

2017
NPF SOFTBALL RULES

*COMBINED NPF GAME RULE REVISIONS
AND NCAA GAME RULES*

NPF games shall be subject to all rules as specified in the current edition of the NCAA Softball Rules and Interpretations Manual, except for the following revisions that apply specifically to the NPF League and its Teams.

- *REPLACE all references to NCAA with NPF.*
- *REPLACE student athlete to NPF athlete.*
- *REPLACE intercollegiate softball and substitute professional fastpitch softball.*
- *REPLACE references to particular NCAA official equipment, such as official game ball.*
- *Include: The League Commissioner, Supervisor of Officials, or League Office designate, shall enforce the official rules and resolve any disputes involving the rules. The League Commissioner may fine, suspend, or terminate any Player, Team Manager, Head Coach, Assistant Coach, or Umpire for violation of these rules, at her/his discretion.*

RULE 1

Definitions

- 1. Appeal**
A play or rule violation on which the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player.
- 2. Ball**
 - 1.3.1 The sphere that is pitched, thrown or struck.
 - 1.3.2 A ball also refers to a pitch that does not enter the strike zone, is not struck at by the batter or is awarded to a batter for a defensive infraction (for example, illegal pitch, erasing a field line, delaying the game).
- 3. Base Path**
The imaginary direct line, and three feet to either side of the line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag.
- 4. Base Runner**
An offensive player who was on base at the time of a pitch and is advancing to, touching or returning to a base.
- 5. Batted Ball**
Any pitch that comes in contact with the bat. Contact may result in a fair or foul ball and need not be intentional.
- 6. Batter**
The offensive player whose turn it is to take a position in either batter's box to receive a pitch.
- 7. Batter-Runner**
The offensive player who started in the batter's box, has completed her turn at bat and has left it in an attempt to reach base safely. The player remains the batter-runner until continuous actions end with the batter-runner safe or put out.
- 8. Batting Order**
The official list of starting offensive players presented in the order in which they are to bat and recorded on a lineup card.
- 9. Batting Out of Order**
Failure to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.
- 10. Blocked Ball**
A live batted, pitched or thrown ball that contacts nongame personnel, game personnel in unauthorized areas, loose equipment or an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area, or dead-ball territory. Blocked ball also refers to a ball that remains on the playing field but has become lodged, wedged or stuck in something other than a fielder's glove.
- 11. Bunt Attempt**
Any nonswinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into the infield. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn — pulled backward and away from the ball.
- 12. Catch**
The act of a fielder who, with her hand(s) and/or glove/mitt, securely gains possession of a batted, pitched or thrown ball.
- 13. Dead Ball**
A term used by the umpire to temporarily suspend play. It also refers to a ball that is not in play. A dead ball cannot be revived and brought back to life. It remains dead until an umpire indicates resumption of play.
- 14. Dead-Ball Territory**
That area beyond any real playing field boundary (such as a fence, backstop, rope, chalk line, bleachers, dugouts or any imaginary boundary line, as determined in the pregame conference), where a live ball becomes dead.

15. Defense

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

16. Dislodged Base

A base displaced from its proper position.

17. Effect

The result or consequence of a rule application.

18. Ejection

The exercise of an umpire's authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game. Ejections are either administrative ejections or behavioral ejections, and both result in the umpire's filing of an incident report. (See Appendix E.)

19. Fair Territory

The wedge-shaped area of the playing field within and including the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the home-run fence and perpendicularly upward. Home plate, the bases, foul lines and poles are considered part of fair territory.

20. Fake Tag

When a fielder, who neither possesses the ball nor is in the act of catching a thrown the ball, obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag that causes the runner to slow down or stop.

21. Field of Play

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

22. Flagrant

An act that involves excessive force with an opponent.

23. Fly Ball

A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that rises into the air that can be caught for an out.

24. Foul Territory

That part of the playing field between the sideline fence and the first and third base lines from home plate to the bottom of the home-run fence and perpendicularly upward.

25. Ground Ball

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

26. Ground Rule

An allowable amendment of the playing rules to accommodate a particular circumstance (usually a field condition). Ground rules cannot conflict with or supersede a playing rule. (See also Rule 5.7.3.)

27. Home Team

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

28. In Flight

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

29. In Jeopardy

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

30. Inning

1.31.1 - That portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three put outs for each team.

1.31.2 - Half inning. Each team's respective time at bat or in the field. The interval during which one team is on offense and the other is on defense. A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning, the winning run is scored.

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

31. Interference

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

32. Line Drive

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

33. Live-Ball Territory

The portion of the playing field where a live ball can be batted, pitched, thrown, fielded or caught. It includes both fair and foul territories.

34. No Pitch

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

35. Obstruction

The act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitch or that impedes the progress of a runner who is legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, is fielding a batted ball or is in the act of catching a thrown ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional and applies to live-ball action only.

36. Offense

Player or team at bat attempting to score runs.

37. On-Deck Batter

An offensive player entitled to occupy the on-deck circle closest to the player's dugout.

38. Out

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

39. Overthrow

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

40. Pinch Hitter

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

41. Pinch Runner

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

42. Pitch

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

43. Pitchout

A pitch intentionally thrown away from the batter to prevent her from contacting the pitch or to allow the catcher to make a potential play on a base runner.

44. Play

1.45.1 - An attempt by a defensive player on a batted or thrown ball to retire an offensive player.

1.45.2 - A play can also refer to an action by a pitcher to elicit a reaction from the runner(s) as it pertains to the look-back rule.

1.45.3 - A pitch is not a play except as it relates to an appeal play .(See Rule 7.1.)

45. "Play Ball"

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

46. Run

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

47. Runner

The offensive player who is in the process of running the bases whether as a batter-runner or a base runner.

48. Rundown

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

49. Safe

A declaration and/or signal by the umpire indicating that a runner is not out or has successfully taken possession of

a base. A safe signal may also be given by an umpire to acknowledge having seen a potential catch or rule violation but determining no catch or violation occurred.

50. Strike

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

51. Suspension

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

52. Team Area

The area within the confines of the field plus bullpens, batting cages, and inside and immediately outside the dugouts.

53. "Time"

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

54. Timing Play

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

55. Trapped Ball

A batted fly ball or thrown ball that is stopped against the ground or boundary structure (that is, a fence, dugout), but not legally caught.

56. Turn at Bat

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

57. Visiting Team

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

58. Without Liability to be Put Out

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

RULE 2

Field of Play

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

1. **Artificial Turf**

A synthetic turf surface field may be used for collegiate competition. It is recommended that the outfield portion be green and, if there is an infield portion, it be brown and have shorter blades than the outfield portion,

Note: It is still highly recommended that a skinned infield be used. (See Rule 2.14.)

2. **Backstop**

A backstop is the required barrier behind home plate that usually stops the ball from going out of play. It should be a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum distance of 30 feet from home plate, (See diagram.) It is recommended that the backstop be vertical and not extend over the playing field. When the backstop is wood, cement or brick, it shall be padded from dugout to dugout beginning not higher than 1 foot off the ground and extending to the top of the wood, cement or brick or 6 feet from the ground, whichever is shorter.

In the event a backstop exceeds 35', the following will apply:

- *On a passed ball, wild pitch, overthrow, etc., that travels into the backstop area beyond where the normal 30' backstop would be, the ball will be live. Baserunners are allowed to advance and are subject to being thrown out. However, baserunners will not advance more than one base if no play is made at that base.*
- *In the event the defense makes a play, the runner is then allowed to advance at her own risk.*
- *In the event the baserunner was stealing a base, she will get the base she was stealing, plus one.*
- *In the event the baserunner was running the bases, she will get the base she was closest to, (when the overthrow occurred), plus one.*
- *In the event of a strikeout, the batter/baserunner will get first base if earned, (meaning she beats the throw), and all other runner(s) may advance per above.*

3. **Base Distance**

The official diamond shall have base lines of 60 feet. (See diagram.)

