e. dugout, bullpen) or player's appropriate playing area (if on the field) in order to join a brawl or potential fight.

EFFECT (a-c)—Participants who fight or who physically contact an official or abuse an opponent shall be ejected from the game and serve a suspension. For a first offense, the individual shall serve a one-game suspension. For a second offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall serve a four-game suspension. For a third offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition (if applicable).

The plate umpire and the head coach of the offending team(s) are each responsible for submitting an incident report (see Appendix C), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident.

The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty, while serving a suspension.

Exceptions:

1. A player involved in a fight who was defending herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
 2. If a player makes physical contact with another player in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, she shall not be ejected or suspended.
- d. While coaches are responsible for the actions of their players, cooperation is needed from players, coaches, administrators and game officials to prevent incidents.

Crowd Control

Crowd Control

SECTION 10. The responsibility for crowd control rests with the director of athletics and the on-site administrator of the host institution. The on-site administrator shall be prepared to utilize the public-address system at the first sign of poor sportsmanship and request cooperation in maintaining proper playing conditions. In addition, the host shall ensure that the public-address announcement regarding sportsmanship is read, at a minimum, between the national anthem and the first pitch. (See Rule 5-9.)

Profanity, racial, sexist or sexual comments or intimidating actions, directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches, spectators or other team representatives will not be tolerated. Individuals making such remarks shall be removed from the site of competition.

Artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers shall not be permitted, and such instruments shall be removed from the spectator areas by the games management personnel.

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

RULE 14

Scoring

Note: Failure of an official scorer to adhere to Rule 14 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for the official scorer.

Official Scorer

SECTION 1. The home team, conference commissioner or tournament director shall appoint and identify (at the pregame meeting) an official scorer for each game. The official scorer shall be responsible for the following:

- a. The official scorer shall record in writing the inning, score, number of outs, runners' position and count on the batter throughout the game.
- b. The official scorer shall have sole authority to make all decisions involving scoring judgment. The scorer shall be objective and shall score for both teams in a similar manner.
- c. The official scorer shall have a current copy of the NCAA Softball Rules at the game and shall know the rules pertinent to his/her responsibilities (e.g., illegal re-entry, unreported substitution, designated player).
- d. The official scorer shall sit in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout) whenever possible.
- e. The official scorer's decision shall be communicated to both teams and members of the media present.
- f. The official scorer shall inform the public-address announcer of all substitutions recorded and relayed by the umpire.
- g. The official scorer's decision shall be in agreement with the NCAA Softball Rules and the umpire's decision. The scorer shall have the authority to rule on any scoring matter not specifically covered in the rules.
- h. The official scorer shall notify the umpire immediately if the teams attempt to change sides before three outs are recorded in one half of an inning.

- i. The official scorer shall notify an umpire immediately in the bottom of an inning if the home team has enough runs to win by the eight-run rule.
- j. The official scorer shall not notify an umpire, if the offensive team is batting out of order or if either team has an unreported substitution or an illegal player. This is the responsibility of the opposing team.

Note: In the unfortunate circumstance that the official scorer is in the team dugout, he/she may communicate with his/her own team. At all other times, information gained outside the dugout shall not be communicated into the dugout.

- k. If the game is protested or halted, the official scorer shall make note in writing of the exact situation at the time of the interruption. The inning, score, number of outs, runners' position and count on the batter shall be recorded.

Scoring Terms

SECTION 2. a. **Assist:** Credit given to a defensive player when she handles or effectively deflects the ball during action that is connected with a putout.

- b. **At-Bat:** A plate appearance that does not include sacrifices, hit by pitch, base on balls, gaining first base by interference, obstruction, or an incomplete turn at bat.

- c. **Base Hit:** A batted ball that permits the batter to reach first base safely because of a fair hit; because a runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball or because the umpire is hit by a batted ball; when a fielder attempts to put out a preceding runner but is unsuccessful, although there is no fielding error and the official scorer believes the batter-runner would have reached first base with perfect fielding; when a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that any fielder attempting to make a play has no opportunity to do so. A hit shall be scored even if the fielder deflects the ball from or cuts off another fielder who could have put out a runner.

- d. **Base on Balls (Walk):** An award of first base granted by the umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, receives four pitches that are declared balls.

- e. **Batters Faced:** A statistic kept for each pitcher that indicates the number of opposing batters who make plate appearances.

- f. **Caught Stealing:** Action of a runner who is thrown out by the catcher as she attempts to steal a base.

- g. **Double Play:** A play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between the putouts.
- h. **Error:** A misplay charged to a defensive player when it is judged by the official scorer to have prolonged the time at bat (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) of an offensive player or contributed to an offensive player being declared safe.
- i. **Extra-Base Hit:** A hit that allows the batter-runner to safely advance past first base without an error or indifference by a defensive player. It may be a double, triple or home run.
- j. **Fielder's Choice:** A fielder's attempt to put out a base runner rather than the batter when a throw to first base would have put out the batter.
- k. **Force Out:** A putout in which a runner, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder holding the ball and touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance.
- l. **Game-Winning Run Batted In:** The run batted in that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.
- m. **Games Started:** Credit given to the players listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game, whether or not they actually pitch, field or bat.
- n. **Games Played:** Credit given to starting players and their substitutes reported in the game, as recorded on the umpire's official game lineup card.
- o. **Illegal Pitch:** Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.
- p. **Intentional Base on Balls (Intentional Walk):** An award of first base granted by the umpire to a batter who, during her time at bat, received a fourth ball which the pitcher intentionally threw outside the strike zone. An intentional base on balls also is referred to as an intentional walk.
- q. **Left on Base:** A runner legally occupying a base at the end of a half-inning. This includes a batter-runner whose batted ball results in another runner being the third out.
- r. **Passed Ball:** A pitched ball that the catcher can reasonably be expected to catch but misses, resulting in a base runner advancing.
- s. **Pick-Off:** Credit given to the catcher for a throw behind a runner that catches that runner off base and results in an out.

- t. **Plate Appearance:** Anytime a batter completes a turn at bat. *Exception:* When a batter leaves the game with two strikes and the substitute batter strikes out, the substitute receives credit for the game played but neither a plate appearance nor a time at bat. The first batter is credited with a game played, plate appearance, at bat and strikeout.
- u. **Putout:** Credit given to a defensive player for retiring a batter or base runner.
- v. **Run:** The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.
- w. **Run Batted In:** Credit given to the batter for each run that scores as a result of: a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a double play, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded.
- x. **Sacrifice:** Credit given to a batter who, with fewer than two outs, advances one or more runners by bunting or slapping and is called out at first base or would have been called out had no error occurred.
- y. **Sacrifice Fly:** A legally batted fly ball with fewer than two outs that results in a runner scoring a run. If the fielder drops the ball but, in the scorer's opinion, the runner would have scored had the fielder held the ball, the play shall be scored as a sacrifice fly, and an error shall be given to the defensive player.
- z. **Stolen Base:** Credit given to a runner who advances a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- aa. **Strikeout:** A putout that is credited to the catcher as a result of the batter being charged with three strikes in a single at-bat.
- bb. **Throw Out:** Credit given to the catcher for initiating the play on an attempted stolen base when an out results. It also is given to a catcher for throwing in front of a runner who subsequently is put out in a run-down.
- cc. **Total Bases:** The sum of all bases a player earns in a game as a result of a hit(s).
- dd. **Triple Play:** A play by the defense in which three offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between putouts.

ee. **Wild Pitch:** A pitched ball that the catcher misses and could not be expected to catch resulting in a base runner advancing.

