

**UNITED STATES
SPECIALTY SPORTS
ASSOCIATION**



**OFFICIAL
FAST PITCH**



**PLAYING RULES
and
BY-LAWS**

Tenth Edition

USSSA FAST PITCH RULES & BY-LAWS TENTH EDITION

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Changes in Ninth Edition Playing Rules after printing

- Rule 2.9.B. The glove/mitt may be any combination of colors except the color of the game ball or optic.
- Rule 19.1 In T-Ball: 11-inch ball will be used.

Changes in Tenth Edition Playing Rules

Major Rule Changes

- Rule 5.4 Adopt DP/FLEX to replace DH. This adoption imposes additions to Definitions and changes to Rules 3.58, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, and 8.3.
- Rule 6.1 Require Two feet on the pitching plate

Rule Changes

- Rule 1.1 Pitching Distances – Pitching distance for 13U on up will be 43 Ft.
- Rules 3.10 and 5.1.B Lineup – made consistent by requiring both first name and last name in both sections.
- Rule 6.1.D explicit language as to how a pitcher who is on the rubber can remove them self from pitching position.
- Rule 9.6.A Retouch on awarded bases explicitly stated that a runner may complete their advance or return.
- Rule 17.13.a and Rule 18.18.a Pitching Coach Restrictions for Coach Pitch & Machine Pitch the same – Can only coach batter prior to pitch.

Editorial Changes

- Rule 2 Bat Warmers approved by USSSA are permitted.
- Rule 3 Clarified meaning of Intentional walk
- Rule 3 Catch Definition – rewrote section
- Rule 3 Coach's Box Definition - NEW
- Rule 3 Trap Definition - NEW
- Rule 5.9 Injured Player – Changed “unconscious to “Apparently unconscious”.
- Rule 6.1.K. Pitcher time to release - added “to prepare for the next pitch” and reworded for Clarification
- Rule 8.3. Courtesy Runner reworded for Clarification
- Rule 8.17 and 8.18.I - tagging runner - Made Rules 8.17.D and 8.18.I consistent
- ARTICLE IV. INDIVIDUAL PLAYER ELIGIBILITY – Clarified wording

USSSA Official Fast Pitch Playing Rules TENTH EDITION

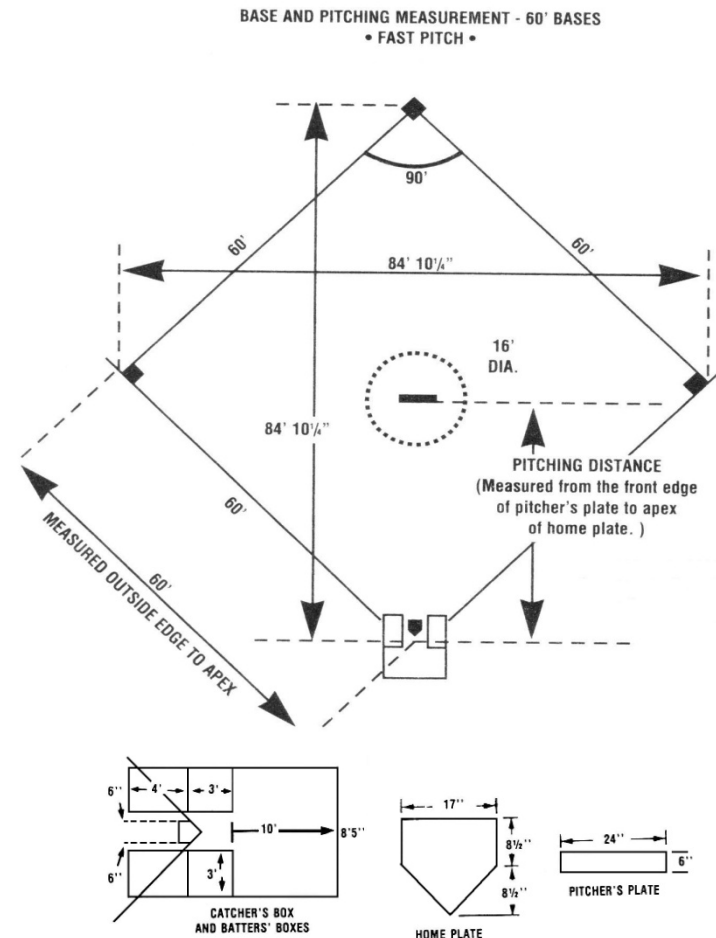
USSSA's On-Line Fast Pitch Rule Book is located at: www.USSSA.com
The On-Line Rule Book Supersedes the Printed Edition

NOTE: Use of the word “he” in this publication is intended to include both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise noted.

RULE 1. PLAYING FIELD

The Field

Diagram



Sec 1. Pitching, base path distances and recommended field distances.

Divisions	Female Pitching Distance	Male Pitching Distance	Base path Radius	Playing Field
Coach Pitch	35 Ft.	35 Ft.	60 Ft.	150-200 Ft
Machine Pitch	35 Ft.	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	150-200 Ft.
8 & Under	35 Ft.	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
9 & Under	35 Ft.	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
10 & Under	35 Ft.	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
11 & Under	40 Ft.	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
12 & Under	40 Ft.	40 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
13 & Under	43 Ft.	46 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
14 & Under	43 Ft.	46 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 Ft.
15 & Under	43 Ft.	46 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 - 225 Ft.
16 & Under	43 Ft.	46 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 - 225 Ft.
18 & Under	43 Ft.	46 Ft.	60 Ft.	200 - 225 Ft.
Women's Open	43 Ft.		60 Ft.	200 - 225 Ft.
Men's Open		46 Ft.	60 Ft.	225 - 265 Ft.

NOTE: Every effort should be made by the Umpire to obtain the correct dimensions. If the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be at the wrong dimensions during the course of the game, the error shall be corrected immediately, with no penalty. The game shall continue and shall not be protested for this reason.

- Sec 2.** The **softball field** shall contain a 60-foot square infield diamond and an outfield area that may or may not be enclosed by a fence. All lines on the playing field shall be marked with a material, which is not injurious to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited. From the mid-point of the front edge of the pitcher's plate, there shall be a circle drawn, which is 16 feet in diameter (8-ft. radius). The catcher's box, bases, coach's boxes, batters boxes and 3 foot first base line shall be as in the "The Field Diagram". The infield and outfield, including the boundary marks from the apex of home plate to 1st and 3rd, and their extended foul lines, are fair ground. All other areas are foul grounds. The recommended width of all marked (chalked) lines on the playing field is 2 1/2 inch.
- On deck circles** shall be a safe distance to the side and away from home plate; at least 30 feet if space allows. Neither team's players shall warm up in the other teams on deck circle. The on deck circle does not have to be occupied, but if a player wishes to warm up, they shall do so in their teams on deck circle.
 - The **batter's box** shall be 7 feet long. The front of the batter's box shall be 4 feet forward from the center of home plate and 3 feet wide starting 6 inches from the plate.
 - Three foot running lane** is a line drawn 3 feet from and parallel to the first base foul line starting halfway between home and first base and extending to first base.

D. Bases & Plates

First, Second, Third Base shall be 15 inches square, made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than 5 inches high. Each base shall be securely attached to the ground.

The Double First Base may be used. This base shall be 15 by 30 inches and made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than 5 inches high. Half the base is white [over fair territory] and half is orange [over foul territory].

Home Plate shall be a 5 sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable similar material. The Dimension as per The Field Diagram

The Pitching Plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber or suitable material, 24 inches by 6 inches. It shall be set in the ground with the top flush with the playing surface.

RULE 2. EQUIPMENT

Sec 1. BATTING HELMET

In the **Youth program**, NOCSAE approved batting helmets with extended ear flaps, which cover both ears and temples are mandatory for all batters, on deck batters, base runners, non-adult base coach, non-adult bat & ball shaggers and any offensive player in live ball territory, even if the ball is dead.

Batting helmets must have NOCSAE approved attached face mask/guard. A commercially manufactured face mask/guard may be attached to a batting helmet, provided it is attached by the manufacture; or a face mask/guard may be attached to a helmet that does not have a face mask, provided the attachment procedure is approved by the manufacture.

A chinstrap is optional.

In the **Adult program**, NOCSAE approved helmets are required. An attached face mask/guard is highly recommended.

When an Umpire observes anyone required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removing the batting helmet while the ball is live, and that person is in live ball territory, the Umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the involved person's team. All subsequent violations of the rule shall result in an ejection; player is confined to bench area.

Sec 2. CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT

In the **Youth program**, the catcher shall wear a NOCSAE approved head protector (with dual earflaps), an approved mask with throat protector, a body chest protector and shin guards. If a hockey style NOCSAE approved catchers helmet is used, a separate throat protector is not needed. A male catcher or any male player warming up a pitcher shall wear an approved protective cup.

In the **Adult program**, the catcher shall wear a mask with throat protector. All protective equipment must conform to industry standards.

Any non-adult warming up a pitcher within the confines of the playing, field shall wear an approved protective mask with throat protector.

Sec 3. THE BALL

The official ball to be used shall have raised seams and shall be of spherical design with a smooth surface. The center or core of the ball shall be of a material and design traditionally used to make softballs, or of other material, or design, approved by the USSSA. The cover shall be of horsehide, cowhide, or other material approved by USSSA and shall be cemented to the core and stitched with cotton, linen, or nylon or any other material approved by USSSA. A multiple layer core design ball or a multiple material core design ball may be approved in the sole discretion of the USSSA on a case-by-case basis. The stitch color must be blue. The internal composition of the core and the material of the cover must be clearly printed on the ball and the words "Official Fast Pitch Softball" must be clearly printed on the ball.

FAST PITCH (12") OPTIC YELLOW COVER ONLY -BLUE STITCH Ball
- must have "USSSA FAST PITCH CLASSIC ", in 1/8" minimum letters and the USSSA logo in at least 1-1/8" diameter. Lettering and logo in blue.

Compression: Maximum of **375#**
COR: 46.25 +/- 0.75
Circumference: 12 +/- 1/8"
Weight: 6.6 +/- 0.30 oz.

FAST PITCH (11") OPTIC YELLOW COVER ONLY -BLUE STITCH Ball
- must have "USSSA FAST PITCH CLASSIC ", in 1/8" minimum letters and the USSSA logo in at least 7/8" diameter. Lettering and logo in blue.

Compression: Maximum of **375#**
COR: 46.25 +/- 0.75
Circumference: 11 +/- 1/8"
Weight: 6.0 +/- 0.20 oz.

All 10 year old and younger divisions shall use the 11-inch softball. All other programs shall use the 12-inch softball.

Sec 4. SHOES

Shoes are required equipment for all participants. All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. Spikes must not extend in excess of 3/4 -inch from the sole and may not be round.

A. (Youth) The sole may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats. Shoe sole or heel protectors other than the standard shoe plate are prohibited. In all divisions 14 and under and younger, Metal cleats and metal toe plates are prohibited.

PENALTY: In divisions which do not allow metal cleats and toe plates, Metal cleats results in the offender being ejected. Metal toe plates must be removed prior to continuing play.

B. (Adult) The sole may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal cleats. 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.

Sec 5. JEWELRY (Youth only – 18&Under and younger)

Players in the game are prohibited from wearing jewelry such as rings, watches, earrings whether covered with tape or not, bracelets, necklaces (including cloth and string type), or other hard decorative items. Unadorned devices with no sharp edges or points, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips, no longer than 2 inches, may be worn to control a player's hair are permitted. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn they must be taped to the body, so as to remain visible. If jewelry is not removed, that player will not be able to play until the jewelry is removed.

A player who participates with jewelry is subject to penalties as per Rule 11 Sportsmanship.

Sec 6. PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

Equipment such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, etc., are prohibited. Casts, splints and braces may be worn, if padded.

Sec 7. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

All players are permitted to wear any approved protective equipment including catcher's equipment, batter's helmet, facemasks and soccer style shin guards. Any appropriate protective gear will be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, unless by rule or by Director/Umpire ruling such protective gear is disallowed as unsafe or as providing an unfair competitive advantage. If used, the equipment must not be detached. Detached equipment can result in obstruction or interference ruling. Repeated acts could be grounds for ejection.

Sec 8. UNIFORMS

At all national and world qualifying tournaments, teams must wear identical uniforms. This includes jerseys, long pants or shorts and leggings. Whether long pants or shorts are worn, all team members must be uniformed alike. Players shall wear uniforms properly and as designed by the manufacturer.

- A. Caps are optional, however when worn they must be all alike and worn with the bill forward. Caps, visors and headbands may be mixed. If worn, a headband must be one piece, and a single solid color. Plastic visors and bandannas are prohibited
- B. Any exposed undergarment becomes part of the uniform and must be solid color. All exposed undershirts must be the same color. All exposed undershorts (sliders) must be the same color.
- C. Non duplicating numbers will be required at all national and World Series qualifying tournaments. The numbers must be minimum of three inches in size and clearly visible.
- D. Coaches must be neatly attired. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.