4. **Baseline**

The baseline is the direct line between any two consecutive bases.

5. **Bases—First, Second and Third**

First, second and third bases are three of the four points that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run. They shall be made of high-density foam covered by a suitable white rubberized or vinyl material securely fastened to the ground by an anchoring system. Each bag shall be 15 inches square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 1½ to 3½ inches. Bases may have tapered edges. A release-type base may be used. The double first base may not be used.

In NPF, double bases are allowed.

6. **Batter's Boxes**

The batter's box is the area to which the batter is restricted when at bat. The boxes, one on each side of home plate, shall measure 3 feet by 7 feet, including the lines. The outer edge of the lines of the batter's box shall be 6 inches from home plate. The front line of each box shall be 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate. The four lines must be drawn. (See diagram.)

7. Bullpen

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

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

8. Catcher's Box

The catcher's box is the area to which the catcher is restricted from the start of the pitch until the pitch is released. Exception: When the batter is positioned in the front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer without effect. The box shall be 7 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be 8 feet 5 inches wide, including the lines. The lines must be drawn. (See diagram.)

9. Coaches' Boxes

The coaches' boxes are the areas to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted before the pitch is released. Each box shall be marked by two lines. The first is a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first- and third-base lines extended from the back edge of the bases toward home plate. The second is a line 3 feet long drawn perpendicular to the end of the 15-foot line closest to home plate. The remaining two sides of the box shall be the sideline and home-run fences. (See diagram.)

10. Dugout (Bench)

The dugout is the area in dead-ball territory reserved for team personnel engaged in the game. Dugouts are required and shall be large enough to accommodate all players and team personnel (approximately 25 people).

Additionally a maximum of two (2) bat handlers can also be in the dugout. Bat handlers MUST wear helmets at all times when they are in the dugout and on the field. Helmets must have the NOCSAE seal on them and must be the official helmet brand of the NPF.

It is recommended that dugouts be enclosed at each end and at the rear. It is highly recommended that the field side of the dugout be protected by netting or fencing not less than 6 feet from the floor of the dugout except for the designated entrances and exits to the field. Protection is required by the 2018 season.

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

11. Fences

It is highly recommended that the playing field be enclosed completely by sideline fences and a permanent home-run fence in a smooth arc of not more than 235 feet from home plate. If constructed of wood, cement or brick, it is strongly recommended that it be padded beginning not higher than 1 foot off the ground and extending to the top of the wood, cement or brick or 6 feet from the ground, whichever is shorter.

Fields with a 6-foot or taller fence are highly recommended to be a minimum of 190 feet in left and right fields and 220 feet in center field. Fields with a 4-foot fence are highly recommended to be a minimum of 210 feet in left and right fields and 230 feet in center field.

For all new construction after 2016, it is required that the fence be 6 feet or higher and be a minimum of 190 feet in left and right fields and 220 in center field. By 2017, an institutional field with a 4-foot fence must be a minimum of 210 feet in left and right fields and 230 in center field, and it is highly recommended that a municipal field with a 4-foot fence used by the institution be at those same distances.

If a temporary home-run fence is used, it must be secured so as not to collapse on and displace the foul pole. For an unfenced field, an out-of-bounds line shall be used to define dead-ball areas.

If the foul pole is located behind the home-run fence, the white foul line must be extended upward on the fence to connect the ground to the top of the foul pole.

12. Foul Pole

The foul pole shall be a single-colored pole that extends vertically upward from the foul line at the point it intersects the home-run fence to delineate fair and foul balls. The pole and/or the line connecting the ground to the top of the pole shall be visible from home plate. The pole should extend a minimum of 10, or the recommended height of at least 20, feet from the ground and shall be immediately adjacent to or attached to the outside of the home-run fence.

It is recommended that screening be attached to the fair side of the pole to enhance the visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the pole. The screening width should be at least 6 inches and should extend from 6 inches above the top of the fence to the top of the pole. In addition, it is recommended that the color of the foul pole contrast with the ball and background so it will stand out, preferably white or optic orange.

13. Home Plate

Home plate is the area over which a pitch is thrown to a batter and is the fourth and final point that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run. Home plate must be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable white material. The sides shall be 8½ inches long, and the edge facing the pitcher shall be 17 inches wide and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long. (See diagram.)

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

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

14. Infield

The infield is the portion of the field in fair territory that is defended by the pitcher and infielders and includes the wedge-shaped area surrounding the diamond formed by the baselines. The infield shall be level, but to allow for natural surface drainage, it is recommended that the entire playing area be graded 5 percent from the edge of the pitcher's plate to the infield/outfield rim and 1 percent to the sideline boundaries of the field.

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

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

15. Layout

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

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

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

16. Lines (Markings)

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

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

of first and third base, and the outside edge of the pitcher's lane should correspond with the outside edge of the pitcher's plate and batter's boxes.

All lines on the playing field shall be marked before each game and in white using paint, chalk or material that is not injurious or irritating to the eyes or skin. All lines must be 2 to 4 inches in width.

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

2.16.3 - A coach shall not intentionally remove any required lines on the field nor intentionally cover the pitcher's or home plate.

EFFECT—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a behavioral ejection. (Rule 13.2.1.)

2.16.4 - A player shall not intentionally remove any lines on the field nor intentionally cover the pitcher's or home plate.

A.R. 2.16.4: Deliberately covering a line with infield material is considered removing the line.

EFFECT—A strike shall be called on the batter if the offense intentionally violates the rule, and a ball shall be awarded to the batter if the defense intentionally violates the rule.

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

17. Nonregulation Field

2.17.1 - The umpires have the responsibility to check the playing field to be sure it complies with these regulations. Every effort should be made to obtain the correct dimensions and markings. Any game started on a nonregulation field shall not be protested for this reason.

Note: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the lines, or pitching or base distances, are incorrect, the error shall be corrected immediately, with no penalty, and the game shall continue from that point. If the pitching or base distances cannot be corrected or the game moved to a regulation field, "No Game" shall be declared. (See Rule 6.18.)

2.17.2 - When playing on a non regulation field (e.g., a dome or multiuser facility) due to weather conditions, the field should have minimum fence distances noted in Rule 2.11. If the actual fence distances are shorter and a fair batted fly ball clears this distance, the batter shall be awarded a ground-rule double, not a home run, and each base runner advances two bases.

18. On-Deck Circle

The on-deck circles shall be two circular areas with a 2½-foot radius in which the on-deck batters are restricted for warm-up swings. They are located to the side and away from home plate near each team's dugout. (See diagram.)

19. Outfield

The outfield is the portion of fair territory defended by the outfielders extending from the infield to the home-run fence. It is usually grass or an artificial grass surface with a warning track 10 to 15 feet from the home-run fence.

20. Pitcher's Circle

The pitcher's circle shall be a circular area with an 8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate used to define the pitcher's area for purposes of the look-back rule. (See diagram.)

21. Pitcher's Lane

The pitcher's lane is the area to which the pitcher is restricted when delivering the pitch. It shall be 8 feet in length extending along the outer edges of the pitcher's plate toward the inside edges of the inside front corners of the batter's boxes. It is 24 inches wide at the pitcher's plate and 25 inches wide where it intersects the pitcher's circle.