Batting

Base Hit

SECTION 3. A base hit is credited to a batter when she advances to a base safely:

- a. On a fair ball that settles on the ground or clears or touches the home-run fence before being touched by a fielder.
- b. On a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that more than a routine play is required to put out the batter-runner.
 1. It should not be anticipated that an off-balance throw would retire a runner. A hit is credited to the batter even if the throw is wild.
 2. When a ground ball is fielded and no throw or a late throw is made, a hit is credited to the batter unless a throw was not made or was made late because of checking or holding a runner on base.
 3. If a slowly hit ball or a hard-hit ball is deflected and eliminates a routine play for another fielder, a hit is credited to the batter.
 4. When a fair-batted ball deflects off of a fielder playing in front of the base line, a hit is credited to the batter.
- c. When a play is made on a lead runner unsuccessfully and the batter would have been safe had a play been made on the batter, a hit is credited to the batter. This includes bunts and running slaps.
- d. When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder does not recover in time to gain good position, a hit is credited to the batter.
- e. On a fair ball that takes an unnatural bounce so that the ball cannot be handled with ordinary effort or that bounces off the pitching plate or any base (including home plate) before being touched by a fielder and at an angle such that it cannot be handled with ordinary effort.
- f. On a ball that reaches the outfield untouched by an infielder, unless the ball should have been handled by an infielder with ordinary effort (e.g., ball between the legs).
- g. On a fair ball that might have touched a fielder but was blown by the wind, lost in the sun or lights, or that falls to the ground because the fielder slips on the field or an object on the field (e.g., catcher's mask, base, home plate, sprinkler).

- h. On a fair line drive hit to the outfield that drops to the ground, if the outfielder is attempting to catch the ball on the run or if the outfielder had to cover considerable distance or make the catch running at a high rate of speed. A hit is credited even if the ball is touched.
- i. On a fair batted ball not touched by a fielder that touches a runner or umpire.
- j. On a fair batted ball that strikes a hat or glove thrown at it.
- k. When no one covers the base or a fielder is late in covering the base.
- l. When the runner interferes with a batted ball, a hit is credited to the batter.
- m. If the ball is not touched because of confusion as to who should have fielded it, a hit is credited to the batter.
- n. When a fielder obstructs a preceding runner.

Note: Always give the batter the benefit of the doubt. A safe course to follow is to score a hit when exceptionally good fielding fails to result in a putout.

Base Hit Not Credited

SECTION 4. A hit is not credited to the batter in the following situations:

- a. When a batter advances one or more bases while a fielder who handles a fair hit attempts to put out a preceding runner.
- b. When a batter misses first base and is then called out on an appeal.
- c. When a batter hits safely and a preceding runner misses the first base to which she was advancing. This is an appealed force out, and the batter is safe on a fielder's choice.
- d. When a runner is called out for being touched by an infield fly ball.
- e. When a runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.
- f. When a fielder fails in an attempt to retire a preceding runner and, in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.

Extra-Base Hit

SECTION 5. a. A batter is credited with an extra-base hit when she reaches a base beyond first base solely because of her hit. It may be a double, triple or home run. *Exception:* A batter never gets credit for a triple if a preceding runner is out at home plate or would have been out had no error occurred. The same applies with receiving credit for a double.

Note: When the batter is tagged out after oversliding or overrunning, she is not credited with reaching such base unless she touched the base before oversliding or overrunning and is tagged out while attempting to return. When a batter misses a base, she gets credit only for the bases touched before missing a base.

- b. A batter is credited only with the base she would have reached had no play on a preceding runner taken place. If she stops, sees another play and then advances, she does not receive credit for that base.
- c. If a fielder merely holds the ball too long, the batter gets credit for all the bases she takes.
- d. A batter is credited with a home run when any fair batted fly ball clears the home-run fence in fair territory, even if the ball is deflected by a fielder.

Game-Ending Hit

SECTION 6. a. A hit that scores a winning run is credited with as many bases as the scoring runner traveled as long as the batter advances at least the same number of bases. *Exception:* On an out-of-the-park home run, ground-rule double or awarded bases, the batter is credited with the appropriate bases as long as all runners legally touch all bases.

- b. When the winning run scores on a home run, but a preceding runner stops running before reaching home plate, the batter is credited with her last legally touched base.

Fielder's Choice

SECTION 7. A fielder's choice is credited in the following situations:

- a. To a batter:
 - 1. When a ball is put in play and any preceding runner is out on the hit or would have been out had no error occurred.
 - 2. When a ball is put in play and the lead runner is safe, but the batter would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.
 - 3. When a ball is put in play and any preceding runner, who is forced to advance, is called out on an appeal for missing the first base to which she was advancing.
 - 4. When a runner is checked and no throw or a late throw is made, but the runner would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.
- b. To the runner:
 - 1. When, after reaching base safely, a batter earns extra bases because of a play on a preceding runner.

2. When other runners advance while the catcher makes a play on the batter on a dropped third strike.
3. When a fielder makes a play on a base she thought the runner was advancing to, but was wrong and the batter-runner would have been out if the fielder had made a play on her at first base.

Sacrifice

SECTION 8. A sacrifice is credited to the batter in the following situations:

- a. When, with fewer than two outs, the batter advances one or more runners by bunting (including a slap, slug, slash and running slap) and is called out at first base or would have been out had no error occurred.

Note: The running slapper must clearly show the intent to advance a base runner(s). Always give the batter the benefit of the doubt.

- b. When, with fewer than two outs, the defense (without error) fails to get the lead runner out on any type of bunt.

Note: If the lead runner is tagged out in an attempt to advance more than one base, it is scored a fielder's choice. If the batter is obviously bunting for a hit in a situation where a sacrifice is not normally used, credit the hitter with an at-bat.

- c. When, with fewer than two outs, the lead runner advances by means of a bunt but a trailing runner is out.
- d. When, with fewer than two outs and runners at first and third base, the pitcher fields a bunt, holds the runner at third base, throws the runner out at first base and the runner at first advances safely to second base.

Sacrifice Not Credited

SECTION 9. No sacrifice is credited in the following situations:

- a. When a lead runner advances on a bunt because of a dropped good throw.
- b. When a batter inadvertently taps the ball into fair territory and it results in a runner advancing and the batter being retired. The intent to sacrifice bunt or slap must exist.
- c. When modifications are not made to the running slapper's swing or motion.