Sec 9. GLOVES/MITTS

Gloves/mitts made of leather shall be worn by all fielders.

- A. The glove/mitt worn by the catcher may be any size.

- B. The glove/mitt may be any combination of colors except the color of the game ball or optic. Glove lacing and manufacturer’s logos may be any color other than that of the ball. A gray, white or optic colored circle on the outside or inside of the glove/mitt that gives the appearance of a ball is illegal. A glove/mitt that is judged to be distracting by the Umpire is illegal.
- C. The glove/mitt worn by all fielders except the catcher shall conform to the following maximum specifications:
 1. Height measured from the bottom edge or heel straight up across the center of the palm to a line even with the highest point of the glove/mitt: 14 inches
 2. Width of palm measured from the bottom edge of the webbing farthest from the thumb in a horizontal line to the outside of the little finger edge of the glove/mitt: 8 inches
 3. Webbing measured across the top end or along any line parallel to the top: 5 3/4 inches.

Sec 10. THE OFFICIAL BAT shall be round in cross section, straight in length, and measure not more than 34 inches long including tape or other grip additions to the bat, and not more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter in its largest part and its weight shall not exceed 31 1/2 ounces, including tape or grip addition to the bat. The bat shall have a safety grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter’s swing. The safety grip shall be not less than 10 inches long, nor extend more than 15 inches from the small end or handle end of the bat. Graphics, including BPF markings, must be permanent and cannot be decals or any other method that can be easily removed or added to the bat.

- A. The bat shall be made of hard wood, in one piece, or laminated from sections of hard wood bonded together with adhesive in such a way that the grain directions of all the pieces are essentially parallel to the lengths of the bat.
- B. The bat may also be made of aluminum or other metals, Fiberglass, graphite or a composite material. The bat may be made in pieces from different materials; but must have a closed barrel end and may be modular with interchangeable parts, subject to additional safety and tampering requirements as set forth in the standard USSSA Bat Licensing Agreement. The knob portion must be welded, or mechanically attached to the bat.
- C. Authorized bat manufacturers shall mark their products with the words “Official Softball” or words to that effect. If the words “Official Softball” are illegible the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other respects. When a bat does not meet the specifications as defined, has flat spots or pronounced dents, or if in the Umpire’s judgment, the bat has been altered, the Umpire shall prohibit the use of the doubtful bat.
- D. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or less under the ASTM BPF test as applied under the standard USSSA Bat License Agreement. A list of

those bats licensed and complying with this standard and therefore legal in USSSA play shall be kept by USSSA and published and made available by means including, but not limited to, the USSSA website. Only bats on the published list will be legal for USSSA play. In addition, no bat shall be legal in USSSA play unless it is marked “USSSA BPF 1.20”. Bats manufactured before January 1, 2004 must be marked “1.20 BPF” or “BPF 1.20”

- E. A USSSA Director may at any time ask to inspect a bat that has been brought into the location of a USSSA sanctioned event. The owner and / or user may either:
 1. Allow the Director to inspect the bat and reach an initial conclusion on whether the bat might be altered. If after making an inspection, the Director, in his sole discretion, decides that the bat might be an altered bat, the suspected offending owner may either:
 - a. Allow the Director to send the bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee and/or the Manufacturer of the bat for a determination as to whether the bat is altered. NOTE: During the time of the examination of the bat by the Manufacturer/ Altered Bat Committee, the USSSA, in the sole discretion of the USSSA Altered Bat Committee, may suspend the suspected offending player pending the decision. If the Manufacturer or the USSSA Altered Bat Committee determines in their sole discretion that the bat has been altered, the Altered Bat Committee may suspend a first time offender for up to two years from USSSA play. For any second time offender, any suspension may be up to a lifetime suspension.
 - b. Accept a one-year (up to life for second time offenders) suspension from USSSA play with no right of appeal.
 2. Withhold the bat from inspection and accept a one-year (up to life suspension for second time offenders) suspension from USSSA play with no right to appeal.

After examination of a bat to determine if it is altered, the bat shall be returned to the owner. No owner and/or player altered bat suspensions will occur unless the suspect bat is determined to be altered.

Sec 11. BAT WARMERS

Bat Warmers approved by USSSA are permitted.

Sec 12. WARM-UP BAT

No player may use more than two bats when warming up in the on-deck circle. A warm-up bat shall have all parts permanently and securely attached at the time of manufacture and at the time of use. Devices added to a bat for warm-up purposes shall be commercially manufactured specifically for a softball bat and shall be securely attached, so as not to disengage during use. Such Devices shall take, but not exceed, the general shape and size of a bat including the grip.

Only USSSA approved bats, USSSA approved weighted bats, or USSSA approved bat weight attachments may be used in loosening up. Nothing such

as a donut or fan may be used when loosening up.

RULE 3. DEFINITIONS

- Sec 1. BALL.** The ball is one of the playing implements. The term is also used to designate a pitch, which is not touched by the bat and is not a strike.
- Sec 2. BASE LINE.** A base line is an imaginary direct line between the bases.
- Sec 3. BASE ON BALLS.** If a batter receives four balls, he is awarded a base on balls (often referred to as a “walk”) and shall go immediately to first base before time-out can be called.
The defense may not notify the umpire nor cause illegal pitch(es) to intentionally walk a batter. A team may intentionally walk a batter. However they must throw four pitches. They cannot simply declare to put the batter on base nor can the pitcher commit repeated illegal pitches.
- Sec 4. BASE PATH.** A base path is a direct line between a base and the runner’s position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag a runner.
- Sec 5. BAT, ILLEGAL.** An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements of Rule 2 Sec 10 – The Official Bat as described in the Equipment Rule.
- Sec 6. BATTED BALL.** A batted ball is any ball that comes in contact with the bat. It need not be intentional.
- A. A FLY BALL is a batted ball that rises to an appreciable height above the ground.
 - B. A LINE DRIVE is a batted ball which travels parallel or nearly so with the ground through most of its flight.
 - C. A GROUND BALL is one that is neither a fly nor a line drive.
- Sec 7. BATTER.** The offensive player whose turn it is to bat.
- Sec 8. BATTER-RUNNER.** The batter-runner is a player who has finished their time at bat and has left the batter’s box (both feet touching completely outside the box) but has not yet been put out or reached first base.
- Sec 9. BATTER’S BOX.** The batter’s box is the area including the lines in which the batter is positioned while at bat.
- Sec 10. BATTING ORDER.** The batting order is the official listing of offensive players by first and last name, in the order in which they are to bat. Uniform number and defensive position shall be listed on the lineup sheet.
- Sec 11. BLOCKED BALL.** A blocked ball is a fair ball, batted or thrown, which is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game; or touches any object which is not part of the official equipment or official playing area; or touches loose equipment

- Sec 12. BUNT.** A bunt is a fair ball, which occurs when the batter does not swing to hit the ball, but holds the bat in the path of the ball to tap it slowly to the infield
- Sec 13. BUNT, ATTEMPTED.** An attempted bunt (“offer”) is any movement of the bat toward the ball when the ball is over or near the plate area. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempt to bunt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be pulled back away from the ball. If an attempted bunt results in a foul ball, it is treated as any other foul ball, if the batter has two strikes and this happens, he is out.
- Sec 14. BUNT, DRAG.** A drag bunt is a bunt where the batter attempts to bunt the ball by running forward in the batter box, carrying the bat with her. The movement of the bat is in conjunction with the batters forward movement.
- Sec 15. CATCH.** A catch is the act of a fielder getting secure possession in a hand or glove of a live ball in flight and firmly holding it.
- A. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of it and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.
 - 1. If a player drops the ball after reaching into the glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.
 - 2. It is considered a catch if a fielder catches the ball before leaving live-ball area by stepping or falling into a bench, dugout, stand, bleacher or over any boundary or barrier, such as a fence, rope, chalk line, or a pre-game determined imaginary boundary line of the field of play. Falling into does not include merely running against such object.
 - 3. A fielder who is out of play may come back to live ball territory and make a valid play.
 - 4. A collapsible fence is considered in play.
 - B. A Catch shall not be credited when
 - 1. The fielder traps the ball.
 - 2. A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or properly worn glove. A cap, protector, mask, pocket or other part of the uniform may not be used to catch the ball. 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.
 - 3. The fielder uses any equipment or part of her uniform that is displaced from its proper position to play on a batted ball.
 - 4. A fielder is out of play while:
 - a. One foot is entirely touching out of play. Note: an out of play line is in play.
 - b. Any other part of the body is touching out of play.
 - c. In the air after being out of play.
 - 5. The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground beyond the original plane of the home-run fence when they contact the ball.

6. The ball strikes anything or anyone other than another defensive player while it is in flight even though it is then caught by a defensive player.
7. Immediately after a catch, the fielder collides with another player, Umpire or fence, or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.

- Sec 16. CATCHER'S BOX.** The catcher's box is area in which the catcher must remain from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. The catcher's body and equipment are considered within the box unless touching the ground outside the box.
- Sec 17. COACH'S BOX.** The coach's box is the area to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted prior to release of the pitch.
- Sec 18. CONFERENCE, CHARGED.** A charged conference takes place when a coach or bench personnel requests time-out to meet with offensive or defensive personnel.
- Sec 19. CONFERENCE, PRE-GAME.** A pre-game conference is a meeting involving the Umpires and the coaches near home plate. Team captains may also attend.
- Sec 20. CROW HOP.** A crow hop is the replanting of the pivot foot prior to delivery of the pitch.
- Sec 21. DEAD BALL.** It is a dead ball when the ball is not in play. The ball is not considered in play again until the pitcher is in possession of the ball and is stationed within the 16-foot circle and the Plate Umpire calls "Play Ball."
- Sec 22. DEAD-BALL AREA.** The dead-ball area is beyond any real boundary, such as a fence, rope, chalk line, any stands, bleachers, dugouts, players' bench or designated media area; or any imaginary boundary line as determined in the pregame conference. If a ball becomes lodged in a fence or backstop, it is considered to be in dead-ball area.
- Sec 23. DESIGNATED PLAYER (DP).** The Primary Role of the DP is to play offense (bats/runs) for the FLEX. The DP may play defense at any position.
- Sec 24. DUGOUT.** An out-of-play area reserved for rostered players, coaches, and official representatives of the team only.
- Sec 25. EJECTED.** A player or coach removed from the game by the Umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct. A flagrant act will require the player or coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. Any ejected player or coach discovered participating in the game would constitute a forfeit.
- Sec 26. FAIR BALL.** A fair ball is a batted ball which:
- A. Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or home and third base;
 - B. Is on or over fair territory including any part of first and third base when bounding to the outfield.

- C. Touches first, second or third bases.
- D. While on or over fair territory touches the person of any Umpire or player or their clothing or equipment except the batter in the batter's box.
- E. While over fair territory passes out of the playing field in flight.
- F. First falls or is touched on or over fair territory beyond first or third base.

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

- Sec 27. FAIR TERRITORY.** Fair territory is that part of the playing field within, and including, the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards.
- Sec 28. FIELDER.** A fielder is any player of the team in the field.
- Sec 29. FLEX.** The Primary Role of the FLEX is to play defense only which can be at any defensive position. The FLEX may remain in the last position (non-batting) in the lineup for the entire game, or may assume the DP's position in the batting order and play offense (bat/run).
- Sec 30. FORCE PLAY.** A force play is a play on the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner who loses the right to the base occupied and is forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner. For a given runner, a force play ends as soon as batter-runner reaches first base or any other runner reaches the next base or a following runner is put out.
- Sec 31. FORFEIT.** A forfeited game is one awarded to the opponent of the offending team. The score shall be recorded as 7 to 0.
- Sec 32. FOUL BALL.** A foul ball is a batted ball which:
- A. Settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base.
 - B. Bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory.
 - C. First falls on foul territory beyond first or third base.
 - D. While on or over foul territory touches the person of an Umpire, a player or any object foreign to the natural ground or contacts the batter in the batter's box.
- Sec 33. FOUL TERRITORY.** Foul territory is that part of the playing field outside the foul lines and perpendicularly upwards.
- Sec 34. FOUL TIP.** A foul tip is a batted ball, which goes directly and speedily from the bat to the catcher's mitt or hand and is legally caught by the catcher, ball remains live.
- Sec 35. GAME**

- A. A **regulation game** is seven innings (term at bat) unless extra inning(s) are necessary because of a tie score, or unless shortened because the home team does not require its half of the seventh inning or only a fraction of it, or because of weather or darkness.
 - B. A **called game** is one that is ended by order of the Umpire.
 - C. A **suspended game** is a game to be completed at a later time.
- Sec 36. ILLEGAL PLAYER.** A player who takes a position in the lineup, either on offense or defense, who does not have a legal right to the position.
- Sec 37. INELIGIBLE PLAYER.** A player who is unregistered or who does not meet requirements to register.
Examples of an ineligible player but not limited to are:
1. Playing under an assumed name.
 2. Players not on the team roster.
 3. Violating divisional age requirements.
- Sec 38. IN FLIGHT.** A batted or thrown ball is in flight until it has touched the ground or some object on fair or foul ground, or it has touched a person other than a fielder.
- Sec 39. INFIELD.** The infield is that portion of the field in fair territory that is normally skinned and covered by infielders.
- Sec 40. INFIELD FLY.** An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (rule does not preclude outfielders from being allowed to make the catch); and provided the hit is made before two are out and at a time when first and second base or all bases are occupied.
- Sec 41. INFIELDER.** An infielder is a fielder who defends the skinned area of the field around first, second, third or shortstop areas. They usually are the first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, pitcher and catcher.
- Sec 42. INITIAL PLAY.** A fielder is considered to be making an initial play on a fair batted ball when he has a reasonable chance to gain control of a ground ball that no other fielder (except the pitcher) has touched or a reasonable chance to catch the ball in flight after it touches another fielder. The fielder is still considered to be making an initial play if he fails to gain control of the batted ground ball and is within a step and a reach (in any direction) of the spot of the initial play.
- Sec 43. INNING**
- A. An **inning** is that portion of the game, which includes a time at bat for each team.