The NPF rule does not require a pitcher's lane to be chalked, however the invisible 24 inch lines still exist."

22. Pitcher's Plate

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

23. Scoreboard

See Game Management Rule 5.14.

24. Sideline Territory

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

25. Tarp

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

26. Video, Audio, Matrix Boards

See Game Management Rule 5.15 and Appendix H.

27. Warning Track

The warning track is the change in surface immediately adjacent to the home-run fence and sideline fences to alert fielders they are nearing a fence. It is strongly recommended that a warning track be 10 to 15 feet in width and made of material that is level with, but different from, the playing surface.

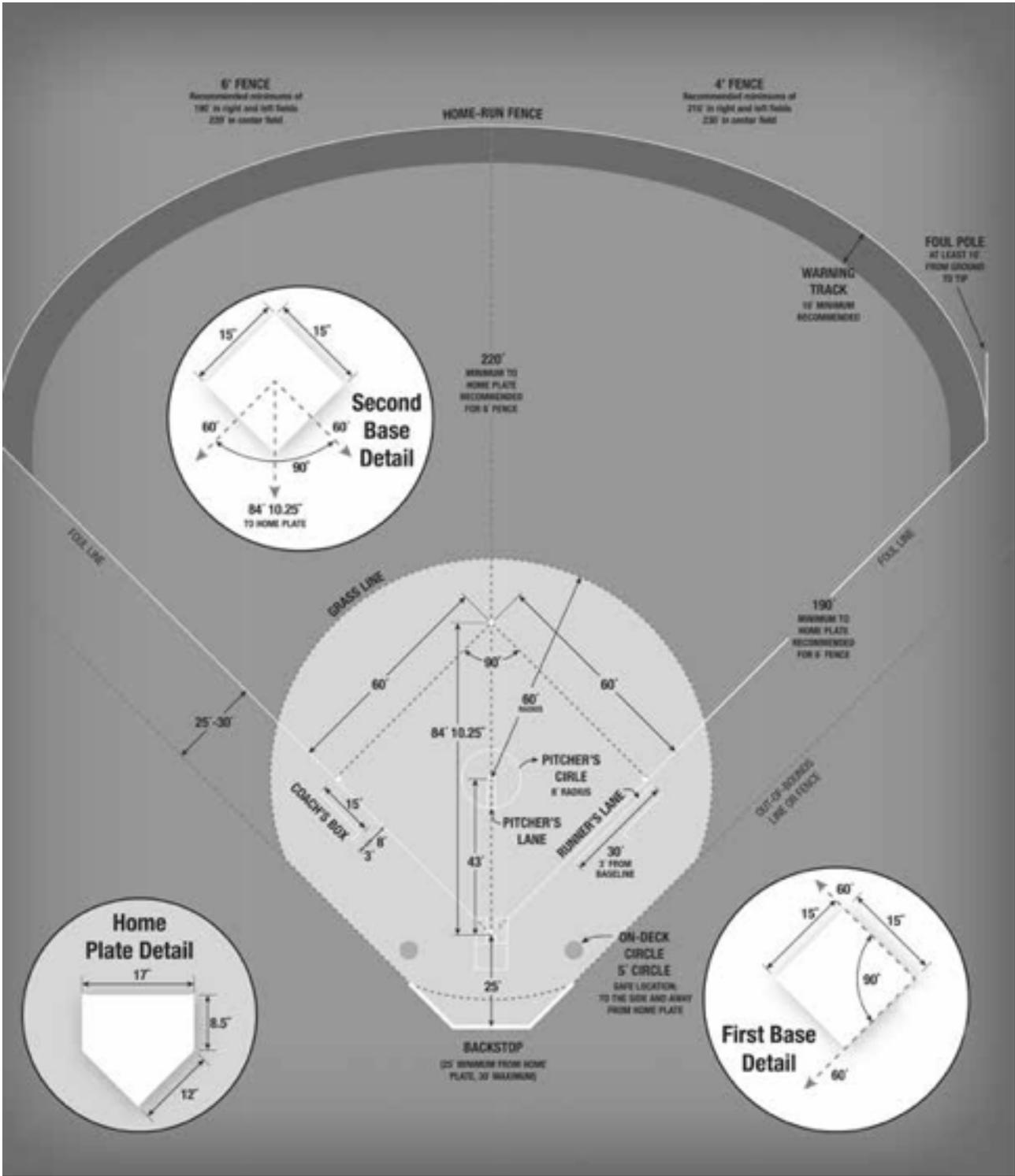
Dimension Table

a. home plate to first/third	a. 60 feet from back point of home plate to the back of the base
b. home plate to second	b. 84 feet 10¼ inches from back point of home plate to the middle of the base
Batter's boxes	6 inches from home plate; 3 feet wide by 7 feet long; front lines 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate
Catcher's box	7 feet in length from rear outside corners of the batter's boxes; 8 feet 5 inches wide
Coaches' boxes	Marked by two lines. The first is a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first and third base lines extended from the back edge of the bases toward home plate; the second is a line 3 feet long drawn perpendicular to the end of the 15-foot line closest to home plate (see diagram)
Fences*	Smooth arc between sideline fences of not more than 235 feet from home plate
	6-foot fence -- 190 feet in right and left fields and 220 feet in center field
See Rule 2.11 for new 2017 requirements	4-foot fence -- 210 feet in right and left fields and 230 feet in center field
Foul pole*	Extend a minimum of 10 feet*, preferably 20 feet, above the ground; screening* attached to fair side at least 6 inches wide*
Home plate	Front edge 17 inches wide; sides are parallel to the inside lines of batter's boxes and are 8 ½ inches long; sides of the point facing the catcher are 12 inches long
Infield	Center of second base is one corner of 60-foot square and the measurement to first and third bases is to the back edge of each base; all measurements made from the apex or back point of home plate
Skinned portion*	60-foot* arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate
Lines (markings)	2 to 4 inches wide
On-deck circle	5 feet in diameter; 2½ feet in radius
Pitcher's circle	8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate
Pitcher's lane	8-foot lines drawn from the outer edges of the pitcher's plate toward the inside edges of the inside front corners of the batter's boxes; 24 inches wide at the pitcher's plate and 25 inches wide where it intersects the pitcher's circle
Pitcher's plate	24 inches long by 6 inches wide; 43 feet from the back point of home plate
Sideline territory	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from the foul lines extended to a point down the line as deep as the home-run fence
Warning track*	10-15 feet wide material different from the outfield surface
*Recommended	

Notes:

1. *Every effort should be made to obtain the correct playing-field dimensions and markings.*
2. *Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the lines, or pitching or base distances, are incorrect, the error shall be corrected immediately, with no penalty, and the game shall continue from that point.*
3. *If the pitching or base distances cannot be corrected or the game moved to a regulation field, "No Game" shall be declared.*

Softball Field Specifications



Field-marking lines must be drawn.

See Rule 2.11 for new home-run fence height and distance requirements for 2017.

RULE 3

Equipment and Uniforms

In addition to all of the standard game equipment rules, Official League Equipment Requirements will be listed in the NPF Policies and Procedures.

1. All Equipment

3.1.2 Teams are responsible for ensuring that the equipment used in competition meets the prescribed industry standards of safety and legality. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that their players are legally equipped and properly attired to reflect a positive image of the game. Uniforms, accessories and equipment (including batting gloves that must be worn, carried in the hands or put out of sight in pockets) must be worn properly and as designed.