Notes:

1. *Modifications could include, but are not limited to, the following: sacrifice motion, a controlled compact swing, a pause in the running slapper's motion or a reduction of foot speed.*

2. *Scoring for the left-handed running slapper should be the same as for a traditional left- or right-handed batter. If the running slapper clearly shows the intent to advance a base runner, credit a sacrifice. If modifications are not made to the running slapper's swing or motion, charge an at-bat, even if a base runner advances.*

Sacrifice Fly

SECTION 10. A sacrifice fly is credited to the batter when, with fewer than two outs, the batter hits a fly ball or line drive that scores a runner, regardless of where the ball is caught (in fair or foul territory), as long as it is in play. When a fair ball is dropped, credit the batter with a sacrifice fly if the runner would have scored with the catch.

Notes:

1. *If the catcher clearly has the ball in her possession before the runner arrives but drops the ball as the runner comes into home plate, the catcher is charged with an error, and a sacrifice fly and run batted in are not credited to the batter.*
2. *All sacrifice flies must result in a run batted in credited to the batter.*

Run Batted In

SECTION 11. A run batted in is credited to the batter for each run that scores as a result of: a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a double play, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded. A game-winning run batted in is the RBI that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.

Notes:

1. *On a play involving an error, an RBI is credited to the batter only if the runner would have scored without the error. In addition, an RBI is credited when, with fewer than two outs, an infielder makes an error on a play made to a base other than home plate. On a third out, when the runner crosses the plate before the third out is made on another runner, credit an RBI.*
2. *No RBI is credited when a) a runner rounds third base, stops, notices a misplay and then advances safely to home, or b) on a base award such as catch and carry or a thrown ball which goes out of play.*

Appeal Plays

SECTION 12. a. **Batting Out of Order.** When an incorrect batter is reported after she is retired and before the next pitch is thrown, the player who should have batted is out and the play is scored as if she had been the correct batter. If the incorrect batter becomes a baserunner

and is then reported out of order, the proper batter is out and the putout is credited to the catcher. If a pitch has been thrown, all play is legal and the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who batted out of order. If more than one batter bats out of order, score all play as it stands and skip the turn at bat of those who missed their turn.

- b. **Inaccurate Lineup Card.** If submitting an inaccurate lineup card results in a runner being removed from a base and declared out, the results of her at bat are nullified and the putout is credited to the catcher.
- c. In all other appeals, credit the fielder closest to the misplay with the putout.

Strikeout

SECTION 13. The batter is charged with a strikeout in the following situations:

- a. When her third strike is caught by the catcher before striking the dirt.
- b. On a dropped third strike, whether or not the batter-runner is safe at first base.
- c. When, with first base occupied and fewer than two outs in the inning, she is put out on a dropped third strike because she cannot legally advance to first base.
- d. When the catcher catches a foul tip directly from the bat to the glove/mitt on a third strike.
- e. When a foul bunt on the third strike is not caught in the air.
- f. When the batter receives two strikes, a substitute batter is inserted and the substitute batter strikes out. The strikeout is charged to the first batter and not the substitute batter. When after sharing a turn at bat with more than one other batter, none of whom received more than one strike, the final batter receives the strikeout.

Stolen Base

SECTION 14. A stolen base is credited:

- a. To a runner who advances to a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- b. To a runner if the runner starts for the next base on the release, and the pitch results in what would otherwise be scored a passed ball or wild pitch. If the runner advances another base because of the wild pitch or passed ball, only the initial base is stolen.

- c. To a runner regardless of the accuracy of the throw and whether an accurate throw would have resulted in a sure putout. No error is charged unless another base is gained due to the wild throw.
- d. To a runner who gets caught in a rundown attempting to steal and advances to the next base safely, only if the next base was unoccupied and no error is made. The base runner must show the intent to steal. If the trailing runner advances, she is credited with a stolen base.
- e. To a runner awarded a base due to obstruction during an attempted steal.
- f. To a runner who advances to a base because of a pick-off play on another runner, provided the runner broke for the next base before the release of the catcher's throw.
- g. To each runner who successfully advances in a double- or triple-steal attempt, as long as no other runner is put out.
- h. To a runner who advances on a bobbled (not dropped) pitch even if the runner decides to advance after seeing the bobble.

Note: A passed ball is NOT charged to the catcher.

Stolen Base Not Credited

SECTION 15. a. A stolen base is not credited to a runner who advances to a base with the aid of a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.

- b. A stolen base is not credited to any runner when any other runner is thrown out on an attempted double or triple steal.

Exceptions:

1. On a double-steal attempt, with runners at first and third, an unsuccessful but legitimate attempt was made to put out the runner stealing second base, and the runner at third is thrown out at home plate on a continuous play.
2. With runners at first and third, credit a stolen base to the runner advancing to second base even if the initial throw is not to second base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
3. With runners at first and third, credit a stolen base to the runner advancing to home plate even if the initial throw is not to third base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
4. With runners on first and third, credit a stolen base to the runner advancing to second base if no throw is made even if the advance was immediately after a walk.

Caught Stealing

SECTION 16. Charge a runner with caught stealing when she is put out or would have been put out had no error occurred on her attempt to steal a base. When in doubt, give the benefit of the doubt to the runner. Do not charge caught stealing unless the runner has an opportunity to be credited with a stolen base when the play starts. If there is a throw and the runner immediately attempts to advance to the next base and is thrown out, the runner is caught stealing. In addition, a runner is charged with a caught stealing if she attempts to advance after being picked off a base and she is subsequently called out on the play.

Throw Outs

SECTION 17. The catcher is credited with a throw out when she throws in front of the runner, resulting in a rundown, regardless of the base at which the putout occurs. If the catcher initiates the play on an attempted stolen base and an out results, she also is credited with a throw out.

Pick-Off

SECTION 18. The catcher is credited with a pick-off when a throw behind the runner results in a putout. If there is a pick-off throw during which the runner immediately attempts to return to the last base touched and the runner is thrown out, it is a putout.

Fielding

Putout

SECTION 19. a. Credit a putout to a fielder who catches a fly ball or line drive, tags out a runner or tags the base to force out the runner.

b. Credit a putout to the catcher in the following instances:

1. A legally caught third strike.
2. The batter is called out for an illegally batted ball.
3. A batter is out on a third-strike foul bunt.
4. A batter is out for being touched by her own fair batted ball while one or both feet are completely out of the batter's box or for stepping on home plate.
5. A batter is out for intentionally interfering with her own foul batted ball.
6. A batter interferes with the catcher.
7. A batter who batted out of order becomes a base runner and a proper appeal is made.
8. A batter-runner fails to touch first base after a base on balls.

9. A catcher steps on the plate with the ball in her possession with the bases loaded. This includes a dropped third strike.
 10. A runner is out for not advancing legally to home plate for the game-winning run.
 11. A runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return. The catcher properly appeals, and the runner is called out.
- c. Credit a putout to the nearest fielder in the following instances:
1. A batter is out on an infield fly that is not caught.
 2. A runner is out for failing to keep contact with the base to which she is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
 3. A runner is out for being hit by a fair batted ball.
 4. A runner is called out for being out of the baseline in order to avoid a tag.
 5. A runner runs backward in the first baseline to avoid a tag.
 6. A runner is out for passing another runner.
 7. A runner is out for running the bases in reverse order.
 8. A runner is out for interfering with a fielder. If the interference is a deliberate attempt to impede another play, a second runner also may be declared out.