- B. A **half inning** is the interval during which one team is on offense (batting) and the other is on defense (fielding). A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning, the winning run is scored. In either case, if there is a delayed out declared by the Umpire for a base running infraction, a possible fourth out may be recognized for the inning, depending on the circumstances.
A new half inning begins immediately after the end of the previous half inning.
- C. An **extra inning** is one, which extends the game beyond regulation play in an attempt to break a tie score.

- Sec 44. INTERFERENCE.** Interference is an act which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.
- A. **Offensive interference** is interference (physical or verbal) by the team at bat, or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline; or when a coach physically assists a runner during playing action.
 - B. **Umpire interference** is when the Umpire, inadvertently moves so as to hinder a catcher's attempt to throw or when a fair, untouched ball touches an Umpire before the closest infielder has a reasonable opportunity to field the ball.
 - C. **Spectator interference** is any action by a spectator, which impedes the progress of the game.

Sec 45. LEAP. A leap is when both feet are airborne

- Sec 46. OBSTRUCTION.** Obstruction is the act of a defensive team member which hinders a runner or changes the pattern of play or when a catcher or fielder hinders a batter unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or making an initial play on a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.
- A. It is **catcher obstruction** when a catcher hinders or prevents a batter from swinging at a pitch.
 - B. A **fake tag** is an act by a defensive player that simulates an attempt to tag a runner. Faking a tag is always considered obstruction.

Sec 47. ON-DECK BATTER. The on-deck batter is the offensive player who follows the batter in the batting order.

Sec 48. ON-DECK CIRCLE. An on-deck circle for each team is a circle 5 feet in diameter located a safe distance to the side and away from home plate, at least 30 feet if space allows.

Sec 49. OUTFIELD. The outfield is that portion of the field beyond the infield.

Sec 50. OUTFIELDER. An outfielder is a fielder who defends the outfield.

- Sec 51. PASSED BALL.** A passed ball is a pitch which the catcher fails to stop or control with ordinary effort and which enables a runner to advance.
- Sec 52. PIVOT FOOT.** The pitchers pivot foot is that foot which is in contact with the ground, as opposed to the non-pivot foot, which the pitcher uses to step toward home plate.
- Sec 53. PLAY BALL.** Play ball is the term used by the Plate Umpire to indicate that play shall start and shall not be declared until all defensive players are in fair territory except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box, and all runners are properly on base.
- Sec 54. QUICK PITCH.** A quick pitch is a pitch made by the pitcher with the obvious attempt to catch the batter off balance. This would be before the batter takes a desired position in the batter's box or while the batter is still off balance as a result of the previous pitch.
- Sec 55. RESTRICTED TO THE BENCH.** A player or coach who has been confined to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game. It is generally as a result of an infraction of a playing rule (not an unsportsmanlike act or conduct).
- Sec 56. RUNNER.** A runner is an offensive player who has reached first base and has not yet been put out.
- Sec 57. SACRIFICE.** A sacrifice is a bunt which enables any runner to advance, or a fly ball which enables a runner to score; but, in either case, results in the batter-runner being put out before reaching first base or would have resulted in the batter-runner being put out if the hit had been fielded without error and provided two were not out when the ball was hit. A sacrifice is not listed as a "time-at-bat."
- Sec 58. SLAP HIT.** A slap hit occurs when the batter gives the appearance of bunting, using a modified swing or slap at the ball as it approaches home plate. If an attempt to "SLAP" is a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball including an attempt by the batter with two strikes.
- Sec 59. SLIDE.** A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, the runner shall be within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot when the slide is completed.
A slide is illegal if:
A. The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder.
B. The runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position.
C. The runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder.

- D. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg.
E. The runner tries to injure the fielder.

- Sec 60. OVER SLIDE.** An over slide is the act of an offensive player when, as a runner, over slides a base the player is attempting to reach. It is usually caused when the player's momentum causes the player to lose contact with the base leaving the player in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over slide first base without being in jeopardy.
- Sec 61. STARTING PLAYER.** A starting player is one of the first nine, ten, eleven or twelve (if using the optional **DP/FLEX** and/or APs) listed on the lineup card that is approved by the Plate Umpire.
- Sec 62. STRIKE ZONE.** The strike zone is that space over home plate, which is between the batters forward armpit and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. Any part of the ball passing through the strike zone in flight shall be considered a strike; the Umpire shall determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance
- Sec 63. STRIKEOUT.** A strikeout is the result of the pitcher getting a third strike charged to a batter. In Fast Pitch, this usually results in the batter being out. Anytime first base is unoccupied, or there are two outs, and the third strike is not caught, the batter-runner is entitled to advance. *See exception in 10 & Under and Younger Section.*
- Sec 64. SUBSTITUTE.** Any member of a team's roster who is not listed as a starting player, or a starting player who re-enters the game.
- Sec 65. TAG OUT.** A tag out is the putting out of a runner (including the batter-runner), who is not touching a base, by touching the runner with a live ball or with the glove or hand when the live ball is securely held therein by a fielder. The ball is not considered as having been held securely if it is juggled or dropped after the touching unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand of the fielder.
- Sec 66. THROW.** A throw is the act of voluntarily losing possession through having the ball leave the hand for a purpose other than a pitch. It may result in the ball being bounced, handed, rolled, tossed or thrown.
- Sec 67. THROW OUT.** A throw out is a putout caused by a throw to first base to retire a batter-runner, or to any other base to which a runner is forced or is required to retouch
- Sec 68. TIME.** "Time" is the command of the Umpire to suspend play. The ball becomes dead when it is given.

Sec 69. TRAP. 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/hand is over, rather than under, it and the fielder does not have secure possession. 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.

Sec 70. TURN AT BAT. A turn at bat begins when a player first enters the batter's box and continues until the player is substituted for, put out, or becomes a batter-runner while at bat.

Sec 71. WILD PITCH. A wild pitch is a pitch that cannot be handled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

RULE 4. THE GAME

Sec 1. FITNESS of GROUNDS

The Umpires are the sole judges of the fitness of the grounds. The Umpire and/or Tournament Director shall suspend play if the weather or other conditions make play unsafe.

Sec 2. RUN SCORES

- A. A runner scores one run each time he legally touches first, second, third bases and home plate or a runner starting at second in a tiebreaker inning touches third and home.
- B. Runs scored would not count
 1. When the third out is a force out.
 2. When the third out is a batted ball in flight that is caught or prevented from being caught by interference.
 3. If a base running infraction were the third out, runs scored by the following runner(s) would not count
 4. When a runner crosses home plate after a preceding runner is declared the third out for a base running infraction.
 5. With two outs, if the base missed were the first to which the batter or runner was forced to advance, no runs would score.

Sec 3. TIME LIMITS

Tournament Directors and League Officials may establish time limits such that a game will consist of seven (7) innings or the amount of time specified, whichever comes first. No new inning will begin once the time limit has expired. Any inning which has been started prior to the time limit expiring will be completed.

The time begins when the pre-game conference ends and the home team is allowed to take the field. A new inning begins as soon as the third out is recorded in the previous inning.

If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

In the Youth Program, the recommended time limit is 1 hour and 30 minute.

Sec 4. The RUN RULE awards a win to a team that has a 12 runs lead after 3 completed innings or 2 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead, 10 runs after 4 completed inning or 3 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead, 8 runs lead after 5 completed innings or 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

Sec 5. TIEBREAKER

After the completion of 7- innings, or when time limits have expired, and the score is still tied, the tiebreaker procedure will begin. The player, who had the last completed at bat, assumes a position on 2nd base. A substitute may be inserted. A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher or catcher. This procedure would be done at the beginning of each half inning; until a winner is determined.

If the absent player should begin the half inning at second base, no out is declared. The player whose name precedes the absent player in the line-up is placed on second base.

Sec 6. REGULATION GAME

- A. A game ends when the team behind in score has completed its turn at bat in the seventh inning, in any extra inning or time limit has expired. If the home team scores a go ahead run in the bottom of the seventh inning, in any extra inning or time limit has expired the game is terminated at that point.
- B. If a game is suspended and later resumed, it will be continued from the point of suspension, with the lineup and batting order of each team exactly the same as at the point of suspension.
- C. If a game ends because of weather conditions and the Tournament Director feels that the possibility of resuming the game is not likely, it is then a regulation game provided:
 1. Three full innings have been played; or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in two or two and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in their three-inning turn.

2. Play has gone beyond three full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turn's at bats. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.

Sec 7. FORFEITED GAME

- A. A game shall be forfeited to the offended team by the Tournament Director when a team:
 1. Is late in appearing or in beginning play after the Umpire calls "Play Ball."
 2. Refuses to continue play after the game has started.
 3. Delays more than one minute in resuming play after the Umpire calls "Play ball" or in obeying the Umpire's order to remove a player for violation of the rules.
 4. Persists in tactics designed to delay or shorten the game.
 5. Willfully and persistently violates any one of the rules after being warned by the Umpire.
 6. Can not provide the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game.
- B. Score of a forfeited game is 7 to 0 unless the game is forfeited after the number of innings required for a regulation game and the offending team is behind, then the score remains as recorded. If the offending team is leading, the score shall be 7 to 0. All individual and team averages shall be included in the official records, except that no pitcher shall be credited with a victory or charged with a loss in such a game if it is not a regulation game.

Sec 8. CHARGED CONFERENCE

- A. **Defense** - Each team when on defense, may be granted not more than three charged conferences without penalty during a seven-inning game to permit coaches or their representatives from the bench to confer with a defensive player or players. In any extra inning game, each team shall be permitted one charged conference without penalty each inning while on defense. The number of charged conferences is not cumulative. A coach, player, substitute or an attendant may make a request for time for a conference. This defensive team charged conference is effective when the ball first becomes live at the start of each half inning.
PENALTY: After three charged conferences in a seven inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one in each extra inning, the pitcher shall be removed as a pitcher for the duration of the game.
- B. **Offensive** - Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of that team's personnel to confer with the base runners, the batter, the ondeck batter or other offensive team personnel. The Umpire shall deny any subsequent offensive team request for charged conferences. This

offensive team charged conference rule is effective when the ball first becomes live in each half inning

- C. Not charged
 1. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference.
 2. A conference is not charged when the pitcher is removed as a pitcher.
 3. If a dugout representative confers with any player during a charged conference of the other team and is ready to play ball when the other team is ready.
- D. **Pre-Game Conference** - The pre-game meeting should begin approximately five minutes prior to the game and before the home team takes the field. There shall be no ball hit or thrown in live ball territory during this meeting. The purpose of the pre-game conference is to
 1. Exchange and check each team's lineup cards.
 2. Discusses ground rules.
 3. Identify the head coach
 4. Have coaches verify that their players are legally and properly equipped.

RULE 5. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- Sec 1. **PLAYERS** A team shall consist of at least nine players, whose positions shall be designated as; (1) Pitcher, (2) Catcher, (3) First Baseman, (4) Second Baseman, (5) Third Baseman, (6) Short Stop, (7) Left Fielder, (8) Center Fielder, (9) Right Fielder. In addition, a team may optionally include a DP/FLEX and/or up to two Additional Players (AP). The maximum number of players in the lineup is 12; the maximum number of batters in the lineup is 11.

- A. A team must have the required number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game.
- B. The team's lineup card shall include first name, last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and should include each eligible substitute. All listed starters must be present in the team area. Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the Plate Umpire during the pregame conference.
Eligible roster members may be added as substitutes at any time.