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

EFFECT—The umpire shall not allow the equipment in the game and warn the violator(s) to correct the condition. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the violator(s) shall be ejected in addition to removal of the equipment. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

2. Ball

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

- Minimum circumference: 11 inches; maximum circumference: 12¼ inches
- Minimum weight: 6½ ounces; maximum weight: 7 ounces Maximum COR (coefficient of restitution): .47
- Maximum compression: 350 ±50.
- Maximum dynamic stiffness: 7,500 pounds per square inch.

3.2.2 The host team shall be responsible for providing a minimum of 12 game softballs of the same specifications and manufacturer. Each game shall begin with two new game balls (one rubbed by each team, so the manufacturer's gloss is removed) and 10 additional (new or game-quality) balls. All game balls shall be sufficiently rubbed up so as to remove the manufacturer's gloss before being put in play by the umpire.

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

EFFECT—(3.2.1 to 3.2.3)—No contest shall be declared. Games shall not be played with softballs that do not meet the required specifications.

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

3. Bats—Game

3.3.1 The official bat that is used by the batter to contact the pitch shall meet the following standards:

3.3.1.1 Shall be of one piece, multipiece permanently assembled, or two-piece interchangeable barrel construction.

3.3.1.1.1 If the bat is a permanently assembled multi-piece model, the connection shall be sufficiently stiff to resemble its initial manufactured condition and not have excessive wobble.

3.3.1.1.2 If the bat has interchangeable components, mating components must have a unique locking system to prevent connections of inappropriate combinations. All component combinations must meet the standards set forth in this rule and each must display the appropriate certification mark.

3.3.1.2 Shall be metal, plastic, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic, titanium or any other composite material.

3.3.1.3 Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of damage (rattles, dents, burrs, wobble and cracks) and not be altered from their certification specifications.

3.3.1.4 Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read because of wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.

3.3.1.5 Bats shall bear the permanent ASA 2004 certification seal and be on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List as maintained on the NCAA and the SUP (www.sup.arbitersports.com) websites indicating compliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.

3.3.1.6 Shall not be more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. 3.3.1.7 Shall not be more than 2¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/32 inch is permitted to allow for expansion.

3.3.1.8 Shall consist of five functional parts: knob, handle, taper, barrel and end cap.

3.3.1.8.1 There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the end cap or end cap area.

3.3.1.8.2 The bat shall have a knob of a minimum of ¼ inch protruding at a degree angle of 90 or less from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A "flare" or "cone" grip attached to the bat will be considered altered. The knob may be taped or marked for identification as long as there is no violation of this section.

3.3.1.8.3 The handle is the area between the knob and taper that is covered by the grip. It must be tubular and shall have a grip of cork, tape (no smooth or plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the knob. It may not exceed two layers. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral but need not be a solid layer. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only.

3.3.1.8.4 The taper is the transition area that connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. Its length and material can vary, and the taper has the fewest rule specifications. Like the barrel, it must be free of rattles, dents, burrs and cracks.

Bats must comply with the current ISF, ASA, NCAA, or USSSA approved specifications, they must contain the proper markings, cannot be tampered with and cannot be predominantly yellow. Bats must also be part of the Official NPF Equipment Pool List or otherwise approved supplier." (Any one of the aforementioned association approvals will suffice. The bat does not have to have all or multiple approvals.) "All other bats will be considered non-approved bats and will not be allowed on NPF fields. The first line of enforcement of this rule lies with Owners, General Managers, and Coaches checking Player bats prior to all games. If a non-approved bat is used, the Opposing Coach (or anyone else on the field) may ask the Umpire to check the status of the bat.

3.3.1.8.5 The barrel is between the taper and end cap and is the intended contact area for the pitch. The bat barrel shell color(s) shall be of a color(s) contrasting to the ball, round and smooth to 0.050 inches in diameter.

3.3.1.8.6 The end cap is a rubber, vinyl, plastic or other approved material inserted firmly, secured and permanently affixed at the barrel end of the bat so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer, without replacing, damaging or destroying it. A bat made of one-piece construction need not have an end cap.

3.3.2 An inappropriate bat is a bat that is illegal, altered or nonapproved. No player or team personnel shall bring an inappropriate bat onto the field or into a team area from the time the umpires enter the field until after they depart.

3.3.2.1 An illegal bat is a bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (that is, particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits, etc.) as set forth in Rule 3.3.1.

A bat that does not meet ISF, ASA, NCAA, or USSSA approved specifications, does not contain proper specification markings or is not part of the Official NPF Equipment Pool List or otherwise approved supplier." Umpires should use the best means possible to identify approved or non-approved bats.

In the case of an illegal bat, if the bat cannot be deemed legal beyond a reasonable doubt, it must be confiscated immediately and sent to the League Commissioner post-game for evaluation.

3.3.2.2 An altered bat is a bat that is an illegal or nonapproved bat that has been changed to resemble a legal bat or was a legal bat that has been intentionally changed from the specifications established in the ASA bat certification process and as required in Rule 3.3.1. Exception: Marking for identification on the knob, laser etching other than on the barrel and replacing the grip are legal.

3.3.2.2.1 The use of any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of bats (for example, shaving, rolling, artificially warming or using a bat warmer) is prohibited and renders the equipment altered and unsuitable for play.

A.R. 3.3.2.2.1: A dugout heater or electric blankets are used to keep the players warm. Before going on deck, each batter uses the heater to warm herself and her bat. RULING: Artificially warming the bats by use of the heater is illegal. Players can warm themselves without placing the bat where it could be warmed. Coaches and players are expected to abide by the rules and umpires to enforce them when they detect the violation or it is brought to their attention by the opposing team.

3.3.2.3 A nonapproved bat is a bat that does not bear the ASA 2004 certification mark or is not on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List.

EFFECT—(3.3.2)—See Appendix C. If an umpire detects the inappropriate bat during the pregame inspection, the bat shall be removed from the team's possession.

If a batter enters the batter's box with an inappropriate bat, or has completed her turn at bat using that bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the bat shall be removed from the team's possession, the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and base runners not put out on the batted ball returned to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Exception: In all cases, advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

If a batter has completed her turn at bat using the inappropriate bat and after the first pitch to the next batter, if the bat can be positively

identified within the half inning, it shall be removed from the team's possession, the batter who used the bat shall be declared out and ejected, but any advance by base runners shall stand.

In all cases regarding possession or use of an inappropriate bat, the plate umpire shall remove the bat from the game, doubleheader, series or tournament and file an incident report (See Appendix E) with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The head coach may retrieve the bat at the conclusion of play from the on-site administrator.

3.3.3 A damaged bat is a legal bat that has burrs, excessive wobble in its connection, rattles, cracks or dents.

EFFECT—See Appendix C. If an umpire detects the damaged bat during the pregame inspection or anytime during the game, the bat shall be removed from the team's possession. The plate umpire shall file an incident report (see Appendix E) with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The head coach may retrieve the bat at the conclusion of play from the on-site administrator.

3.3.4 Deleted for NPF. Bat testing does not exist in NPF and teams are not responsible for providing the list.

4. Bats—Warm-Up

Nonaltered, one-piece, wooden baseball or softball bats and fungo bats may be used in pregame warm-ups or in the on-deck circle in addition to legal softball bats. Attachments to a bat (such as sleeves, donuts and fans) are not allowed in the on-deck circle.

EFFECT—The presence of an inappropriate bat or an inappropriate number of bats in the on-deck circle shall result in the equipment's removal from the game (not returned to the dugout), and the player shall be warned. Should the previously removed inappropriate bat reappear in the on-deck circle, the on-deck batter shall be ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

5. Catcher's Equipment

Body protectors and baseball/softball shin guards that offer protection to at least the foot-to-knee area must be worn by the catcher. The catcher must wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. In addition, the catcher must wear a protective face mask. Traditional baseball/softball catcher's headgear or ice hockey goalie-style headgear may be worn but, in either case, must bear a permanent mark (molded in, embossed or by indestructible seal) indicating compliance with the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) combined helmet and mask standard.