Note: If the fielder was in the act of throwing or fielding a ground ball, the fielder is credited with an assist but the putout is credited to the fielder for whom the throw was intended.

9. A runner is out when a proper appeal is made on a missed base or home plate.
10. An unreported player or an illegal player is declared out.
11. A proper appeal is made on a batter who batted out of order but was put out. The proper batter is out and the play scored as if she had batted.

Assist

SECTION 20. An assist is credited to a fielder in the following situations:

- a. A fielder deflects a batted or thrown ball that results in a putout.
- b. A fielder throws a ball that results in a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders. The fielder may receive a putout in addition to an assist.
- c. A fielder throws or deflects a ball that results in a runner being called out for interference or running out of the baseline.

- d. A fielder makes a wild throw and, after the throw, the runner is tagged out before reaching the next base. If the runner reaches the next base safely and, in an attempt to advance to another base, is tagged out, credit the initial fielder with an error.

Note: Do not credit the pitcher with an assist on a strikeout or when after a pitch, the catcher tags out or throws out a runner.

Error

SECTION 21. a. An error is charged against any fielder for each misplay (i.e., fielding, wild throws, missed catches on good throws) that prolongs the life of a batter (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) or a runner or permits a runner to advance. This includes a dropped foul ball, unless it was allowed to drop intentionally to prevent a runner from advancing.

- b. A single error is charged even if more than one base is gained by a runner as a result of the play.
- c. An error shall be charged against any fielder when she catches a thrown ball or fields a ground ball in time to put out any runner on a force play and fails to tag the base or the runner, including a batter-runner on a play at first base.
- d. An error shall be charged against any fielder whose throw takes an unnatural bounce, touches a base or the pitcher's plate, or touches a runner, a fielder or an umpire, thereby, permitting any runner to advance. Apply this rule even when it appears to be an injustice to a fielder whose throw was accurate. The scorer must account for every base advanced by a runner.
- e. When a throw is made to a base and more than one fielder could have received the throw but neither did, an error is charged to the fielder who should have received the throw.
- f. An error is charged to a fielder (including the catcher) committing obstruction when an additional base is gained as a result of the obstruction.
- g. An error is charged to a defensive player who collides with a fielder making the initial catch on a fly ball that is dropped.
- h. An error is charged when an unnecessary throw allows a runner to advance.

Note: This does not include a throw made to play on a different runner.

- i. An error is charged to the thrower when an otherwise good throw hits a runner, umpire or bat.

No Error Is Charged

SECTION 22. No error is charged to a fielder in the following situations:

- a. When a ball is misplayed because of being lost in the sun or lights, blown by the wind, or if the fielder slips and falls — even if contact is made with the ball.
- b. When there is a mental mistake. Throwing to the wrong base is considered a mental mistake.
- c. When a catcher attempts a pick-off unless the runner advances an additional base.
- d. When a runner returns safely to her original base on a rundown.
- e. When a runner beats a wild throw or dropped catch (unless an additional base is gained). This also pertains to the second or third out of a double or triple play.

Note: A dropped ball by the receiver is an error if the runner would have been out.

- f. When a ball is hit with such force, so slowly or with erratic spin, that it would require more than ordinary effort to play the ball.
- g. When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder cannot recover in time to make the play.
- h. When a fielder drops a ball after running a considerable distance or if she fails in her attempt to catch the ball while running at a high rate of speed.
- i. When a fielder drops a line drive after moving more than a few steps to catch the ball.
- j. As a result of an illegal pitch, wild pitch, passed ball or hit batter, even if more than one base is gained from the initial misplay.
- k. When a runner advances on a dropped third strike. In such a case, a wild pitch or passed ball shall be charged; however, if an accurate throw or proper catch would have resulted in an out, an error shall be charged to the appropriate player.
- l. When a pitcher mishandles a sharply batted ball. Wild throws and the mishandling of routine ground balls and bunts are reason for charging the pitcher with an error.

Double Play/Triple Play

- SECTION 23. a. A double or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time the pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is in the possession of the pitcher in her pitching position. Play must be continuous. If an error occurs between putouts, no double or triple play is credited. In addition, a double or triple play is credited when an appeal play results in a second or third out after the pitcher has the ball in her possession but before the next pitch is thrown.
- b. The second part of a double play never should be assumed. If an overthrow is made, no error is recorded unless the runner advances to another base. If the second throw is catchable and is dropped, an error is charged to the person receiving the throw.

Pitching

Earned/Unearned Run

- SECTION 24. a. Earned runs are runs for which the pitcher is statistically accountable. An earned run shall be charged against the pitcher when a runner scores as a result of: a base on balls, a fielder's choice, a hit, a putout, a batter hit by a pitch, an illegal pitch, a sacrifice bunt (including a slap and running slap), a sacrifice fly, a stolen base and a wild pitch (including a third-strike wild pitch). Earned runs are charged only in the event that the defense did not have the opportunity to make the third putout. Earned runs are determined by reconstructing the inning as if there were no errors or passed balls. The pitcher should be given the benefit of the doubt in determining the advancement of runners had the defensive team been errorless. Any pitcher who is replaced is charged with earned runs for which she is totally responsible.

Note: A batter who gets on base as a result of a fielder's choice can score an earned run only if the runner that was out as a result of the fielder's choice was a potential earned run.

- b. When a runner who began the inning on second base during the tiebreaker scores and the pitcher is held accountable for all bases gained, score the run as earned but charge it to the team total and not to the individual. (See Rule 14-30 for information on the tiebreaker rule.)
- c. A run is unearned if the runner, who scores, reached first base by error or had prolonged life because of a dropped foul fly or obstruction.

Relief Pitcher

SECTION 25. a. A relief pitcher is charged with every run that scores when the batter has reached base while she was pitching. Charge a pitcher with the number of runners she put on base.

- b. When a relief pitcher enters the game to pitch to a batter in mid-count and the batter gets on base and scores, charge the first pitcher with the run if the batter has a count of two or three balls and fewer than two strikes, or if the count is full, and in either case the batter walks. Charge the relief pitcher with any other action of the batter (including a strikeout).
- c. A relief pitcher does not receive the benefit of previous chances of outs when reconstructing the inning to determine earned and unearned runs charged to her. The original pitcher does. Thus, a relief pitcher could be charged with an earned run that does not appear in the team's totals.

Strikeout

SECTION 26. a. The pitcher who throws the third strike to a batter is credited with the strikeout, even if the batter reaches first base on a dropped third strike.

- b. The scorer determines whether it is scored as a strikeout-passed ball or strikeout-wild pitch.
- c. For all circumstances scored as strikeouts, see Rule 14-13.

Wild Pitch

SECTION 27. A wild pitch is charged to a pitcher when the pitch is so high, wide or low that the catcher cannot handle the ball with ordinary effort and at least one runner advances. Any pitch in the dirt is wild. Only one wild pitch is recorded regardless of the number of runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher because it was wild, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a wild pitch and a strikeout. No wild pitch is charged if a runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A wild pitch is not an error.