- Sec 2. **PLAYING SHORT** is an exception to Rule 5.1 above . A team shall be allowed to play with one batting position unfilled. The batting position the team cannot fill shall be designated as the absent player. When the absent player is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat. A team may play short under the following circumstances:
 - A. A team may continue a game with one less player than is currently in the batting order whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection and no substitutes are available.
 1. If the player leaving the game is the batter or a runner, they shall be

declared out. Exception: If the injury is caused by a rule violation by the defensive team (for example batter hit by pitch, obstruction, malicious contact), the player may be replaced by the player not currently on base who had the last completed time at bat. This exception does not apply to any future time at bat.

2. The players who have left the game cannot return to the lineup.

Exception: a player, who has left the game under the blood rule, may return.

B. A team may begin the game with eight (8) players in a 9 player lineup. The absent player shall be listed in the ninth (9th) batting position and the team will be required to take an automatic out in the ninth position in the batting order. Under no circumstances shall a team be allowed to have less than eight (8) players in the batting order.

C. The team may not play short if there is an eligible substitute available. If an eligible player arrives, they must enter the game immediately.

Sec 3. ADDITIONAL PLAYER - Up to two additional players can be used to increase the batting lineup to 10 or 11 batters. The additional player(s) will be placed in the line up in the batting position(s) to be occupied. The additional player(s) can also be used on defense (only 9 defensive players in the field), but must keep the same position in the batting order. The additional player(s), if used, must be selected prior to the start of the game, and their name(s) must be included on the line up card presented to the Umpire. Failure to declare the use of the additional player(s) prior to the game precludes the use of an additional player(s) in that game. If a pinch-hitter or pinch runner is used for an additional player, that player becomes the new additional player. The original additional player(s) may re-enter like any other player under the re-entry rule. If an additional player is used, the position must be used the entire game.

Sec 4. DP/FLEX - A team may use the Designated Player (DP)/FLEX option provided it is made known prior to the start of the game.

A. The DP's name is indicated on the lineup as one of the batters in the batting order.

B. The name of the player for whom the DP is batting (FLEX) will be placed in the last position (non-batting) following the last batter in the lineup.

C. The DP must remain in the same position in the lineup for the entire game.

D. The DP may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute or the FLEX.

If the DP is replaced on offense by the FLEX, the DP will leave the game. This reduces the number of players in the lineup by one. However the number of batters does not change.

If replaced by a substitute, the DP position remains in the lineup.

E. A DP may re-enter one time, as long as the DP returns to the original position in the batting order. If the DP re-enters or a substitute enters as the DP and the FLEX was batting in the DP's spot, the FLEX can either: return to the last position (non-batting) and play defense only, or

leave the game.

F. The DP may play defense at any position.

The DP may play defense for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game.

The DP may play defense for the FLEX and the FLEX is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players by eliminating the non-batting position in the lineup.

G. The FLEX may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute. The DP or an AP may play defense for the FLEX. Unless the Flex has replaced the DP, the FLEX will leave the game. If replaced by a substitute, the FLEX position remains in the lineup. The FLEX may re-enter the game one time provided they return to the non-batting position in the lineup.

1. If replaced by the DP, this eliminates the non-batting position.

2. If the FLEX re-enters or a substitute enters as the FLEX and the DP was playing defense in the FLEX player's spot,

a. the DP can return to batting only, play defense for another player and the non-batting position is re-established or

b. The DP can leave the game if the FLEX plays offense for the DP.

H. Placing the FLEX into one of the batting positions for someone other than the DP's position is considered an illegal substitution. The illegal substitute shall be removed from the game and restricted to the dugout/bench.

Sec 5. SUBSTITUTE - A player who replaces a player that is in the game (offense or defense). Teams are required to immediately report all substitutions to the Plate Umpire. Upon notification by either team, the Umpire shall announce the legal substitute and make the appropriate lineup card changes. An unreported legal substitute brought to the Umpire's attention will result in a penalty, all prior play shall stand.

PENALTY: For unreported substitution,

First offense: A team warning is issued.

Second offense: The head coach is ejected for remainder of the game only.

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. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

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. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

Effect—Placing the FLEX into one of the batting positions in the lineup for someone other than the original DP (or substitute) results in ejection of the FLEX.

A substitute or player who replaces a pitcher while the team is on defense shall pitch to the first opponent to bat against the substitute until that batter has advanced to first base, or has been put out or until there has been a third out. To ensure that the requirements are fulfilled, the Umpire will deny any coach-defensive player conference that will violate it.

- A. The starting pitcher must face one complete batter. If the starting pitcher is replaced before the first opposing batter has been put out or advanced to first base, the pitcher may play or re-enter at another position, but shall not return to pitch.
- B. A player may be removed as a pitcher and returned as a pitcher only once per inning. Provided the return as a pitcher does not violate either the pitching, substitution, or charged conference rule. If the pitcher, because of injury or being incapacitated, is replaced as pitcher and the above rule is not satisfied; or if the pitcher's substitute requires more warm-up throws than permitted, the pitcher shall not return to the game as a pitcher.

Sec 6. RE-ENTRY: Any player may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever in the line-up. A violation results in an illegal substitution. A substitute who is withdrawn may re-enter.

Sec 7. ILLEGAL PLAYER is a player who enters the line-up without the right to an offensive or defensive position. Examples of an Illegal player(s), but not limited to, are:

- A. Starter and/or substitute who re-enters in an incorrect batting position.
- B. Starter and/or substitute who re-enters a second time.
- C. Using a player to pitch who was removed from the pitching position because of Rule 4 Sec 8 A "Penalty".

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

PENALTY: An illegal player violation results in the immediate ejection of the illegal player and his/her coach. In addition, the following penalties will apply:

- A. If the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and before the next pitch, the illegal player is called out. Any advance by any runner as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified. Any additional outs recorded on the play stand.
- B. If the illegal player has made a defensive play and before the next pitch (or the defensive team or the Umpires have left the field), the offensive team has the option of 1) the result of the play or 2) replaying the last pitch.

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

Sec 8. INELIGIBLE PLAYER The penalty for using an ineligible player is a forfeit of any/all games played or in progress.

Sec 9. INJURED PLAYER

- A. During a live ball situation, when a player becomes injured such that, in the Umpire's judgment, requires immediate attention, the Umpire shall call "DEAD BALL" and allow or seek first aid.
EFFECT: Award any bases that would have been reached.
- B. A player who has been rendered **apparently** unconscious during a game is prohibited to resume playing that day without written authorization from a physician.

Sec 10. BLOOD RULE

Player/Substitute, Manager, Coach, Trainer, Batboy or other Team member or Umpire who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until the bleeding is stopped and the wound covered.

- A. If treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game. The amount of time is determined by the Umpire's judgment.
- B. If excessive time is involved, the re-entry rule would apply to players.
- C. If there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform or if a bandage becomes blood soaked, in the judgment of the Umpire, the uniform/bandage must be changed before the individual may participate.

RULE 6. PITCHING RULE

Sec 1. A legal pitch shall conform to the following:

- A. **Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall put both feet on the pitcher's plate. Part of the pivot foot must be on top of the pitcher's plate. The non-pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The hands must be apart. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without possession of the ball, and the pitcher may not simulate pitching with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.**
- B. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with the shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, with the hands separated.
- C. While in this position, the pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.
- D. After completing "C" above, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
Note: Before the pitch starts, the pitcher may remove them self from the pitching position by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet (either foot may be removed first) or by requesting time.
- E. The Pitch:
 - 1. The pitch **begins and cannot be discontinued** when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.

2. During the delivery, the pitcher shall take exactly one forward step toward home plate and land within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. No step backward is allowed.
 3. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.

NOTE 1: It is not a step if the pitcher slides his foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.

NOTE 2: Techniques such as the "crow hop" and "the leap" are illegal.
- F. A LEGAL DELIVERY - shall be a pitched ball that is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.
1. The release of the ball and the follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forwarded past the vertical line of the body.
 2. The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.
 3. The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or between the legs.
 4. The pitch is completed with a step toward the batter.
- G. THE PITCHER MAY USE ANY WINDUP DESIRED PROVIDED:
1. No motion to pitch is made without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
 2. The pitcher does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in pitching position, he removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
 3. The pitcher does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
 4. The pitcher does not make more than one and one half revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the pitching arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip.
 5. The pitcher does not continue to wind up after taking the forward step or after the ball is released.

NOTE: Continuation of the windup is considered any action that, after the ball is released, causes the arm to continue to rotate past the shoulder.
- H. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thigh that the Umpire judges to be distracting. If a pitcher wears a batting helmet while on defense, the outer covering and shield shall be a non-glare surface.
- I. Foreign Substance on the ball/Items on pitcher. The pitcher shall not at any time be allowed to use any moisture or foreign substance on the ball, the pitching hand or fingers nor do anything to deface the ball. Neither shall

any other player or team personnel apply moisture or a foreign substance to the ball nor do anything to deface the ball. Under the supervision and control of the Umpire, powdered resin may be on the hands to dry them. Gorilla Gold is a type of resin and is allow by USSSA Fast Pitch.

- The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.
- J. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, bounce, etc., the ball while in the pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it.

Effect Sec 1. A – J – Illegal Pitch
 - K. Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch or the Umpire says "play", the pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch.

Penalty: Dead ball; a ball on the batter
 - L. At the beginning of an inning or when a pitcher relieves another pitcher, one minute may be used to deliver not more than five practice pitches to the catcher, or some other teammate. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five.
 - M. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the back swing or forward motion, a ball is called on the batter. In either case, the ball remains in play and runners may advance at their own risk.

Sec 2. CATCHER and DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

- A. A catcher shall be inside the lines of the catcher's box and all other defensive players positioned in fair territory when the pitcher takes their position to pitch and when the pitch is released.

PENALTY: An illegal pitch is called.
- B. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout or a putout made by the catcher, or to play on a base runner.

PENALTY: The batter is awarded a ball.

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

EFFECT: The offending player shall be ejected from the game.

Sec 3 ILLEGAL PITCH

An illegal pitch is a pitching rules violation. An illegal pitch is called immediately. It is a delayed dead ball and should be signaled by the Umpire calling the illegal pitch and verbalized so a player could hear the call. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

- A. Effect: The pitch is declared a ball and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out.

- B. If the batter reaches first base safely and all other runner advance at least one base, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled. No option is given.
- C. The coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the results of the play or accepting the effect for an illegal pitch.
- D. If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
- E. If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
- F. The umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to the coach if requested.

Sec 4. NO PITCH shall be declared when:

- A. The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
 - B. A runner is called out for leaving a base too soon.
 - C. The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter is in position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch.
 - D. The pitcher pitches before a runner has retouched his base after being legitimately off that base.
 - E. A player, manager or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.
- The Umpire shall penalize according to the Sportsmanship Rule (11.2.Q).

EFFECT- A-E: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

RULE 7. BATTING

Sec 1. ON-DECK BATTER.

- A. The on-deck batter may take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest the offensive team bench. No player is permitted to warm up in the other team's on-deck circle.
- B. The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two. Any detachable piece placed on the bat must be approved.
- C. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:
 1. When the on-deck batter becomes the batter.
 2. To direct runners advancing from third to home plate.
- D. The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's opportunity to make an out.
 1. If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
 2. If it is with the defensive fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.

Sec 2. POSITION AND BATTING ORDER Each player of the team at bat shall become the batter and shall take his position within the batter's box (on either side of home base), in the order in which his name appears on the lineup card as delivered to the Umpire and the opposing team prior to the game. The order shall be followed during the entire game except that an entering substitute shall take the replaced player's place in the batting order. A batter is in proper order if he follows the preceding player in the lineup, even though such preceding batter may have batted out of order. An improper batter is considered to be at bat as soon as he enters the batter's box and one pitch has been thrown. When an improper batter's infraction is first discovered, time may be requested and the improper batter replaced by the proper batter who will assume the improper batter's ball and strike count, provided the infraction is detected before the improper batter is put out or becomes a base runner.

Sec 3. LEAD OFF BATTER. After the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed his time at bat in the preceding inning.

Sec 4. BATTING POSITION.

- A. **Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely in the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.**
- B. After the ball is in play, the batter may not step out of the batter's box to stop play unless time has been granted by the Umpire.
EFFECT: All action will continue and the pitch will be called.

Sec 5. A STRIKE is charged to the batter when:

- A. A pitched ball enters any part of the strike zone in flight and is not struck at.
- B. A pitched ball, in the Umpire's judgment, is prevented from entering the strike zone by any actions of the batter.
- C. A pitched ball is struck at and missed.
- D. A pitched ball becomes a foul ball when the batter has less than two strikes.
Note: A batted ball that contacts the batter in the batter's box is a foul ball.
- E. A pitched ball becomes a foul tip (even on a third strike) or a foul from an attempted bunt.
- F. A penalty strike is called because a batter delays.