Catchers and other uniformed team members who receive warm-up pitches on the field of play must wear catcher's headgear.

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

Note: It is strongly recommended that anyone who receives warm-up pitches off the field of play (bullpen area, dead-ball area) should wear catcher's headgear.

6. Gloves/Mitts

3.6.1 All players except the catcher must use a leather fielder's glove/mitt that meets the following maximum specifications:

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

The catcher may wear a leather glove or leather mitt of any dimension. Gloves/mitts may not be the color of the ball but may be any combination of other colors. The manufacturer's logos are not considered a glove color.

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

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

EFFECT—(3.6.1 and 3.6.2)—If noticed before a play, the umpire shall direct the fielder to remove the glove/mitt. Should the illegal glove/mitt reappear, the offending player shall be ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) If a play is made with the illegal glove/mitt, the glove is removed from play and the offensive coach has the choice of taking the result of the play or having the play nullified. If nullified, the batter returns to bat, base runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the last pitch and play is resumed.

7. Helmets/Protective Headgear

3.7.1 Offense. While batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle or coaches' boxes, each offensive player is required to wear a double-earflap protective helmet approved by NOCSAE. All helmets shall be the same color. Highly reflective, mirror-like chrome-finish helmets are prohibited. The permanent NOCSAE mark and exterior warning label must be legible. Decals and markings that are commemorative or indicative of notable performances are permissible.

EFFECT—If an umpire observes a player wearing a damaged or illegal helmet before coming to bat, while at bat or on base, or while in the coaches' boxes, the umpire shall direct the player to change to a legal helmet without penalty. Failure to wear a legal helmet when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or intentionally removing the helmet while the ball is live shall result in the player being declared out but shall not remove a force play.

3.7.2 Catcher. See Rule 3.5.

3.7.3 Defense. A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets must be the same color. Helmets shall have a nonglossy finish.

3.7.4 Student-Athlete Base Coach. A student-athlete in the coaches' box is required to wear a NOCSAE-approved protective helmet whenever the ball is live from the first pitch of an inning to the last out of the inning.

EFFECT—If an umpire observes a student-athlete in the coaches' boxes without a NOCSAE-approved protective helmet, the umpire shall direct the student-athlete to wear one without penalty. Failure to do so when directed by the umpire shall result in an administrative ejection of that student-athlete. See Rule 13.2.1.

3.7.5 Faceguard/facemask.

3.7.5.1 An offensive player may wear a helmet with a commercially manufactured protective face mask attached. The face mask should meet the NOCSAE standard for the mask and helmet combination and must be permanently attached by the manufacturer or attached by a procedure approved by the manufacturer.

3.7.5.2 A defensive player may wear a face mask, whether attached to a helmet or not.

8. Optional Protective Equipment

Optional protective equipment is those items not required by rule but worn or used by personal choice. In all cases, they must be worn or used as intended by the manufacturer.

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

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

3.8.2 Defensive headgear.

3.8.2.1 A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets must be the same color. The helmet must have a nonglossy finish.

3.8.2.2 A defensive player may wear a face mask, whether attached to a helmet or not.

3.8.3 Elbow/knee/shin pads. Elbow/knee/shin pads, if worn, must each be the same color as the other similar accessories worn.

3.8.4 Foul weather apparel. Sweat shirts, sweat pants, nylon windbreakers and jackets may be worn. Foul-weather garments worn by multiple players should be of the same style, color and trim but must not be distracting, interfere with the game or pose a safety risk to the player(s) or her opponents.

3.8.5 Undershirts/undershorts (sliders). It is not required that players wear undershirts or undershorts, but if worn by more than one player, the apparel must be the same in color. Shirt style and sleeve length may vary. Visible undergarments must be in solid colors and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn, slit or rolled up).

EFFECT—(3.8.1 to 3.8.5)—If possible, the player shall remove the item upon request of the umpire. If impossible or the player chooses not to comply with the umpire's request, she may be substituted for or ejected from the game. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1).

9. Shoes

Shoes are considered equipment and are therefore not subject to the uniform logo rule. (See Rule 3.10.5.1.) All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal spikes. Spikes must not extend in excess of 3/4-inch from the sole and may not be round. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened and the entire surface of the attachment is in contact with the existing surface of the shoe.

10. Uniforms

All eligible players shall be attired with uniforms (jersey, pants, shorts and socks) of identical style, color and trim differing only in size and player's numbers and names. Uniforms, all accessories and protective equipment must be worn properly and as designed. Exception: A uniform part that must be changed because of saturation of blood shall not cause the player to be penalized.

3.10.1 Coaches' uniform. Coaches must be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.

3.10.2 Headgear. Players must wear League-Approved headwear (if headwear is worn) on-field, with the exception of the pitcher and catcher, for whom it is optional. All headwear must be of the same color and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Exception: The catcher's headgear may be of a different color than the other defenders' headgear. Coaching Staff is not required to wear visors or hats, but if they chose to do so, the visors or hats must be the League-Approved visors or hats.

3.10.3 Insignias and Numbers. Commemorative or any other special insignia/patches may be worn on the uniform as long as all teammates' uniforms are identical and embedded numbers are not larger than 1 inch. All uniform jerseys must have a distinct whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back (0 and 00 are considered the same number). The number(s) or its outline shall be of a contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. It is recommended that jerseys have 3- to 4-inch high numbers of a contrasting color on the front of the jersey. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number.

3.10.4 Jersey. It is the responsibility of the visiting team to ensure its jersey is of a contrasting color to that selected by the home team. Exception: Tournament brackets may designate light or dark jerseys, but in the event one team's

dark jersey is too similar to the other team's light jersey, the visiting team must change jerseys.

A.R. 3.10.4: Securing sleeves to simulate a sleeveless jersey is considered wearing the uniform improperly.

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

3.10.5 Logos. Teams are allowed to put the patch of a non-competitive company (no apparel) on the NPF uniform sleeve. The size should be no more than one and a half (1 ½) inches tall and three (3) inches wide. The patch should not be put anywhere near Boombah identification. The League Office and Boombah must approve the company, patch, and placement on the uniform prior to additions/alterations being made."

3.10.5.2 The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including socks, warm-ups) and all other uniform accessories (for example, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors or hats) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 2¼ square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (for example, a patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo.

3.10.6 Pants/shorts. The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, but all players on the same team must be attired the same way.

EFFECT—(3.10.1 to 3.10.6)—The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not complying with the uniform rule. Any player not correcting the uniform violation shall be ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

RULE 4

Game Personnel

1. Assistant Coach

An assistant coach is responsible for aiding the head coach. An assistant coach assumes responsibility for the team in the event the head coach is unavailable to perform his or her duties. (See also Rule 4.4.3.)

2. Authorized Personnel

4.2.1 Only the following personnel involved in the game shall be allowed on the playing field: players, coaches, umpires and nongame personnel (on-site administrator, medical personnel, team managers, bat handlers, authorized media [at the discretion of the home team] and authorized grounds crew personnel).

4.2.1.1 When a live batted or thrown ball accidentally ricochets off non- game personnel (see above), the ball remains live. It is not interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming.

4.2.1.2 When a fly batted or thrown ball is caught by nongame personnel, the ball is dead. If no defender had a chance to catch the ball or if the ball would not have become a fair ball, it is not interference.