Passed Ball

SECTION 28. A passed ball is charged to the catcher when she fails to stop or control a pitch with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Only one passed ball is recorded regardless of the number of runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher that could have been handled with ordinary effort, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a passed

ball and a strikeout. No passed ball is charged if a runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A passed ball is not an error.

Statistics

Pitching Statistics

SECTION 29. a. Credit a pitcher with a complete game, no-hitter, shutout, etc., if she pitches the first pitch and every subsequent pitch of a new game. For statistical purposes, she is considered the starting pitcher, however, she does not have the substitution rights of a starting player unless she is listed on the lineup card in one of the nine or 10 starting positions.

The flex player is charged with a game played in terms of eligibility, but not statistically (unless she participates in the game as a pitcher), if she is replaced in the lineup before the first pitch.

b. Starting Pitcher.

1. The starting pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
 - (a) She has pitched at least four total innings of a game of six or more innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced (including runners for whom she was responsible and later scored), and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
 - (b) She has pitched a total of three innings when a regulation game is called after five innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced (including runners for whom she was responsible and later scored), and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
 - (c) She has pitched the required number of innings, her team is ahead or tied when she is replaced, she re-enters the game with her team behind, and her team subsequently recaptures the lead.

Note: A pitcher cannot receive credit for a save if she receives the win.

2. A starting pitcher receives the loss if she is relieved while her team is behind, and her team remains behind for the remainder of the game, regardless of the number of innings pitched.

c. Relief Pitcher.

1. The relief pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
 - (a) The starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, or her team fell behind.

- (b) The relief pitcher who pitches most effectively after the starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, more than one relief pitcher was used and the lead was never lost.
 - (c) The relief pitcher was the pitcher of record when her team gained the lead and stayed in the lead.
 - (d) A relief pitcher left the game while the score was tied or her team was behind, and she re-entered the game and regained the lead.
2. A relief pitcher receives the loss if she is the pitcher of record when the opponent goes ahead and stays ahead for the remainder of the game.

Notes:

- 1. *If a pitcher is removed from the game offensively by a batter or a runner, all runs scored by her team during the remainder of that inning are credited to her benefit in determining when her team is in the lead.*
- 2. *A shutout is recorded if the starting pitcher pitches scoreless ball for the entire game or if a relief pitcher pitched scoreless ball after relieving in the first inning before any outs or score. If two or more pitchers combine for a shutout, it shall be noted in the game summary as a combined shutout.*

d. Save.

A pitcher must meet all three of the following conditions to be credited with a save:

- 1. She is the last pitcher in the win.
- 2. She is not the winning pitcher.
- 3. She meets one of the following conditions:
 - (a) She enters the game with a lead of not more than three runs and pitches for at least one inning.
 - (b) She pitches effectively for at least three innings.
 - (c) She enters the game with the potential tying run on base, at bat or on-deck.

Note: Not more than one save may be credited in a game.

Tiebreaker Rule

SECTION 30. a. A run scored by the player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team and not the pitcher. Whether a run scored by any other player shall be charged to the pitcher is up to the judgment of the official scorer.

- b. If action by a subsequent batter, such as a fielder's choice, causes the lead-off runner to be put out, the first run scored that inning may be

charged to the team. (Example: If a runner reaches first base safely on a fielder's choice as a result of a first-to-third putout, this new runner still is charged to the team.)

- c. If the lead-off runner at second is put out without action by the batter (caught stealing, picked off or leaving the base early), then, no run is charged to the team.

Notes:

- 1. A run charged to the "team" is neither earned nor unearned because there is no actual person to whom the run is to be charged. It is technically impossible for the "team" to have an earned-run average, because the "team" will always have zero innings pitched.*
- 2. In the statistical pitching summary for a game using the tiebreaker rule, "team," is listed as a pitcher. The only statistic recorded for "team" is total runs allowed. The total runs allowed by a team may exceed the sum total of earned and unearned runs. The box score will not prove as it normally does since there is usually an extra runner left on base for each inning in which the rule is in effect.*
- 3. The respective pitchers of record receive the win and loss.*
- 4 See Rule 6-15 for an explanation of the tiebreaker rule.*

Cumulative Performance Records

SECTION 31. a. A consecutive hitting streak continues with a hit if the plate appearance results in a base on balls, hit batter, obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly ends a streak even though it is not counted as an official at-bat.

- b. A consecutive-game hitting streak continues without a hit when all plate appearances result in either a base on balls, hit batter, obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly, as well as no other hit, ends the streak.
- c. A consecutive-game playing streak continues by playing one half of an inning on defense (three outs) or by completing one turn at bat. Pinch running does not continue the streak.
- d. If a player is ejected from a game before an official at bat and before meeting any of the above requirements, a streak continues.
- e. For purposes of a streak, all performances in the completion of a halted game are considered as occurring on the date when the game officially began.

Called, Forfeited and Protested Games

SECTION 32. a. **Called Game.** If a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is called, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game ends (as specified in Rule 6-16), shall be recorded. If the scoring in an incomplete inning has no bearing on the outcome of the contest, include all individual and team statistics. If a called game is a tie, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

- b. **Forfeited Game.** When a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is forfeited, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game is forfeited shall be recorded. If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall be designated. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or the score is tied at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated. If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, no statistics shall be recorded. Refer to Bylaw 31.10 of the NCAA Manual for more information concerning statistics from forfeited games.
- c. **Protested Game.** When a protest is ruled valid but the game is not replayed to conclusion, it shall be declared "No contest." The record of all individual and team actions shall be recorded; however, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

Proving the Box Score

SECTION 33. To prove a box score, the total of the team's plate appearances (times at bat, bases on balls, hit batters, sacrifice hits, sacrifice flies and batters awarded first base because of interference or obstruction) and the international tiebreaker runner must equal the total of the team's runs, players left on base and the opposing team's putouts.