Sec 6. A BALL is credited to the batter when a pitch is not touched by the bat and is not a strike or when there is an illegal pitch or for catcher / pitcher's delay.

Sec 7. A foul hit or fair hit, which may be a bunt, occurs when a pitch is touched by the bat of the batter who is in the batter's box.
EXCEPTION: Foul Tip.

Sec 8. A batter shall not delay the game by failing to promptly take his position in the batter's box within 10 seconds of the pitcher having the ball in the pitching circle, or by stepping out of the box when the pitcher is on the pitcher's plate.

PENALTY: If a pitcher is committed to delivering the pitch, the batter leaves the box at the risk of having a strike called while being out of position. For failure of the batter to be ready within 10 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the Umpire shall call a strike. If it is the third strike, the Umpire shall call time and declare the batter out.

NOTE 1: After entering the batter's box, the batter leaves it at the risk of being charged with delay. The batter may request time-out if he desires to step out for a valid reason and, if granted, the 10 seconds count will begin anew when the ball is declared live. The Umpire is authorized to refuse to grant time-out if the batter repeatedly causes delay or if his leaving the batter's box appears to be an attempt to worry the pitcher or to gain some other advantage.

NOTE 2: If the pitcher stops or hesitates in his delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box or holding up his hand to request time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. However, if the batter steps out of the box or holds up his hand to request time and the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a strike and the ball remains live. If a pitch is not delivered, a rule has been violated by both the batter and the pitcher. The Umpire shall call time, declare, "no-pitch" and begin play again. If the Umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the Umpire shall penalize according to the Sportsmanship Rule (11.2.Q).

Sec 9. A batter shall not hit the ball fair or foul while either foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or while touching the plate.

NOTE: A follow-through with the bat may carry one of the batter's feet entirely outside the box so it touches the ground as the ball is leaving the bat. It is customary for the Umpire to ignore this if both feet were in legal position at the start of the swing and if it is not considered an attempt to circumvent the spirit of the rule.

PENALTY: The ball becomes dead immediately. The batter is out.

Sec 10. A batter shall not disconcert the pitcher by stepping out of the box on one side of home plate to the box on the other side while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.

PENALTY: The ball becomes dead immediately. The batter is out.

Sec 11. A batter shall not permit a pitched ball to touch him

PENALTY: The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike), unless pitch was a third strike.

Sec 12. A batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate. By stepping out of the batter's box, by making any other movement which hinders action at home or the catcher's attempt to play

on a runner, or by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when there is a throw to home and there is time for the batter to move away.

PENALTY: Dead ball; the batter is out.

Sec 13. If the bat breaks and is hit by the ball or hits a runner or a fielder, no interference will be called. If a whole bat is thrown and interferes with a defensive player attempting a play, interference shall be called.

PENALTY: The batter is out and runners return. If, in the Umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two may be declared out (the batter throwing the bat and the runner closest to home).

Sec 14. A batter shall be called out when:

A. He enters the batter's box with an illegal bat.

B. A third strike is caught.

C. A bunt on a third strike is foul.

D. A third strike (in flight) is not caught, provided a runner occupies first base at the time of the pitch and there are less than two outs.

NOTE: If there are two outs or if no runner occupies first base, the batter is not out unless the third strike is caught. The batter is entitled to try to reach first base before being tagged out or thrown out.

E. Any coach or member of the offensive team interferes with a fielder attempting to field a foul fly.

F. A team is playing with one less batter than the starting number and the absent player's turn to bat is reached.

G. After hitting or bunting a ball, the bat hits the ball a second time while the ball is on or over fair territory, or is on or over foul territory and, in the Umpire's judgment, had a chance to become a fair ball, the ball is dead, no runner(s) advance and the batter is out.

EXCEPTION: If the bat and ball accidentally come in contact with each other a second time while the batter is holding the bat in the batter's box, it is a foul ball.

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 intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is live and in play.

PENALTY: All runners must return to the base occupied at the time of pitch in A, C, F.

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

I. When any part of a foot is touching home plate when the ball makes contact with the bat.

J. When a batter leaves the box, but has returned to the box and makes contact with the ball.

EXCEPTION– Section H-J: If no contact is made with the pitched ball, there is no penalty.

RULE 8. BASE RUNNING

Sec 1. **Stealing** of bases permitted.

Sec 2. **The LOOK-BACK RULE** is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball (e.g. has the ball in their hand, glove, under arm or chin, between their legs) within the 16-foot circle.

Any runner(s) in motion may continue without stopping or may stop once, but then must immediately move directly back to the last base touched or attempt to advance to the next base.

Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, they may not move off that base.

A batter-runner who overruns first and does not without delay attempt to advance to second is committed to return to first and stop.

The runner, off base, may not stand motionless.

There does not need to be any motion or recognition by the pitcher.

Failure of the runner to respond as indicated shall cause the Umpire to signal the runner out. The ball shall be declared dead.

If the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the 16-foot circle, the pitcher makes an attempt on any of the runners or a fake throw is made, this rule does not apply.

Being in the 16-foot circle is defined as both feet within or partially within the line. The feet may touch the line and extend outside the line. When the pitcher is in the pitcher's circle and a runner(s) is off the base, the pitcher is considered to be playing on the runner(s) when the throwing arm is raised or any forward movement of the body is made toward the runner. Movement of the head is not considered an attempt play.

Effect: Ball is dead and runner is out.

Sec 3. **COURTESY RUNNER**

A. The team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or catcher any time after they reach base other than by substitution. The same runner may not be used for both positions in the same inning. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave under such circumstances

B. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are not entitled to serve as a courtesy runner.

Penalty: A player who is not entitled to be a courtesy runner who is used as a courtesy runner shall immediately be called out and a team warning issued. On the second offense, the head coach is ejected for the remainder of game only.

C. A runner put in for any player other than the pitcher or catcher will be considered a substitute player.

D. A player may not run as a courtesy runner and be used as a substitute for another player in that half inning.

EXCEPTION: Unless there is an injury and there is no substitute

available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute and take the place of the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base, the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in their place.

E. Once a courtesy runner is designated for that half inning, no other courtesy runner or the pitcher or catcher may return to run for the original courtesy runner. Should an injury occur, another courtesy runner or the pitcher or catcher may run until they score or are put out.

F. The courtesy runner is not permitted to be used for the DP unless the DP is the pitcher or catcher of record.

PENALTY Unreported courtesy runner: An unreported courtesy runner is treated the same as an unreported substitute. The team is warned and further violations result in the ejection of the coach.

Sec 4. **A batter becomes a batter runner** with the right to attempt to score by advancing to first, second and third and then home plate in the listed order when:

A. Hitting a fair ball.

NOTE: Batter becomes a runner when entitled to run.

B. Charged with a third strike.

NOTE: if a third strike is caught, the batter is out an instant after becoming a runner.

See exception in 10 & Under and Younger Section.

C. A fourth ball is called by the Umpire.

D. A pitched ball, legal or illegal, hits the batter's person or clothing, provided the batter does not strike at the ball.

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

NOTE: If a batter's loose garment, such as a shirt that is not buttoned is hit by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to first base.

E. The catcher or any infielder obstructs him. Obstruction on the batter is a delayed dead ball. The coach or captain of the team at bat, after being informed by the Plate Umpire of the obstruction, shall indicate to the Umpire whether he elects to accept the result of the play or to accept the penalty of awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced. Such election shall be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal) or before the infielders leave the diamond. Obstruction of the batter (before he has become a batter-runner) is ignored if the batter-runner reaches first and all other runners advance at least one base.

NOTE 1. Any runner attempting to advance (i.e., steal or squeeze) on a catcher's or any infielder's obstruction of the batter shall be awarded the base he is attempting. If a runner is not attempting to advance on the catcher's obstruction, he shall not be entitled to the next base, unless forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.

NOTE 2. If obstruction is, enforced, all other runners on the play will return to the base occupied at time of the pitch unless forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.

NOTE 3. If the obstruction penalty is not enforced, all other runners advance at their own risk.

Sec 5. A batter-runner is awarded first base if:

- A. A fourth ball is called.
- B. Hit by a pitched ball as provided in section 8.4.D.
- C. The catcher or any infielder obstructs him.
- D. A fair ball, other than an infield fly, becomes dead and provided a preceding runner or retired runner does not interfere in such a way as to prevent an obvious double play.

NOTE: Unless awarded first base as above, a batter-runner is entitled to first base only if the batter-runner reaches it before being tagged out, thrown out or called out for hitting an infield fly.

Sec 6. Touching bases in legal order

- A. An advancing runner shall touch first, second, third and then home plate in order.
- B. A returning runner shall retouch the bases in reverse order. Except when an uncaught foul ball causes the ball to become dead, the runner need not touch intervening bases.
- C. Any runner who misses a base while advancing may not return to touch the missed base if a following runner has scored.

NOTE: Any runner who misses the first base to which he is advancing and who is later called out shall be considered as having advanced one base.

- D. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base out of position.
- E. 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 and the runner is out.
- F. 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.
- G. Failure of a PRECEDING runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball, and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a SUCCEEDING runner who touches bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no SUCCEEDING runner may score a run.
- H. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left too soon after a following runner has scored or once he leaves the field of play.

- I. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.
- J. Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.

Sec 7. A Runner may advance with liability to be put out.

A. When the ball leaves the pitcher's hand on the delivery.

- B. On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.
- C. On a thrown ball that hits an Umpire.
- D. If a batted ball (fair or foul other than a foul tip) is caught, the initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch.
- E. If a fair ball strikes an Umpire or a runner after having passed an infielder other than the pitcher, and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or when a fair batted ball has been touched by an infielder, including the pitcher, and the runner did not intentionally interfere with the batted ball or the fielder attempting to field the batted ball.

EFFECT- Section 7: The ball is in play.

Sec 8. A Runner becomes liable to be put out when:

- A. with the ball in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base.
- B. after overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.
- C. after dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.

Sec 9. If a batter-runner is entitled to return to first base after overrunning, or if a runner fails to touch home plate, and if either such runner desires to return to such base, the runner shall return immediately.

Sec 10. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over slides may immediately return without liability of being put out, provided he does not feint or attempt to advance to second.

NOTE 1: When a walk or uncaught third strike occurs in which the batter is entitled to run, it is treated the same as a batted ball. The batter-runner may continue past first base and is entitled to run toward second base as long as he does not stop at first base, if the pitcher has possession of the ball in the 16-foot circle. If he stops after rounding first base, the runner must comply with the Look Back Rule (Rule 8, Sec 2).

NOTE 2: A player who is awarded first base on a base on balls may continue on down the first base line after touching first base and immediately return without liability of being put out, if there is no feint or attempt to advance to second. He may also round first base and go directly to second base without stopping. If he does stop, he must comply with the Look Back Rule (Rule 8, Sec 2).

Sec 11. A runner acquires the right to the proper unoccupied base if the runner

touches it before being put out. The runner is then entitled to this base until being put out, or until legally touching the next base while it is unoccupied or until a following runner is forced to advance to the base occupied.

Sec 12. Each runner shall touch his base after the ball becomes dead. All awarded bases must be touched in their proper order. The runner returns to the base he had reached or passed when the ball became dead. In the event of interference, a runner returns to the base he had legally reached at the time of the interference. If the interference does not cause the batter to be out and any other runner cannot return to the base last legally occupied at the time of the interference, he is advanced to the next base.

EXCEPTION: The runner returns to the base occupied at the time of the pitch if his advance was during an uncaught foul.

Sec 13. When a runner is obstructed while advancing or returning to a base, by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting an initial play on a batted ball, the Umpire shall award the obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached, in the Umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.

- A. If the obstructed runner advances beyond the base the runner would have reached, in the Umpire's judgment, the runner advances with liability to be put out.
- B. If any preceding runner is forced to advance by the awarding of a base or bases to an obstructed runner, the Umpire shall award this preceding runner the necessary base or bases.
- C. The penalty for faking a tag is obstruction.
- D. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where he was obstructed except as follows:
 1. The obstructed runner obtains the base he would have been awarded had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play. The obstructed runner is no longer protected if he leaves the base.
 2. The obstructed runner commits an act of interference or malicious contact
 3. The obstructed runner passes another runner.
 4. A proper appeal is made for leaving a base too soon or for missing a base.

NOTE: When obstruction occurs, the Umpire gives the delayed dead-ball signal and calls out "obstruction." If an award is to be made, the ball becomes dead when time is taken to make the award.

Sec 14. AWARDED BASES

All awarded bases must be touched. Each runner including the batter-runner is awarded:

- A. Four bases (home base):
 1. If a fair-batted ball goes over a fence between the foul poles without touching the ground.
 2. If a fair-batted ball hits a foul pole above the fence.