4.2.1.3 Non-game personnel may not intentionally interfere with a live batted or thrown ball (that is, kick or push the ball) or with a defender attempting to field a live batted ball or receive a thrown ball.

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

4.2.2 No person shall be allowed on the playing field during a game except Coaches, Players, Managers, and Trainers in uniform, Bat Handlers, Umpires, Television Camera Persons authorized by the Home Team or League, Officers of the law in uniform, and other employees of the Home Team staff.” Exception: In-between inning promotions.

Owners are authorized to occupy a team’s dugout, as long as they are present for official business and remain professional at all times. No more than twenty-three (23) Players can be in the dugout at the same time. Owners should not occupy the dugout during game action.

3. Base Coach

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

A Base Coach must be a member of the Team Staff, which is defined as Manager, Head Coach, or Assistant Coach. Extenuating circumstances may force a player to become Base Coach. Under these circumstances, the League Commissioner will approve on a case-by-case basis.

Extenuating Circumstance Exception:

If only one Team Staff member is available to coach, an Inactive Player defined as a Rostered Player that is not listed on the line-up card as a Starting Player prior to the start of the game may act as base coach. In the event of a coach becoming unable to coach the bases during the game due to extenuating circumstances, a substitute that has already been in and out of the game, may be designated as a Base Coach. This Base Coach “designee” must be attired differently from all other Players on the field while coaching the base. The Head Coach/Manager must advise the Umpire that she/he has delegated specific duties prescribed by the rules to an Inactive Player and any action of such designated representative shall be official.

A Player who has also been contractually designated as a Coach cannot play during a game in which she will also be the designated Coach. She cannot come into that game as a Player under any circumstance during said game. Team Management Staff (GM/Owner) is allowed to participate in a coaching position, but only as needed on a case-by-case basis as approved by the League Commissioner for extenuating circumstances.

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

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

time of the pitch.

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

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

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

EFFECT—(4.3.3 and 4.3.4)—The ball is dead, the runner closest to home plate shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Exception: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live. It is not interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming.

4.3.5 A coach (or anyone other than another runner who has not yet crossed home plate) may not physically assist a runner while she is actively running the bases and the ball is in play.

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

4. Head Coach

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

4.4.1.1 The team's conduct;

4.4.1.2 Observance of the official rules;

4.4.1.3 Ensuring that all players are legally and safely equipped and properly attired;

4.4.1.4 Presenting an approved bat list with highlighted and numbered models for all bats available for use in the game; and

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

4.4.2 In the event the team has co-head coaches, one shall be designated as the head coach on the lineup card.

4.4.3 In the event the head coach is unavailable, an acting head coach shall be named. He/she must be an approved representative of the institution and may include a student coach or student manager, but a student-athlete may not be appointed.

5. Medical Personnel

If, during a game, a student-athlete, coach or umpire is injured and requires medical attention, on-site medical personnel shall be responsible for treating the injured party appropriately. If he/she can be treated without undue delay, play shall be suspended until the injured party has received appropriate medical care. If the injury to a student-athlete requires extensive treatment and she can be safely removed from the playing field, an eligible substitute shall replace the injured player and play shall be resumed. In the event of either a serious injury or an injury of unknown severity, the injured party should remain on the field until medical personnel can arrange for transportation that will not compromise the injury. Aggressive treatment of open wounds or skin lesions should be followed. In particular, whenever a participant suffers a laceration or wound where oozing or bleeding occurs, the game should be stopped at the earliest possible time, and the participant should leave the field of play and be given appropriate medical treatment. An injured student-athlete should not return to the field of play without the approval of medical personnel.

6. Official Scorer

The host team or game management director of a tournament shall designate an official scorer before each game and identify him/her to the umpires and opposing coaches. ***The official scorer must be seated in the press box or a designated area other than a dugout. The scorer is responsible for preparing and sending a report on each game to the League Office at the completion of each game.*** The official scorer shall rule on all scoring within the game and ensure that the home team's and visitor's scorebooks concur. For a complete listing of the official scorer's duties, see Rule 14.1.

7. On-Site Administrator

4.7.1 Host administration shall designate an on-site administrator whose responsibilities include:

4.7.1.1 Determining within one hour of game time and with the assistance of participating coaches, the fitness of the field in the event of unsatisfactory weather or facility conditions;

4.7.1.2 Making him/herself known to umpires and opposing coaches before the contest but not later than the pre-game meeting;

4.7.1.3 Securing inappropriate and damaged bats that fail the umpire's inspection in a safe location until they are retrieved by the appropriate head coach at the end of the game, doubleheader, series or tournament, whichever is later, and as applicable;

4.7.1.4 Ensuring the existence of proper sporting conditions and behavior of spectators throughout competition, including ensuring the public-address announcement regarding sportsmanship is read. (see Rule 5.8);

4.7.1.5 Assisting umpires with ejections by escorting the ejected person(s) to an allowable area (see Rule 13.2.1);

4.7.1.6 Informing the umpire crew of severe weather conditions and providing spectators with appropriate information;

4.7.1.7 Providing facility or dangerous-situation information to umpires that leads to their consideration of calling a game (see Rule 6.6.3);

4.7.1.8 Ensuring the umpires have safe passage between the field and their dressing room and/or vehicles between and after games; and

4.7.1.9 Monitoring the audio and video board operations and abiding by the intent of these guidelines and policies, including between-inning entertainment. (See Appendix H, B5.)

EFFECT—(4.7.1.1 to 4.7.1.9)—The game should not progress until an on-site administrator is identified. The plate umpire is responsible for filing an incident report (see Appendix E) with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor if any of these duties are not carried out appropriately.

4.7.2 The on-site administrator shall not be a member of the softball coaching staff or an undergraduate student of the competing teams.

8. Public-Address Announcer

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

The public-address facilities shall not be available to or used by spectators, student yell leaders or any non-game administrative personnel. (See Rule 5.8 for Pregame Announcement.)

9. Spectators

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

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

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

10. Team Manager

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

11. Team Representative

A team representative is a member of the coaching staff (including volunteer and student coaches) or team manager. Team representatives are entitled to confer with each other or with players during charged conferences.

12. Umpires

4.12.1. A minimum of three (3) officials must be contracted for each game. However, a game may be played with two (2) Officials in the case of extenuating circumstances. This occurrence must first be approved by the League Commissioner or the NPF Supervisor of Officials.

RULE 5

Game Management and Pregame Procedures

1. *Banners that are predominantly yellow and are in direct sight of any fielder are not allowed.*
2. *Electronic Signage should be timed so that it does not rotate, flash, or change images while a player is at bat.*
3. *Flash photography is not allowed.*

5.1.1 Batting. Refer to NPF Policies and Procedures Manual for pre-game timeline information. Exhibit C, Home Game Timeline.

5.1.2 Fielding. Refer to NPF Policies and Procedures Manual for pre-game timeline information. Exhibit C, Home Game Timeline.

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

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

EFFECT—(5.1.1 to 5.1.3)—The visiting team's head coach must first appeal to the on-site administrator or home team's head coach for a correction of the situation. If the condition is still unsatisfactory, the visiting coach may request use of the home team's space and involve the umpire crew to supervise the time, if necessary.

1. Fitness of the Field

5.2.1 When on site within one hour before game time, the coaches of both teams and/or the on-site administrator shall decide whether a game shall not be started because of unsatisfactory conditions of weather or playing field, except for the second game of a doubleheader.