Table of Symbols

Symbol	Definition	Symbol	Definition
A	assist	L	loss
AB	at-bat	LOB/LEFT	left on base
BA	batting average	OB	obstruction (defensive)
BB	base on balls (walk)	PA	plate appearance
BF	batters faced	PB	passed ball
CG	complete games pitched	PKO	pick-off
CS	caught stealing	PO	putout
DP	double play	R	run scored
E	error	RBI	run batted in
ER	earned runs	SB	stolen base
ERA	earned-run average	SBA	stolen base attempt
GP	games played	SAC/SH	sacrifice
GS	games started	SF	sacrifice fly
GWRBI	game-winning run batted in	SHO	shutout
H	base hit	SO	strikeout
HBP	hit by pitch	SV	save
HR	home run	TB	total bases on safe hits
IBB	intentional base on balls	TO	throw out
ILP	illegal pitches thrown	TOA	throw out attempt
INT	interference (offensive)	TP	triple play
IP	innings pitched	W	win
K	strikeout (swinging)	2B	double
X	strikeout (called)	3B	triple

Percentage Table

Batting average:	$\frac{\text{hits}}{\text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{H}{AB}$
Earned-run average:	$\frac{\text{earned runs} \times 7.0}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{ER \times 7.0}{IP}$
Fielding percentage:	$\frac{\text{putouts} + \text{assists}}{\text{putouts} + \text{assists} + \text{errors}}$	$\frac{PO + A}{PO + A + E}$
On-base percentage:	$\frac{\text{walks} + \text{hit by pitch} + \text{hits}}{\text{walks} + \text{hit by pitch} + \text{sacrifices} + \text{at bats}}$	$\frac{BB + HBP + H}{BB + HBP + SAC + AB}$
Winning percentage:	$\frac{\text{games won} + .5 \text{ games tied}}{\text{games won} + \text{game lost} + \text{games tied}}$	$\frac{W + .5 T}{W + L + T}$
Slugging percentage:	$\frac{\text{total bases earned by hits}}{\text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{TB}{AB}$
Stolen base percentage:	$\frac{\text{stolen bases}}{\text{stolen base attempts}}$	$\frac{SB}{SBA}$
Strikeout ratio:	$\frac{\text{strikeouts} \times 7.0}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{SO \times 7.0}{IP}$
Throw-out percentage:	$\frac{\text{throw outs}}{\text{throw out attempts}}$	$\frac{TO}{TOA}$
Total bases: (home runs x 3) + (triples x 2) + (doubles x 1) + total number of hits		

RULE 15

Umpires

Note: Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 15 shall not be grounds for protest.

Apparel and Equipment

SECTION 1. a. The umpiring crew shall be dressed alike. The standard uniform shirt is a powder blue, short-sleeve pullover shirt (with a collar, button placket with navy and white trim on the collar and sleeves). The navy blue, short-sleeve pullover shirt with red and white trim may be substituted if all umpires concur. Remaining parts of the uniform are navy blue or heather grey slacks and ball bag, black socks and navy cap (plain unless all umpires concur to wear a cap with a conference affiliation), all black shoes and belt with a silver buckle. A jacket or sweater may be worn but must be completely navy blue. If a sweater is worn, the uniform shirt must be worn underneath. A turtleneck shirt may be worn under the jacket only and, if worn, must be navy blue. A T-shirt under the uniform shirt is optional, but if worn, must be white.

Notes

1. *Conference affiliation may be embroidered on caps and/or shirts for use in conference play only.*
2. *A 3x2 patch of the American flag may be sewn with its bottom edge on the hem of the uniform shirt's left sleeve.*
- b. The plate umpire shall wear a black mask with natural or black padding and black throat protector. (An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of a throat protector on the mask.)
Note: An attached throat protector must be commercially manufactured, properly attached and unaltered. A throat protector that is part of the mask shall extend far enough to adequately protect the throat.
- c. It is required that the umpiring crew have a current NCAA Softball Rules book accessible during the competition.
- d. It is strongly recommended that all umpires wear appropriate protective equipment.

Duties

SECTION 2. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team personnel to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce prescribed penalties. Each umpire is an approved official of the institution or conference by which they have been assigned to a particular game and is authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpires shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is general information for umpires:

- a. It is strongly recommended that the umpire not be affiliated with a team or its institution.
- b. The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and should report to the playing field at least 30 minutes ahead of time, start the game at the designated time and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when he/she arrives on the field and reports to the host coach, and it ends when he/she leaves the field after the game.
- c. The umpires should introduce themselves to the coaches and other appropriate game management personnel, including the on-site administrator.
- d. The umpires shall inspect the playing field and equipment.
- e. At the pregame meeting, the plate umpire shall clarify all ground rules for the representatives of each team.
- f. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension of play.
- g. No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his or her respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- h. An umpire should consult his or her associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it is to make the decision and who requests the opinion of the other umpire(s).
- i. In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes shall be designated as the plate

- umpire, while the umpire(s) whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions shall be designated as the base umpire(s).
- j. The plate umpire and base umpires shall have equal authority to:
 - 1. Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon;
 - 2. Call "Time" for suspension of play;
 - 3. Eject or suspend a player, coach or other team personnel; and
 - 4. Call illegal pitches.
 - k. The umpire shall declare the batter or runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire shall not render a decision on:
 - 1. Participation by an improper player (i.e., batter out of order, player who is listed inaccurately on the lineup card, unreported substitute and illegal player). (Effect, see Rule 8-4 and Appendix B)
 - 2. Missing a base. (Effect, see Rules 12-19 and 12-25.b)
 - 3. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (Effect, see Rules 12-8.c and 12-25)
 - 4. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base (Effect, see Rule 12-6.a).
 - 5. Switching baserunners on occupied bases. (Effect, see Rule 12-8.e)
 - l. The plate umpire calls, "Play ball," loud enough for the coach charged with the conference, the batter and catcher to hear. The base umpire(s) calls, "Play ball," loud enough for the opposing coach to hear. Failure of players and coaches to hear the call shall not void the call.
 - m. The umpire shall not impose an effect on a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the effect would be an advantage to the offending team.
 - n. The umpire shall use his/her authority to protect the well-being of the participants by granting warm-up fielding and/or throwing to players after an injury or additional warm-up pitches in inclement weather.

Plate Umpire

SECTION 3. The plate umpire shall:

- a. Have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- b. Take a position behind the catcher.
- c. Have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.

- d. Call and count all balls and strikes and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes.
- e. By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire, make decisions on plays, fair or foul balls, and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield in a two-umpire system, the plate umpire will assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.
- f. Determine and declare whether:
 1. A batter is out when, with two strikes, a batted ball is bunted foul;
 2. A batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter; and
 3. A fly ball is an infield fly.
- g. Call or indicate "Play ball" to start the game or resume play, "Time" to temporarily suspend play, and "Game" to terminate play for a regulation game.
- h. Document and announce each substitution to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer, if applicable.
- i. Render base decisions as indicated in the umpires' mechanics manual.
- j. Have the lights turned on when necessary for safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.
- k. Be the final judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play should bad weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game. The on-site administrator shall keep the umpire crew informed of relevant weather changes. (See Appendix E for lightning guidelines.)
- l. For the second game of a doubleheader, the plate umpire from the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of a second game of a doubleheader.
- m. Penalize rule infractions (such as illegal pitch, interference, delay of the game, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsportsmanlike conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher).
- n. Conduct the pregame meeting with the opposing coaches before the scheduled starting time.
- o. Assume all duties when circumstances warrant starting or finishing a game as a single umpire.

Base Umpire(s)

SECTION 4. The base umpire(s) shall:

- a. Take such positions on the playing field as outlined in the umpires' mechanics manual.

- b. Assist the plate umpire in administering the rules of the game.
- c. Render base decisions as indicated in the umpires' mechanics manual.
- d. Call base runners out for leaving a base before the pitch has been released.

Change of Umpires

SECTION 5. Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game unless injury or illness incapacitates an umpire.