3. If a fair-batted ball is prevented from going over the fence by a spectator.
4. If a fair-batted ball is prevented from going over the fence by an illegal glove/mitt.
5. If a fair-batted ball is prevented from going over the fence by detached player equipment, which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

B. Three bases:

1. If a fair-batted ball (other than in item a) is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, held or kicked by a fielder, provided the ball when touched:
 - a. Is on or over fair ground.
 - b. Is a fair ball, while on or over foul ground.
 - c. Is over foul ground in a situation that it might become a fair ball.

C. Two bases:

1. If a fair-batted ball becomes dead because of bouncing over or, when passing through a fence, becomes blocked.
2. If a live thrown ball, including a pitch, is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or detached player equipment which is thrown, held, tossed or kicked by a fielder.
3. If a live thrown ball (not by a pitcher from the pitcher's plate as in item D) goes into a stand for spectators, or a players' bench, or over or through or lodges in a fence.
4. If the fielder, in the judgment of the Umpire, intentionally touches loose equipment left on or near the field by the defensive team.
5. If the fielder intentionally carries or throws a live ball into dead-ball territory.

NOTE: If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

D. One base:

1. If a pitch by the pitcher from the pitching position on the pitcher's plate goes into a dead-ball area, becomes blocked, lodges in an Umpire or catcher's equipment.
2. If a fielder loses possession of the ball on a tag play and the ball enters dead-ball area.
3. If an illegal pitch penalty is imposed.
4. If forced from the base occupied by a following runner who must advance because a batter receives a fourth ball, is hit by a pitched ball or hits a fair ball which becomes dead.
5. If a runner is attempting to steal or he is forced from the base he occupies by a batter-runner or runner who must advance because the catcher or any fielder obstructed a batter (such as stepping on or across home plate, pushing the batter to reach the pitch, or touching the bat). Instances may occur when the infraction may be ignored or when the batter may be awarded first base.
6. If the fielder unintentionally carries or throws a live ball into dead-ball territory.

NOTE 1: Illegal use of detached player equipment, as in items a, b or c, does not cause ball to immediately become dead. If each runner advances to or beyond the base that each would have reached as a result of the award, the infraction is ignored.

NOTE 2: If a ball is touched with an illegal glove or mitt, any runner who advances on the play beyond the base he would be awarded does so at his own risk and may be put out.

- E. The Umpire shall impose such penalties and/or make any awards as in the Umpire's judgment will nullify the following acts:
1. Spectator interference. When there is spectator interference with any thrown or batted ball, the ball shall be dead at the moment of interference.
NOTE EXCEPTION: It is not spectator interference if a spectator physically hinders a fielder who is reaching into a dead ball area to make a play on a batted or thrown ball.
 2. Blocked ball caused by the defense.

Sec 15. An award is from the base determined as follows:

- A. The pitch:
 1. If any pitch (batted or unbatted) is followed by a dead ball before the pitcher is in the 16-foot circle for the next pitch and before there is any throw by the fielding team.
 2. For a runner required to tag up after a caught fly ball.
- B. The infraction:
 1. If the award is for any pitching infraction followed by a pitch.
 2. For use of detached player equipment or ball touches an illegal glove.
 3. For fielder losing possession of the ball.
 4. Obstruction.
- C. The time the ball last left the hand of the thrower (in any situation other than A or B).

Sec 16. A runner must return to his base when.

- A. a batted ball is foul.
- B. an illegally batted ball is declared by the Umpire.
- C. a batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. Each other runner shall return to the last base which, in the Umpire's judgment, was legally touched by the runner at the time of the interference.
- D. any part of the batter's person or clothing is touched by a pitched ball that is swung at and missed.
- E. a batter is hit by a pitched ball, unless forced.
- F. when an intentionally dropped ball is ruled
EFFECT- Section 16 A-F: The ball is dead and each runner must return to his base without liability to be put out, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner.
- G. when the Plate Umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick off play.

EFFECT: Delayed dead ball. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live. If the runner is not out, all runners return to the base occupied at the start of the pitch. It is not Umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the Umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher. The ball is live.

Sec 17. The batter-runner is out:

- A. When interfering with the catcher's attempt to field the ball after a third strike.
- B. When a batted ball in flight is caught by a fielder, or such catch is prevented by a spectator reaching into the field enclosure.
- C. When a fair fly, fair line drive or a fair bunted ball in flight is intentionally dropped by an infielder with at least first base occupied and less than two outs; the ball is dead and the runners shall return to their respective bases.
NOTE: In this situation, the batter is not out if the infielder permits a fair fly ball, line drive or a fair bunted ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield-fly rule applies.
- D. If, after a third strike or a fair hit, any fielder, while holding the ball, tags out the batter-runner before the batter-runner touches first base; or if any fielder, while holding the ball securely in a hand, touches first base or touches first base with the ball before the batter-runner touches first base.
- E. When he runs outside the three-foot running lane (last half of the distance from home plate to first base) while the ball is being fielded or thrown to first base.
EXCEPTION: This infraction is ignored if it is to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field the batted ball or if the act does not interfere with a fielder or a throw.
- F. When he contacts the ball a second time in fair or foul territory, if, in the Umpire's judgment, the ball had a chance to become fair.
- G. When he moves backward toward home plate to avoid or delay being tagged out. The ball is dead and base runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the infraction.
- H. When he hits a fair fly and the infield fly rule is declared.
EFFECT - The ball is live, the batter is out if the batted ball is fair. If the ball is caught, each runner may tag up and advance with the liability to be put out once the batted ball is touched the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is not caught, the ball is live, the batter-runner is out which removes all force plays, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out without needing to retouch his base(s).
See exception in 10 & Under and Younger Section.
- I. When any coach or member of the offensive team interferes with a fielder attempting to field a foul fly ball.
- J. When, after becoming a batter-runner, he does not attempt to reach first base before all infielders leave the diamond, the half-inning ends, or he gives up by entering the bench or dugout area.

K. When he is an illegal substitute and is discovered.

Sec 18. Any runner is out when:

A. Running more than three feet away from the base path to avoid being tagged, or to hinder a fielder while the runner is advancing or returning to a base.

EXCEPTION: This is not an infraction if a fielder, attempting to field a batted ball, is in the runner's proper path and if the runner runs behind the fielder to avoid interfering.

NOTE: When a play is being made on a runner or batter-runner, the runner establishes his base path as directly between the runner's position and the base toward which the runner is moving.

B. He slides illegally and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him.

PENALTY: The runner is out and the ball is dead immediately and interference is called.

NOTE: Runners are never required to slide but, if the runner elects to slide, the slide shall be legal.

C. He does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him.

PENALTY: The runner is out and the ball remains live unless interference is called.

NOTE: Jumping, hurdling, and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder only if the fielder is lying on the ground.

D. Malicious contact occurs (always supersedes obstruction).

E. On a force play at any base, the runner or retired runner fails to execute a legal slide, or does not attempt to avoid the fielder on the play.

F. Intentionally interfering with a throw or thrown ball.

G. Hindering a fielder's initial play on a batted ball.

H. Being put out is prevented by an illegal act by anyone connected with the team.

NOTE 1: If, in the judgment of the Umpire, a runner interferes in any way and prevents a double play anywhere, two shall be declared out (the runner who interferes and the runner closest to home).

NOTE 2: If a retired runner interferes and, in the judgment of the Umpire, another runner could have been put out, the Umpire shall declare the runner closest to home out.

NOTE 3: If the batter-runner interferes, the Umpire shall call the batter-runner and the runner who has advanced the nearest to home base out.

NOTE 4: 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.

NOTE 5: If a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder so that the fielder still has an opportunity to obtain an out, and the runner contacts the fielder, this is still interference. 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 or obstruction.

I. **Tagged out.**

EXCEPTIONS: If a batter-runner safely touches first base and then over slides or overruns it, the batter-runner may immediately return to first base without liability of being tagged out, provided there was no feint or attempt to advance to second. Also, if any base comes loose from its fastening when any runner contacts it, such runner cannot be tagged out because the base slides away from the runner.

NOTE: The ball is not securely held if it is dropped or juggled after the runner is touched, unless the ball was deliberately knocked from the fielder's hand by the runner.

J. A base is not retouched before a fielder tags the runner out or the fielder holds the ball while touching such base after a caught fly ball or missed base. It is not necessary for a runner to retouch base after a foul tip.

K. Not in contact with the base at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. However, if the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a runner to return to base, the runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the ball. The runner may advance as though the base was left legally.

L. The runner violates the Look Back Rule

M. He fails to reach the next base before a fielder either tags runner out; or holds the ball while touching such base, after runner has been forced from the base occupied because the batter became a runner.

EXCEPTION: No runner may be forced out if a runner who follows in the batting order is first put out, including a batter-runner who is out for an infield fly.

N. A fair-batted ball contacts him before it touches or passes an infielder, or after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the Umpire judges that another infielder has a play.

EXCEPTION: If a runner is touching a base when hit by a batted fair ball, the runner is not out unless he intentionally interferes with the ball or an infielder making a play. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. All base runners return to the base occupied at the time of the infraction, unless forced.

NOTE: When the infield-fly rule is in effect, if a runner is hit by an infield fly when not touching a base, both the runner and the batter are out.

O. Detected passing an unobstructed preceding runner before such runner is out (including awarded bases).

P. Detected running bases in reverse to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

Q. After at least touching first base, the runner leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning his effort to touch the next base.

R. Detected taking a position for a running start behind and not in contact with a base.

S. On or beyond a succeeding base when the ball is declared dead after having left a base too soon on a caught fly ball; or having failed to touch a preceding base; or continuing and touching a succeeding base after the ball become dead.

NOTE: A runner shall not be declared out if the fielder deliberately throws or carries the ball into dead-ball territory to prevent that runner, who has touched or advanced beyond a succeeding base, from returning to a missed base or a base left too soon.

T. the runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to an infielder and properly appealed.

U. Fails to touch base and appeal

V. Intentional contacts a fair ball

W. Prior to a pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter, the runner was discovered having used an illegal bat or non-approved bat.

EFFECT: Any runner not put out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

X. a runner on base leaves the game without a replacement substitute

Y. the immediate preceding runner who is not out, intentionally interferes, in the Umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete the play on the batter-runner.

EFFECT: The runner shall also be called out.

Z. When anyone other than another Runner physically assists him while the ball is in play.

AA. When a Coach intentionally interferes with a live, batted ball or thrown ball.

AB. When the offensive team causes a blocked ball.

EFFECT: The runner closest to home is out.

AC. When a Coach runs in the direction of Home Plate or any other base, on or near a baseline, while the Fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted ball or on a thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw in his direction.

Sec 19. Double First Base

The Double First Base shall consist of a base in fair territory that is white in color and a base in foul territory that is colored.

A. A batted ball hitting or bounding over any part of the white portion is declared fair. A batted ball hitting or bounding over only the colored portion is declared foul.

B. Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion.

1. If the batter-runner touches only the white portion when there is a play being made at first base, it is treated the same as missing the base. The batter-runner is out providing the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white or colored portion, no appeal can be made.

2. If the defense touches only the colored portion, it is treated the same as being off the base.

Exceptions: The defense and batter runner can use either portion when:

1. The ball is thrown from the foul side of first base line.

2. An errant or missed throw pulls the defensive player into foul ground.

C. If there is a force play by an infielder on the batter-runner, who touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white, Interference is ruled.

Penalty: The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and all other runners are returned to the base last occupied at the time of interference.

D. When no play is being attempted at first base, the batter-runner may touch the white or colored base.

E. After the batter-runner initially reaches first base, the runner and any fielder may use the white or colored base. This shall include but is not limited to:

1. The runner returning to first base.

2. The runner tagging up on a fly ball.

3. The fielder making a play on a returning runner.

RULE 9. APPEALS

An appeal is a play or rule violation on which the Umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player

Sec 1. Types of appeals:

A. Missing a base, either advancing or returning (live or dead-ball appeal).

B. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched (live or dead-ball appeal).

C. Batting out of order (dead-ball appeal only).

D. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base overrunning first base (live-ball appeal only).

Sec 2. Live ball appeal (before Umpire calls time). Any fielder can appeal a runner once. A Live Ball Appeal may be made by touching the runner (A & B & D above) or touching the base (A & B above). The ball is live and all runners may advance with liability of being put out.

Sec 3. Dead ball appeal. Once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called, the coach or any defensive player, with or without the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering Umpire should then make a decision on the play.

A. If the ball has gone out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities before the dead-ball appeal can be made.

- B. If "play ball" has been declared by the Umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the Umpire would again call "time" and allow the appeal.

Sec 4. The appeals must be made:

- A. before the next legal or illegal pitch;
B. at the end of an inning, before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates his normal fielding position; or
C. on the last play of the game, before the Umpires leave the field of play.