5.2.2 Should bad weather or unfit conditions exist during a game, the plate umpire shall be the final judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play. The on-site administrator shall inform the umpire crew of upcoming severe weather conditions and provide spectators with appropriate information. See also Safety Guidelines in Appendix G.

5.2.3 The plate umpire of the first game shall be the final judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of the second game of a doubleheader.

5.2.4 Maintenance of the field before and during games shall be the responsibility of the home-team management. In-game field maintenance shall only be at the direction of the umpire(s).

5.2.5 It is recommended that the home-team management provide a tarp for the entire infield.

2. Game Balls

Game balls must be available a minimum of 60 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the game. See also Rule 3.2.

3. Umpires' Duties

The umpires should report to the field and notify the on-site administrator and home-team coaches of their arrival at least 45 minutes before the start of the game.

5.4.1 The umpires shall check the condition of the field, inspect all playing lines and markings for proper location and adequate visibility, and direct the host institution to correct problems, if possible, or be prepared to make a ground rule to address the situation.

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

5.4.2 The umpires shall verify the availability of a minimum of 12 game softballs, including two new balls rubbed up by each team and 10 additional balls from the host team's game management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play. All new game balls shall be sufficiently rubbed up so as to remove the manufacturer's gloss before being put in play by the umpire.

5.4.3 Before each game, the umpires shall match each bat on the field and in team areas with the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List provided by the coach and inspect the bats for the ASA 2004 certification seal and any obvious damage. Umpires should make certain that inappropriate and damaged bats are not available for use during the game (that is, not allowed in the dugout).

EFFECT—See Rule 3.3 for inappropriate bats.

4. Pregame Suggested Protocol

5.5.1 It is recommended that the following protocol be used:

5.5.1 Submit lineup to the official scorekeeper;

5.5.2 Bat display and inspection;

5.5.3 Team infields and/or shuttle balls;

5.5.4 Pregame meeting;

5.5.5 Introductions;

5.5.6 National anthem (if applicable);

5.5.7 Pregame announcement; and

5.5.8 Play.

5. Lineup Card

5.6.1 The lineup card is the official listing of eligible players submitted by a head coach before the start of the game.

5.6.2 Each team must submit a complete lineup card to the official scorer 20 minutes before game time and to the plate umpire and opponent at the pregame meeting. The lineup becomes official when it is reviewed and accepted at the pregame meeting making any subsequent changes subject to the rules of substitution, entries and re-entries. Exception: A team playing consecutive games on the same day shall deliver a lineup card for the succeeding game to the official scorer as soon as possible but not later than the pregame meeting.

5.6.3 The following information shall be recorded on the lineup card: first and last names, uniform numbers and positions of the starting players, listed in the order in which they are to bat; and the first and last names and uniform numbers of all eligible substitutes. In addition, it shall include the first and last name of the head coach. In the event the team has co-head coaches, one shall be designated as the head coach for the game.

Notes:

- 1. Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*
- 2. All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*
- 3. First names may be omitted from the written lineup as long as they are printed on the card's roster and multiple players with the same last name must have a first name or distinguishing first name initial.*
- 4. Omitting the last name makes the player ineligible, not the card inaccurate.*
- 5. The umpire may ask for the lineup card to be corrected before accepting it as official.*

Also see inaccurate lineup card. (See Rule 8.3.2 and Appendix B.)

6. Pregame Meeting

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

5.7.1 Identify the official scorer and his or her location, and the on-site administrator (if not previously introduced to

opposing coaches and umpires),

5.7.2 Receive from the home team and visiting team their respective batting orders on a lineup card, The umpire shall review each team's lineup card with its coach to be sure it is complete and shall provide one last opportunity for changes without the changes being charged as substitutions. Once returned to the umpire, each team's lineup is official. In the event of a subsequent change, the plate umpire shall report the substitution(s) to the opposing team, official scorer and public-address announcer. See also Rule 5.6.

EFFECT—If the name, number or position of a player is incorrect, it is handled as an appeal play. (See Rule 7.1.1.4 for process and Rule 8.3.2 for effect.)

5.7.3 Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail, if agreeable with the visiting team. If the coaches do not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the umpire crew.

5.7.4 Review special game rules (for example, halted game, tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules, or required departure time if applicable for a flight.) (See Rules 6.17 and 6.15, respectively.)

5.7.5 Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.

7. Pregame Announcement

Leave to the discretion of the Team and the League

8. Scouting Information and Electronic Equipment Use

5.9.1 A team may film or video only contests in which it is playing, but may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game that is or will be televised. Exception: A tournament host may stream video of all games in its tournament and is not restricted to filming and streaming video of only games in which it is a participant.

5.9.2 Only nonuniformed team personnel (including players) may be outside team areas for the purpose of scouting and videoing a contest, recording pitch speeds, charting pitches, keeping score or running the scoreboard, but in doing so, they render themselves ineligible for the game.

5.9.3 Taking photos and videoing done by any team personnel may not be done from the team's dugout or bullpen; however, unattended video cameras may be positioned in these team areas.

A.R. 5.9.3: The host team has cameras mounted on or in its dugout for its future video analysis of its hitters and the visiting team has an unmanned camera on a tripod in its dugout to video the pitchers. **RULING:** Since neither of these cameras is attended to by personnel, acquiring video for future use from these team areas is permissible. The intent is not to prohibit the uploading of information but rather to continue restricting the downloading and use of information during the game.

5.9.4 A designated, team-neutral area should accommodate both the home team's and the visitor's video cameras, but in the event that separate locations are necessary, the two areas shall be comparable.

5.9.5 Team personnel shall not use television monitoring or replay equipment during a contest.

Notes:

- *Turning on or off videotaping equipment between innings does not constitute a violation.*
- *Uniformed team personnel (including players) may not be outside team areas for scouting purposes.*

5.9.6 Scouting information obtained from outside the dugout involving current opponents shall not be relayed or given to anyone on the playing field, in team areas or to team personnel during the contest.

5.9.7 Statistical information may be entered into electronic equipment (for example, smart phones, tablets, laptops) but may not be accessed or retrieved during the game.

5.9.8 Cell phones and pagers are not allowed on the field but may be used in team areas for purposes other than coaching or scouting except as noted in Rule 5.9.7 above. Use of a cell phone camera in a team area is prohibited from the start of the pregame meeting until the game's conclusion.

EFFECT—(5.9.1 to 5.9.8)—**When brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected (if within the facility). If the head coach is not within the facility, the violator shall be ejected. In all cases, the conditions for the effect in Rule 13.2.1 shall apply to the administrative ejection.**

5.9.9 Television monitoring or institutional replay equipment shall not be used except in the following three postgame situations:

5.9.9.1 By the umpires to verify team personnel involved in a fight;

5.9.9.2 By the umpires to verify team personnel who left a team area to join a brawl;

5.9.9.3 By the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor to confirm the accuracy of a softball incident report involving a protest or suspension.

9. Crowd Control

The responsibility for crowd control rests with the Home Team, Ownership, Management, and Staff and request cooperation in maintaining proper playing conditions. In addition, the on-site administrator shall ensure that the public-address announcement regarding sportsmanship is read, at a minimum, between the national anthem and the first pitch. (See Rule 5.8.)

Profanity, racial, sexist or sexual comments, or intimidating actions, including baiting or taunting, directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches, spectators or other team representatives will not be tolerated. Individuals making such remarks or actions shall be removed from the site of competition.

10. Artificial Noisemakers Use

Objects used to make noise or amplify sound to show support, approval or opposition to playing action, other than body parts, are considered artificial noisemakers. The use of musical instruments and misuse of equipment to make noise are addressed separately in Rules 5.13 and 13.6.2, respectively.