Pregame Responsibilities

SECTION 6. Before the start of the game, the umpires shall:

- a. Inspect the bats for grip, size, ASA certification and any obvious damage. Umpires should make certain that dented, bent or illegal bats, are not available for use during the game (i.e., not allowed in the dugout). To determine whether a bat with a dent(s) or a flat spot is legal, a bat ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.

EFFECT—See Rule 3-2 for illegal, altered and non-approved bat violations.

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

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

- c. Collect from the teams a minimum of five game softballs — one new ball rubbed up by each team and three additional balls from the home team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play. Additional balls should be furnished by a home team or tournament representative.
- d. Have balls available to replenish the supply of game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:
 - 1. A ball has been hit out of the playing field.
 - 2. A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play.

3. The pitcher requests a different ball. The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

Pregame Meeting

SECTION 7. Before the scheduled starting time, the plate umpire shall conduct the pregame meeting with a member of each coaching staff. During this meeting, warm-ups on the field of play shall be suspended, and the plate umpire shall:

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

Notes:

1. *Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*
 2. *All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*
- c. Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail, if agreeable with the visiting team. Where the teams do not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the umpires.
 - d. Review special game rules (e.g., halted game, tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules).
 - e. Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.

Procedures at End of Game

SECTION 8. At the completion of the game, the plate umpire shall return the game balls to the appropriate games management staff or coach and report any flagrant conduct or irregularity associated with the game. The umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play or protest. The umpires shall leave the field together in as a polite, businesslike and inconspicuous manner as possible.

Umpire's Judgment

SECTION 9. a. Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed, but is never subject to protest. There will be no protest on such judgments as whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a runner was safe or out, a pitched ball was a ball or strike, or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with his or her associate(s) before taking any action, but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.

Exceptions:

1. On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the catcher, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball.
 2. On a decision regarding a pick off, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with his/her partner.
- b. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.
- c. The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

Suspension of Play

SECTION 10. a. An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations:

1. When, in his/her judgment, conditions justify such action.
 2. When he/she leaves his/her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
 3. When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- b. An umpire shall not temporarily suspend play in the following situations:

1. While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
2. After the pitcher has started her delivery.
3. In case of injury until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at her base. *Exception:* When necessary to protect an injured player, the umpire may suspend play immediately.
4. At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed.

Umpire's Responsibility for a Protest

SECTION 11. a. During regular-season play, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:

1. After input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rulebook.
2. The protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and submit a written protest to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.
3. If the protesting coach decides to continue the game under protest:
 - (a) The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game will be resumed under protest.
 - (b) The plate umpire and the protesting coach must note and record the relevant information including:
 - (1) The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
 - (2) The names and contact information of the umpires and official scorer.
 - (3) The rule and section of the official rules or a copy of the ground rule under which the protest is made.
 - (4) The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.
 - (c) Within 72 hours, the plate umpire and the protesting coach must each complete an official protest form (see Appendix C) and send

it to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The opposing coach may also choose to complete and send the official protest form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

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

Notes:

1. *It is the responsibility of each conference to determine if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*
2. *For nonconference games, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to determine if the games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared "No contest." It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*

(e) When a protest is upheld and a game is rescheduled:

- (1) The same lineup card must be used when the game is resumed, a pregame meeting held to verify accuracy (such as changed jersey numbers) and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.
 - (2) If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because she was legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew a suspension.
- b. During play that determines an NCAA qualifier (automatic or play-in) and during NCAA championship play itself, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:
1. After input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must

attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rulebook.

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

Umpire’s Responsibility for an Appeal

SECTION 12. Once the appeal is made to the umpire responsible for the play, that umpire will make the proper call.

Umpire’s Responsibility for a Forfeited Game

SECTION 13. The umpire crew must concur in order to declare a game forfeited. If the umpire crew declare the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (see Appendix C), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The institution’s athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Umpire's Responsibility for Ejections and/or Suspensions

SECTION 14. The umpire has the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game (ejection) when imposing penalties for violations of Rules 13-8 and 13-9. The plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report, in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The institution's president (suspensions only), athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Appendix A

Feet and Lines Chart (see also Rule 2-17)

Action	Line In Question	Permissible Position
Catcher in box	Catcher's box	within
Fielder (other than catcher) before pitch	Foul line	on
Legal catch	Dead ball	on
Pitcher on plate taking signal	Width of plate	within
Pitcher's stride	Width of plate	on
Batter position in box	Batter's box	within
Batter at bat/ball contact	Batter's box	on
Batter-runner in running lane	Runner's lane	on
Look-back rule	Pitcher's circle	on

Lines (foul lines, running lane, pitcher's circle, dead-ball areas, coaching, batter's and catcher's boxes) denote spaces to which players or coaches are restricted.

The outermost edge of each line is the restricting boundary and shall meet the dimensions defined in the rules.

To be considered "within" the space, the player or coach must not have any part of the foot extend beyond the outermost edge of the line.

To be considered "on the line," the foot of the player or coach may extend over the boundary as long as the foot is in contact with the line.

In either case, a player or coach must not have an entire foot in contact with the ground completely outside the line that defines the space.

Appendix B

Improper Player Chart

Information found in	Batting Out of Order	Inaccurate Lineup	Unreported Sub	Illegal Player
1. Offending Team Corrects Own Mistake (Offense or Defense)	Rule 11, Section 11 Not recommended but if coach insists, same penalty as if reported by opponent	Rule 7, Section 1 No penalty to correct name or number as long as player was listed on lineup card	Rule 8, Section 4c No penalty; declared officially in game	Rule 8, Section 4d Offending player is ejected; all play stands
2. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire While Offender is At Bat	No penalty; correct batter steps in; all advances are legal	All play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
3. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Immediately After Turn At Bat But Before Next Pitch	Missed batter is out; nullify all advances; next batter is one who follows missed batter	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
4. Defensive Team Alerts The Umpire After Turn At Bat And After A Pitch	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; next batter is one who follows incorrect batter	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; all advances are legal
5. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiedrunner Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify all advances
6. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiedrunner Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced And After Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out (if on base) and ejected; all advances are legal
7. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After She Makes A Play But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; correct lineup	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; declared officially in game	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; offending player is ejected
8. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After She Makes A Play And After Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	All play stands; declared officially in game	All play stands; offending player is ejected

Appendix C

(To get a full-page version of this form, go to www.ncaa.org)

NCAA Softball Incident Report

Send to Dee Abrahamson, Secretary-Rules Editor
(Fax: 815/753-9355; E-mail: Abrahamson@niu.edu)

Game Date and Time _____ Location _____

Visiting Team _____ Home Team _____

Visiting Coach _____ Home Coach _____

Plate Umpire _____ Contact info _____

Base Umpire _____ Contact info _____

UIC or Add'l Umpire _____ Contact info _____

On-Site Administrator _____ Contact info _____

Official Scorer _____ Contact info _____

Game Details: Visitor's Score _____ Home Score _____ Inning _____ (Circle: Top or Bottom)

Batter's Number _____ Batter's Count _____ Outs _____

Runner(s) on Base & Location _____

Reason for Report: Improper Equipment (3) _____ Refusal to Play (13-8) _____

Fighting or Physical Abuse (13-8 and 9) _____

Profanity, Insulting or Disparaging Remarks (13-2.c) _____

Other Unsportsmanlike Behavior by a Participant (13-9) _____

Unsportsmanlike Behavior by a Fan (13-10) _____ Equipment Abuse (13-3) _____

Misuse of Tobacco, Video Equipment, Noisemakers (13-5 thru 7) _____

Person Ejected _____ Team _____

Protest Filed by _____ Team _____

Situation/Specific Rule Protested (attach additional page(s) if needed):

After ejection, did the coach: _____ Leave immediately. _____ Continue arguing. _____ Return to argue.