Sec 5. Advancing Runners

- A. Runners may advance during a live-ball appeal play.
B. No runner may advance on a dead ball appeal.
C. No runner is out if he steps off base during a dead ball appeal.

Sec 6. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:

- A. he has advanced, touched and remains a base beyond the base missed or left too soon and the ball becomes dead.
B. he has left the field of play; or
C. a following runner has scored.

Sec 7. More Than One Appeal. More than one appeal play may be made but guessing games should not be allowed.

Sec 8. Force Out. If an appeal is honored at a base to which a runner was forced to advance, no runs would score if it was the third out.

Sec 9. Fourth-Out Appeal. An appeal may be made after the third out as long as it is made properly. (i.e. one out with runner on first and third. The batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each runner leaves his 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 would then be declared out also, and the run would not count.)

Sec 10. Batting Out Of Order

A batter shall be called out on appeal when he fails to bat in his proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in his place.

NOTE: Only the defensive team may appeal out of order after the batter has completed his time at bat.

- A. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the Umpire before the next pitch (legal or illegal), or before the infielders leave the diamond if a half inning is ending, batting out of order is declared and results in the following:
1). The proper batter is declared out.

- 2). The improper batter is taken off base. If the batter is out on the play, the out does not stand because the out for batting out of order supersedes an out by the improper batter on a play.
3). Any outs made on the play on other runners stand. Any runner not put out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
4). No runs may score on the play.
5). The next batter is the player who follows in the batting order the player who was declared out for not batting in the proper order.
NOTE: If a runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch or passed ball while the improper batter is at bat, such advance is legal.

- B. If an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the succeeding batter, or all infielders have left the diamond if a half-inning has ended and, in all cases, before an appeal is made, the improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of his time at bat become legal.

- C. When the proper batter is called out because he has failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter who was called out.

- D. When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is properly made as above, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batting order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter.

NOTE: When several players bat out of order before discovery so that a player's time at bat occurs while he is a runner, such player remains on base, but he is NOT out as a batter.

RULE 10. DEAD BALL - SUSPENSION OF PLAY

- Sec 1.** The batter is awarded 1st base and all base runners advance one base (if forced), when a pitched ball, not struck at and not called a strike, touches any part of the batter's person or clothing (if not loose garment). The ball may strike the ground before it hits the batter.

EXCEPTION: If the batter makes no effort to avoid being hit, the hitting of the batter is disregarded. The ball is dead immediately and is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch.

Note:

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 batter swings and the ball hits his hands which send it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead immediately; A strike is called on the batter; and if it is the third strike, the batter is out.

- Sec 2.** It is a delayed dead ball when the Umpire obstructs the catcher attempting to throw the ball.

EFFECT: If the runner is not out, he is returned to the last base attained before the obstruction occurred.

- Sec 3.** Ball becomes dead immediately when:
- A. A pitch touches a batter or the batter's clothing.
NOTE: the ball becomes dead even though the batter strikes at it.
 - B. The ball is illegally batted or comes in contact with the bat a second time.
 - C. The batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat.
 - D. Any batted ball, while on or over foul ground.
 - 1. Touches any object other than the ground or any person other than a fielder.
 - 2. Goes directly from the bat to the catcher's protector, mask or person without first touching the catcher's glove or hand.
 - 3. Becomes an uncaught foul.
 - E. There is interference by a runner or a retired runner.
 - F. A fair ball, which is on or over fair ground.
 - 1. Touches a runner or an Umpire before touching any fielder and before passing any fielder other than the pitcher.
 - 2. Touches a runner after passing through or by an infielder and another infielder could have made a play on the ball.
 - 3. Touches a spectator.
 - 4. Goes over, through or wedges in the field fence.
 - G. A pitch or any other thrown ball
 - 1. Is touched by a spectator.
 - 2. Is touched by nonparticipating team personnel.
 - 3. Goes into a stand or player's bench (even if it rebounds to the field).
 - 4. Goes over or through or wedges in the field fence.
 - 5. Lodges in an Umpire's or catcher's equipment or touches loose equipment.
 - H. The Umpire handles a live ball, calls "Time" for inspecting the ball, or for any other reason.
 - I. A fielder, after catching a fair or foul ball (fly or line drive), leaves the field of play by stepping with both feet or by falling into a designated dead-ball area (i.e., bench, dugout, stand/bleacher, etc.).
NOTE: if a chalk line is used to designate an "out-of-play" area, the line is considered in play. If a fielder is touching the line, he is in the field of play and may make a catch. When the fielder completely unintentionally leaves live-ball area and then re-establishes himself within live-ball territory (one foot touching out of play line), a catch would be allowed. If the fielder unintentionally leaves a live-ball area with both feet after making a catch, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded one base from the time of the pitch. Two bases shall be awarded each runner if a fielder intentionally leaves live-ball area with both feet.
 - J. Any personnel connected with the offensive team requests "Time" or uses any other command or commits an act for the purpose of trying to cause the opposing pitcher to commit an illegal pitch.
 - K. An infielder intentionally drops a fair fly.
EXCEPTION: Infield Fly Rule.
 - L. A runner interferes with a fielder attempting to catch a foul fly.

- M. The batter-runner moves backward toward home plate to avoid or delay being tagged out.
- N. A batted, thrown or pitched ball touches in an occupied designated media area (a ball that passes through a dead-ball area in flight is not considered dead).
- O. An illegal pitch occurs, but no pitch is delivered to the batter.
- P. The umpire calls Time Out for an Injured Player see Rule 5.

- Sec 4.** It is a delayed dead ball when:
- A. An illegal pitch is delivered.
See Effect in Rule 6.3 Pitching Illegal Pitch.
 - B. There is interference by a batter.
 - C. A catcher or any fielder obstructs a batter or obstructs the ball through use of detached play equipment.
 - D. The Umpire interferes with catcher who is attempting to throw.
 - E. A coach physically assists a runner.
 - F. A ball touches an illegal glove/mitt.
 - G. Any one who is required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removes the helmet while the ball is live.
- Sec 5.** The ball becomes dead when time is taken to make an award when a catcher or any fielder illegally obstructs a runner.
- Sec 6.** **After a dead-ball situation**, the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher within the 16-foot circle and the Umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball" and gives the beckoning hand signal.
- Sec 7.** **"Time" shall be called** by the Umpire and play suspended:
- A. When the Umpire and/ or Tournament Director considers the weather or ground conditions unfit for play.
NOTE: After 30 minutes, the Umpire and/ or Tournament Director may declare the game ended or suspended.
 - B. When a player, bench personnel or spectator is ordered from the field of play, or player is ordered to secure protective equipment.
 - C. When an Umpire or player is incapacitated, unless injury occurs during a live ball, then time shall not be called until any further advancement or putout is possible.
NOTE: If necessary, the Umpire may suspend play immediately if, in the Umpire's judgment, further play may cause injury or jeopardize a participant's safety.
 - D. When a player or coach is granted time for a substitution, conference with the pitcher, or for similar cause.
 - E. When play is suspended for any other cause, including an award of a base after an infraction, inspection of the ball, or the ending of a half-inning.

- Sec 8.** When the ball becomes dead:
- A. No action by the defense during that time can cause a player to be put out.
 - B. A runner may not advance, nor return to a base that was not touched or that the runner was not in contact with on a caught fly ball during a live ball if the runner had advanced to or beyond a succeeding base.
 - C. Any runner may advance when awarded a base or bases for an act, which occurred before the ball became dead. All awarded bases must be touched.

RULE 11. SPORTSMANSHIP

- Sec 1.** All players and coaches will be expected to behave in a sportsman like manner at all times. Any player, coach or parent / fan whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive will at a minimum be warned and may be removed from the playing field or stands at the discretion of the Tournament Officials or the Umpires. Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated under **any circumstances**. This includes a team forfeiting or being removed from the tournament if necessary.
- Sec 2.** A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:
- A. Fake a tag without the ball.
 - B. Carelessly throw a bat.
 - C. Fail to wear or deliberately remove helmet when it is required to be worn.
 - D. Wear jewelry to include tape over jewelry or any exposed ornament which in the Umpire's judgment is dangerous (players participating in the game).
 - E. Hit the ball to teammates on defense after the game has started.
 - F. Use electronic communication, television monitoring or replay equipment for coaching purposes during the course of the game.
 - G. Use tobacco products in any form.
 - H. Be in possession of any object in the coach's box other than a scorebook, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only.
 - I. Be outside the designated dugout/bench or bullpen areas unless they are a batter, runner, on deck batter, in the coach's box or one of the nine players on defense.
Note: A single on-deck batter shall remain in their team's on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up.
- PENALTY A-I:** FIRST OFFENSE is a team warning. SECOND OFFENSE and any subsequent violation the offender is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game and their current head coach shall be ejected.
- Note: a reminder at home plate by the Umpire does not constitute a warning for either team.
- J. Using words or actions to incite spectators to demonstrations.
 - K. Using intimidation tactics, or baiting or taunting.

- Note: The USSSA disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under circumstances including race, religion, gender or national origin.
- L. Behaving in any manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play.
 - M. Enter the area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions.
 - N. Charge an Umpire.
 - O. Use amplifiers or bullhorns for coaching purpose during the course of the game.
 - P. Argue ball and strike calls or other Umpire judgment calls.
 - Q. Call "time", employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act for the purpose of causing an illegal pitch.
 - R. Commit any other unsportsmanlike act.
- PENALTY J-R:** If it is the FIRST OFFENSE and is judged to be of a minor nature, an offending player may be warned or an offending coach may be restricted to the bench. If not minor or a subsequent offense, the Umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in the game being forfeited. Any coach restricted to the bench shall be ejected for further misconduct. A coach may leave the bench/dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured.
- S. Curse or use profanity
 - T. Deliberately throw a bat, helmet or any other piece of equipment.
 - U. Initiate malicious contact.
 - V. Engage in a fight.
- Note:** Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to softball. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.
- W.** Leaving their positions or bench area when a fight has broken out. Coaches who enter the field to restrain combatants from their team shall not be considered to have violated this rule.

PENALTY S-W: The Umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in the game being forfeited. A player ejected for malicious contact is declared out unless he has already scored.

RULE 12. COACH/MANAGER OR PLAYER EJECTION

- Sec 1.** A coach/manager who is ejected shall leave the vicinity (out of sight and out of sound) of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from any further contact (direct or indirect) with the team during the remainder of the game.
- Sec 2.** If a coach/manager is ejected from a game he must sit out the remainder of that game and the following game. The coach is barred from coaching in the tournament until that team has completed their next game. A player ejected must sit out the remainder of that game. Anyone ejected will be asked to leave the park at the discretion of the Umpire and Tournament Director.

RULE 13. PROTEST

- Sec 1.** Umpires will work to settle all problems on the field. Protests will be allowed for age and rule interpretations only. Protests must be declared to the Plate Umpire before the next pitch following the dispute. No protest will be allowed following the game. Tournament Officials and UIC will rule on all protests and their decision will be final.
- Sec 2.** The Tournament Director may at his discretion charge a protest fee of \$100. Protests of player eligibility shall be charged per player.
- Sec 3.** Tournament Officials will be available at all times. If you have any questions, please talk to a Tournament Official.
- Sec 4.** In tournament play, all protests must be settled, before any play can be resumed except protests concerning player eligibility. If a player eligibility protest is lodged during tournament play and cannot be resolved at the time of the protest, the game shall be completed. If the eligibility question cannot be resolved until the tournament is completed and it is subsequently found that the involved player or players are ineligible, the team shall be placed last in the tournament standings and the standings shall be adjusted accordingly.
- Sec 5.** In tournament play, when an ineligible player is discovered during the game, the offending team loses the game, is ejected from the tournament, placed last in the standing and forfeits all awards, sponsor travel money and berths that would have been awarded at that tournament. If this ineligible player is discovered after the completion of the game (but during the tournament) the game shall stand as played. However the offending team is ejected from the tournament, and assumes the same penalties as above.

RULE 14. UMPIRES

- Sec 1.** All tournaments and leagues played under the jurisdiction and administration of the USSSA Fast Pitch program shall utilize only Umpires who are currently registered with the association. Umpires shall have USSSA registration card available at all games worked.
- Sec 2.** The Umpire should not be connected in any way with either team.
- Sec 3.** The Umpire should be sure of the date, time and location of the game and should arrive at the field 30 minutes before the game time, prepared to work.
- Sec 4.** The official Umpire uniform standard for sanctioned play includes approved and licensed products, which allow for freedom of movement. The official uniform shall consist of:

- A.** USSSA Licensed mesh pullover shirt. If a shirt is to be worn under the Umpire shirt, it shall be plain, short or long sleeve, and white, black or match the pullover shirt in color. Any exposed sleeves shall match the color of the pullover shirt.
- B.** USSSA Licensed Umpire cap. This will include the USSSA embroidery on the cap and the official licensed label inside.
- C.** Long heather gray slacks with black socks. Shin guards may not be exposed.
- D.** Gray or black ball bag. Only the Plate Umpire shall wear a ball bag.
- E.** Black belt.
- F.** Black polished shoes and black shoelaces.
- G.** Licensed windbreaker jacket, v-neck pullover may be worn as outside apparel.
- Note:** If more than one Umpire is used per game, they must be dressed alike.
- H.** The Umpire behind the plate must wear a mask.