Person Filing Report _____ Date Submitted _____

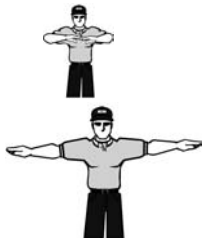
Signature/Title

Appendix D

Umpire Signals



OUT
Raise right arm straight up. Bring forearm slightly forward while clenching into a fist. Verbalize "Out."



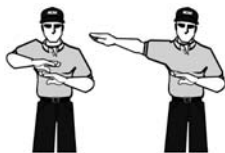
**SAFE/NO CATCH/NO TAG/
NO INFRACTION**
Extend arms straight out with palms down. Verbally call.



STRIKE
Verbalize "Strike" while set. Stand, raise right arm up and forward into a fist.



**FOUL BALL/DEAD BALL/
NO PITCH**
Raise both arms up, palms forward angled out from the body. Verbalize the call.



FOUL TIP
Optional. Brush fingers with upward motion, chest high or higher. Follow with strike signal. No verbal.



FAIR BALL
Point towards fair ground with hand closest to infield. No verbal call.



INFIELD FLY
Raise right arm above head with fist closed. Verbally call "Infield Fly."



DOUBLE
Raise right arm above head showing two fingers. Verbally call "Two Bases."

**HOME RUN**

Raise right arm above head with index finger extended. Circle arm in clockwise motion.

**TIME**

Raise both arms above head, palms forward, with arms at a slight angle from body. Verbally call "Time."

**DO NOT PITCH**

With palm up, raise hand toward pitcher.

**PLAY BALL**

Raise arm toward pitcher with palm facing body. Bring arm toward body while verbalizing "Play Ball."

**DELAYED DEAD BALL**

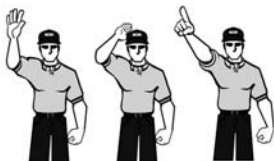
Extend left arm straight out—in a fist with fingers facing out.

**COUNT**

Raise both arms shoulder high or higher in front of the body. Indicate strikes with fingers on right hand and balls on the left hand.

**POINT**

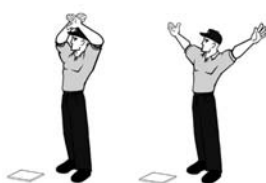
Extend arm with index finger extended. Keep other arm close to body.

**EJECTION**

Hold up right arm with palm open and forward. Draw the hand back to the ear and redirect arm skyward at a 45-degree angle away from the body with the index finger extended.

**THE RUN SCORES**

Point at plate while emphatically verbalizing "The Run Scores."

**THE RUN DOES NOT SCORE**

Cross both arms back and forth above the head with palms facing forward. Verbalize "No Run."

Appendix E

Lightning Guidelines

Guidelines for Game Officials and Game Management to Use Regarding Lightning

The purpose of this appendix is to provide information to those responsible for making decisions about suspending and restarting games based on the presence of lightning.

The current recommendation of the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) is to consider terminating play when the lightning is six miles away (flash-to-bang time of 30 seconds or less). This recommendation was developed as a practical way to make a judgment in situations where other resources, such as technology and instrumentation, are not available.

As a minimum, NSSL staff strongly recommends that by the time the flash-to-bang count is 30 seconds, all individuals should have left the game site and reached a safe structure or location.

In addition, a smaller, but still real, risk exists with the presence of lightning at greater distances. Unfortunately, current science cannot predict where within the radius the next strike will occur.

The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.

The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished because of background noise in the immediate environment and its distance to the observer. To use the flash-to-bang method, count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how many miles away the lightning is occurring.

When considering resumption of a game, NSSL staff recommends that everyone ideally should wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field of activity.

If available, electronic detection devices should be used as additional tools to determine the severity of the weather. However, such devices should not be used as the sole source when considering terminating play.

(Information taken from the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook and NCAA Championships Severe Weather Policy).

Appendix F

Video, Audio or LED Matrix Boards

A. Scoreboards and Video.

1. Scoreboards (and monitors) must not be used to "show up" an umpire or visiting team members, incite the crowd, or distract a player. The following situations may not be shown:
 - a. Replays showing balls or strikes;
 - b. Brushback pitches;
 - c. Fights or disputes between or among uniformed personnel on the field;
 - d. Any episode or event that would embarrass or denigrate an umpire, visiting team member, visiting team representative, or the official scorer;
 - e. The likeness of an umpire or an umpire's name that could be used to embarrass an umpire; and
 - f. Fans or other unauthorized personnel running onto the field.
2. Exciting plays such as spectacular catches or players circling the bases after home runs may be shown more than once.
3. Replays may not delay the game. The next batter is expected to immediately step into the batter's box.
4. Any instance where an umpire has made a judgement call may be replayed only one time at regular speed.
5. No live game action may be displayed. Close-ups of the batter in the on-deck circle are permitted, but once a player steps into the batter's box, all live action must stop. A still shot, statistics, or other non-moving pictures must remain on the screen until the batter finishes the plate appearance.

6. Arguments or disputes between umpires and players or coaches may not be shown.
 7. Live shots of fans are permitted during dead-ball periods, but good judgement must be used to avoid unacceptable behavior, signs or clothing.
- B. Audio and LED or LED Matrix Boards.
1. All music, chants or crowd-cuing messages must stop when the batter steps into the batter's box. Use of LED or LED Matrix boards should also stop when the batter steps into the batter's box.
 2. Music, noise and cheers, and use of LED or LED Matrix boards, may be used during the following times:
 - a. Before the start of the game;
 - b. Between innings;
 - c. During pitching changes or extended treatment for an injury;
 - d. As the batter is heading toward the batter's box; and
 - e. Between games in a doubleheader or after the game.
 3. LED or LED Matrix boards may be operated during a lengthy stoppage in play, but their operation must cease when the umpire calls "Play." Teams are to exhibit good judgement when using messages that encourage fans to cheer or make noise.
 4. Audio (music, organists, etc.) may not be played in a manner that may incite spectators to react in a negative fashion to umpires' decisions or to visiting players.
 5. It is the on-site administrator's responsibility to monitor its video and audio operations and abide by the intent of these guidelines and policies, including between-inning entertainment.
 6. Should any of the policies in this section be violated by a team, umpires have the authority to stop the game to have the matter corrected by the on-site administrator. In this case, umpires must file an incident report (Appendix C or downloaded from Web site), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

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