- Sec 5. Game officials** include the Plate Umpire and may include one, two or three field Umpires. Any Umpire has the authority to order a player, coach, or team attendant to do or refrain from doing anything, which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce prescribed penalties. The National Fast Pitch Program Committee strongly recommends there be at least two Umpires.
- Sec 6. Umpire jurisdiction** begins upon the arrival of one Umpire within the confines of the field and ends when the Umpires leave the playing field at the conclusion of the game.
- Sec 7.** If there is only **one Umpire**, that Umpire has complete jurisdiction in administering the rules and shall take a position behind the catcher. The only exception will be the 8 & under Machine Pitch, where the Umpire feeds the pitching machine.
- Sec 8. Any Umpire's decision**, which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or ball, or whether a runner is safe, or out, is final. If there is a reasonable doubt about some decision being in conflict with the rules, the coach or captain may ask that the correct ruling be made. The Umpire making the decision may ask another Umpire for information before making a final decision. The use of videotape by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decision is prohibited. No Umpire shall criticize or interfere with another Umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it.
- NOTE:** The Plate Umpire sometimes asks for aid from the Base Umpire when there is a question as to whether a batter's half-swing is to be called a strike. As an aid in deciding, the Umpire shall note whether the swing carried the barrel portion of the bat in front of the batter's body and in the direction of the infield, but the final decision is based on whether the batter actually struck at the ball.

Sec 9. No Umpire may be replaced during a game unless he or she becomes ill or injured.

Sec 10. The Umpire's right to disqualify players or remove nonplayers for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct is absolute.

Sec 11. Umpires shall not use tobacco products in any form in the vicinity of the playing field.

Sec 12. If there are two (or more) Umpires, the Plate Umpire shall stand behind the catcher. The Plate Umpire shall make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the field Umpire. The duties of the Plate Umpire shall include the following:

- A. Call and count balls and strikes,
- B. Signal fair hits, and call out "foul ball" while signaling each foul hit,
- C. Make all decisions on the batter.
- D. Ask both coaches if their teams are legally and properly equipped, inspect equipment and condition of the field, receive batting order of both team, announce special ground rules and formulate such if the two teams cannot agree, designate the dugout/bench area, if necessary, designate the official scorekeeper and see that each player takes his glove and other loose equipment to the bench at the end of his team's time in the field.
- E. Call "Play Ball" and give beckoning hand signal to start the game or to resume play, and call "Time" whenever ball becomes dead.
- F. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the Plate Umpire immediately announces it for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the base line the Umpire shall declare, "Infield fly, if fair."
- G. Eject a player or send a coach from the field of play if it becomes necessary.
- H. Announce each substitute.
- I. Call game if conditions become unfit for play.
- J. Penalize for rule infractions, such as illegal pitch, interference, delay, unwarranted disputing of decision, unsportsmanlike conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher.
- K. Make final decision on points not covered by the rules.
- L. Forfeit the game for prescribed infraction by spectators, player or attendants.
- M. When game is played under the auspices of an organization which permits protests to be filed, the Plate Umpire shall report the protest to the organization along with all related conditions at the time of the protested play, provided the protest is brought to the attention of an Umpire by the offended team at the time of the play and before the next pitch after such play.

EXCEPTION: Protests resulting from the last play of the game shall be brought to the attention of an Umpire by the offended team prior to leaving the field. The Plate Umpire shall then inform the coach of the opposing team and the official scorekeeper.

NOTE: If there is a question about a rule that was possibly misapplied, the team's coach or captain shall inform the Umpire at the time of play and before a pitch to the next batter of the team currently at bat or before the first batter for the team that was on defense, if the teams have changed positions; or before the Umpire leaves the field, if the play in question was the last play of the game.

- N. Keep a record of defensive team charged conferences and team warnings for each team.
- O. Penalize for jewelry violation.
- P. Rectify any situation in which an Umpire's decision that was reversed has placed either team in jeopardy.
- Q. Correct a scorekeeping error if brought to attention before the Umpires leave the field when the game is over.

TABLE 1 - EJECTIONS and RESTRICTIONS

This is a summary of the Official Rules.

In the case of a conflict, the Official Rules take precedence.

EVENT	RULE	OFFENDING PLAYER	OFFENDING COACH	COACH of OFFENDER
Malicious contact	11.2.U	OUT & EJECT	EJECT	N/A
Illegal player	5.7	EJECT	N/A	EJECT
Profanity or Cursing	11.2.S	EJECT	EJECT	N/A
Deliberately throw equipment	11.2.T			
Engage in fight	11.2.V			
Leave position/bench to join in a fight	11.2.W			
Leave detached equipment in field of play	2.7	1) WARN 2) "may" EJECT		
Incite spectator demonstration	11.2.J	1) WARN if minor 2) EJECT	1) RESTRICT if minor 2) EJECT	N/A
Use intimidating tactics, bait, or taunt	11.2.K			
Behavior not in spirit of fair play	11.2.L			
Enter area behind catcher	11.2.M			
Charge an Umpire	11.2.N			
Use bullhorns or amplifiers	11.2.O			
Argue balls/strikes/judgment calls	11.2.P			
Action to cause an illegal pitch	6.4.E 7.8.Note2 11.2.Q			
Other unsportsmanlike conduct	11.2.R			
Not Entitled courtesy runner	8.3.B			
Fake Tag	11.2.A	1) WARN 2) RESTRICT	N/A	1) Team Warning 2) EJECT
Carelessly throw bat	11.2.B			
Deliberately remove helmet	2.1			
Fail to wear helmet	11.2.C			
Wear jewelry or tape over jewelry	11.2.D			
Hit ball to teammates on defense	11.2.E			
Using replay equipment	11.2.F			
Use of tobacco	11.2.G			
Possess anything but a scorebook in coaches box	11.2.H			
Team personnel out of bench area	11.2.I			
Unreported substitution	5.5	In game legal		1) Team Warning 2) EJECT (*)
Unreported courtesy runner	8.3			

NOTE 1 All coach ejections except noted by * result in the coach being barred from participation for the remainder of the game in progress PLUS the coach is barred from participation until their NEXT game is completed.

NOTE 2 Coach Ejection for unreported substitution / courtesy runner (*) results in the coach being barred for the remainder of the game in progress only.

RULE 15. 10 & Under and Younger Rule Exceptions

Play will be governed by USSSA Rule Book, unless specified in this section.

- 1.1 The pitching distance shall be 35 feet.
- 2.3 The 11-inch softball shall be used.
- 8.4.B (8 & Under and Younger) The batter is out on a third strike. If a batter strikes out and the ball is not caught, the batter is out and cannot advance to first base. The ball remains live.
- 8.17.H (8 & Under and Younger) The infield fly rule will not be used.

RULE 16. Men's Rule Exceptions

Play will be governed by USSSA Rule Book, unless specified in this section.

- 4.4. The **RUN RULE** will be 15 runs after 3 innings, 12 runs after 4 inning, 7 runs after 5 innings.
- 4.5 The **TIEBREAKER** Procedure will not be used.
- 5.1. **PLAYERS** A team shall consist of at least nine players, whose positions shall be designated as: (1) Pitcher, (2) Catcher, (3) First Baseman, (4) Second Baseman, (5) Third Baseman, (6) Short Stop, (7) Left Fielder, (8) Center Fielder, (9) Right Fielder. In addition, a designated hitter (DH) or one additional player (AP) may be used but not both.
- 6.1.A Only one foot is required on the pitcher's plate as per rule.
- 6.1.E.2 The pitcher may step backwards as per rule.
- 6.1.E.2 The forward step is NOT required to be within the 24 inch length of the pitcher's plate
- 6.1.E.3 The pitcher may leap. If both feet are in the air, the toes of the pivot foot are required to point down.

RULE 17. Coach Pitch Rules

Play will be governed by USSSA Rule Book, unless specified in this section.

1. Ball: 11-inch USSSA approved ball, optic yellow in color with a maximum Compression of 375# and a COR rating of 46.25 +/- 0.75 will be used.
2. Innings: A regulation game shall be seven (7) innings for World Series play. Other Coach Pitch games can utilize a 5 or 6 inning game as regulation.
3. Time Limits: World Series and 7 inning games shall have a 75 minute limit. All Games scheduled for less than 75 minutes shall be either 5 or 6 innings. Games can end in a tie during pool play. Bracket games that are tied at the end of regulation or upon completion of an inning with time expired shall go to the International Tie-Breaker method.

4. Runs per Inning: A maximum of 6 runs can be scored each inning by each team.
5. Run Rule: As per Rule 4 Section 4.
6. Offensive Lineup: The batting lineup may be any number from nine (9) to all players present. If any position in the batting order is left open due to injury, illness, or ejection it will be an automatic out if a sub is not available. Exceptions will be made if an injury is the result of a rules violation by the opposing team.
7. Defensive Positions: There will be maximum of ten (10) defensive players in the field, but no more than six (6), including the catcher, can be positioned inside the infield baselines.
The player pitcher must have at least 1 foot in the pitcher's circle when the batter's coach is pitching. No other defensive players may be positioned inside the pitcher's circle at the same time. The outfield is defined as the turf area on a regulation sized youth field or at least 10 feet beyond the baselines for other playing surfaces.

NOTE: In 8U, the use of a DP/Flex or DH is not allowed. All players listed on the lineup card will hit. If you start the game playing 10 players defensively, you must end the game with 10 players defensively.

8. Batting: The batter's coach will make a maximum of 5 pitches to a batter.
 - a. If the batter has not hit a fair ball, struck out, or been put out after receiving the maximum number of pitches, they will be called out unless they have fouled off the 5th pitch. All foul balls on or after the 5th pitch will extend the at-bat one more pitch until the ball is not contacted or batted fair unless they have fouled off the 5th pitch. All foul balls on or after the 5th pitch will extend the at-bat one more pitch until the ball is not contacted or batted fair.
 - b. The catcher does not have to catch the third strike.
 - c. There shall be no Base on Balls (walk) awarded.
 - d. Batters hit by a pitch will **not** be awarded 1st base.
 - e. Batters may not bunt.
9. The infield fly rule is not in effect. The ball remains "live" with all runners in jeopardy of being put out or advancing.
10. A runner may not leave the base before the ball crosses the plate. If the runner leaves the base early they shall be called out.
11. A runner may not steal.
12. Time will be called when a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner or the ball is returned to the player pitcher with at least foot inside the pitcher's circle.
If a runner is more than half way to the next base when time is called, the

runner will be awarded the next base. If they are not half way to the next base when time is called they will be returned to the previous base safely.

13. Additional Coaches: In addition to base coaches, two (2) other coaches are allowed on the field of play.
 - a. The offensive team pitching coach must pitch from the pitching plate. Once the coach toes the pitching plate the ball is in play and the look back rule is in effect.
The pitching coach may only coach the batter prior to pitch. He/she may not coach the batter-runner or runners at ANY time. The base coaches are allowed to coach the base runners only.
If the pitching coach is unintentionally hit with a batted ball, it is an immediate dead ball and a no pitch (the batter continues the time at bat). If the pitching coach intentionally makes contact with the ball or in the umpires judgment interferes with a defensive play, the ball is dead and the batter is out. The coach will be given a warning and a second infraction will result in the coach being ejected.
 - b. A maximum of two (2) defensive coaches are allowed in the outfield.

RULE 18. Machine Pitch Rules

Play will be governed by USSSA Rule Book, unless specified in this section.

1. Ball: 11-inch USSSA approved ball will be used.
2. Innings: A regulation game shall be seven (7) innings. The Tiebreaker Procedure will be used in the 8th inning or in any inning that begins after time has expired.
3. Time Limits: There will be a 60 minute time limit.
4. Runs per Inning: A maximum of 6 runs can be scored each inning for each team
5. Run Rule: The run rule will be 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings. If either team is behind and cannot catch up or go ahead, the game shall be over immediately.
6. Offensive Lineup: The batting lineup may be any number from nine to eleven players. If any position is not filled, it will be an out.
7. Defensive Positions: The defensive team must have a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of nine (9) players in the field.
At the start of a pitch, one player shall be in the pitcher's position on either side of the pitching machine with one foot on the side line of the 6 foot diameter circle. (side to side 6 foot). The pitcher cannot leave its position until the ball comes out of the machine.