5.11.1 Artificial noisemakers are allowed by fans, but should not be used while the ball is live.

5.11.2 The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes and team personnel is prohibited in team areas.

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a team warning. Any subsequent violation by the same team shall result in a behavioral ejection of the violator. (See Rule 13.2.1.) If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning.

11. Media

Media authorized by the host team may be in designated live- or dead-ball areas at the discretion of the host institution.

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

12. Entertainment and Promotions

No Entertainment or promotions, or any component thereof, shall not play while the ball is live. If both teams have a band present, play may only occur immediately before the team's offensive half-inning and/or for about 10 seconds immediately after a score. If only one band is present, play may occur whenever the ball is dead as long as it does not interfere with the public-address announcer.

13. Scoreboard

A visible display of the score is required. It is recommended that an electronic scoreboard that shows balls, strikes, outs and the line score be located in such a position on the field that it can be seen easily by both teams and spectators.

Scoreboards should not be placed directly in the batter's field of vision through the pitching circle.

14. Video, Audio, Matrix Boards

It is required that the use of video, audio and matrix boards follow the guidelines established in Appendix H.

EFFECT—Should any policies in Appendix H be violated, umpires have the authority to stop the game to have the matter corrected by the on-site administrator. In this case, umpires must file an incident report (Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the game. The institution's director of athletics and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

RULE 6

The Game

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

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

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

1. Regulation Game

6.1.1 A regulation game shall be seven innings unless:

6.1.1.1 The game is extended because of a tie score. (See Rule 6.14.)

6.1.1.2 The game is shortened because:

6.1.1.2.1 The home team needs none or only part of its half of the seventh inning to score more runs than the visiting team;

6.1.1.2.2 The umpire declares the game called (see Rule 6.16), forfeited (see Rule 6.19), halted (see Rule 6.17); or

6.1.1.2.3 *There is no Run-Rule in regular season NPF competition.*

6.1.2 It is a regulation game when the umpire terminates play by calling, "Game." If a team wishes to lodge an appeal or protest on the final play of the game, it must immediately inform the plate umpire of that intent. Once the umpires leave the field, a protest will not be allowed.

6.1.3 Speed-up, free substitution, time limits or any other optional rules may not be used for official NPF contests.

2. Scoring of Runs

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

6.2.2 One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches first, second and third bases and home plate before the third out of an inning. Exceptions: 1) The base runner placed on second base to begin the tiebreaker is exempt from touching first base; and 2) with two outs, score any run in which the base runner is awarded home plate during a live ball even though a trailing runner is tagged out before the lead runner touches home plate.

A.R. 6.2.2: Bases loaded, two outs, batter earns a base on balls. Base runner from third base slowly advances to home plate while the base runner from second base aggressively advances to third base, rounds the base and is tagged out. The out at third base happens before the base runner from third base touches home plate. RULING: Score the run on the live-ball award.

6.2.3 No run shall be scored if the third out of an inning is the result of:

6.2.3.1 A batter-runner being called out before reaching first base or any other base runner forced out because of the batter becoming a batter-runner.

6.2.3.2 A runner being put out by a tag or live-ball appeal play before the lead base runner touches home plate.

6.2.3.3 A preceding base runner being declared out during play or as a result of a successful appeal.

Notes:

- *For ease in determining if a run scores on an inning-ending play, account for all force outs before scoring any runs. If the third out is attained via force out, no runs will score.*
- *An appeal can be made after the third out.*

6.2.4 No run shall be scored by a runner who is ruled out for the fourth out as a result of an appeal of a base missed or left too soon.

A.R. 6.2.4: With one out and base runners on first and third bases, the batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each base runner leaves her base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defensive team then makes an appeal at third base before the infielders leave the infield. RULING: The base runner on third base will then be declared out also, and the run will not count.

3. Game Winner

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

6.3.1 The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team scores the winning run in its half inning even though it is an incomplete inning. (See Rule 14.6.1.)

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

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

4. Starting the Game

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

5. Positions of the Offensive Team

The offensive team:

6.5.1 Must follow the original batting order throughout the game.

6.5.2 May position a base coach in the coaches' boxes at first and third bases during its time at bat.

6.5.3 Must keep all personnel, except the base coaches, batter, base runner(s) and on-deck batter, in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is live.

6.5.4 Shall limit on-field warm-ups at the start of the game, between half innings and during pitching changes to:

6.5.4.1 Warm-up swings on the field of play by the batter who is in foul territory (provided she is outside the batter's box) and the on-deck batter in her team's on-deck circle.

6.5.4.2 Warm-up running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

6.5.4.3 A base runner(s) who is on base before a pitching change may lead off her respective base(s) during pitching warm-ups.

6.5.5 Must not position any coaches or uniformed team members near or behind home plate, or behind the back-stop, while the pitcher is throwing warm-up pitches or pitching to a batter.

EFFECT—(6.5.3 to 6.5.5)—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject him or her. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6. Positions of the Defensive Team

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

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

6.6.2 Catcher. The catcher must be within the catcher's box from the start of the pitch until the pitch is released. No part of the catcher's feet may be outside the lines until the pitch is released.

Exceptions:

1) When play is suspended by the umpire (no effect);

2) When the batter is positioned in the front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer to the plate without effect. At all times, the catcher must avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter legally has the right to the entire batter's box.

6.6.3 Infielders/Outfielders. All infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. If a fielder's feet are touching the line or are in fair territory, she is considered in the field of play.

EFFECT—(6.6.1 to 6.6.3)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

6.6.4 A player should not be considered to have changed defensive positions if she does not exchange her fielding position with another player but only temporarily stations herself at a different location on the field (for example, a fourth outfielder or fifth infielder).

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

EFFECT—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject him/her. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6.6.6 At the start of the game, between half innings and during pitching changes, warm-ups shall be limited to:

6.6.6.1 Pitching from the pitcher's circle to home plate for not more than five pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base or any combination that is limited to five throws from the pitcher.

EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the next batter(s) faced for each excessive pitch/throw.

6.6.6.2 Throwing and catching with one ball among not more than four players and the pitcher in the infield;

6.6.6.3 Throwing and catching among any number of players in the outfield; and

6.6.6.4 Warm-up running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

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

EFFECT—(6.6.6.2 to 6.6.6.4)—The umpire shall warn the violator and her coach for the first offense in the game. For a second offense in the same game, a ball is awarded to the batter. For a third offense in the same game, the head coach is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

7. Live Ball

When the umpire calls "Play ball," the ball is live and in play. The ball remains live and in play until the umpire suspends play by calling "Time" or the ball becomes dead.

8. Delayed Dead Ball

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

6.8.1 Delayed dead ball is called under the following circumstances: 6.8.1.1 Detached equipment interference (see Rule 9.2.4); and 6.8.1.2 Plate umpire interference in a steal (see Rule 9.7).

6.8.2 Delayed dead ball with an option for the offended team is called under the following circumstances:

6.8.2.1 Inaccurate lineup, unreported/misreported substitute, illegal player (see Rule 8.3);

6.8.2.2 Catcher and fielder obstruction (see Rules 9.5.1 and 9.5.2); 6.8.2.3 Illegal pitch (see Rule 10.8);

6.8.2.4 Batter interference (see Rule 11.21);

6.8.2.5 Runner leaving a base before the release of the pitch (see Rule 12.20); and

6.8.2.6 Thrown bat endangering an umpire or player not making a play on the ball (see Rule 11.21.5.3).

6.8.3 Although not a delayed dead ball, an option is afforded the offended team when an illegal glove is used to make a play. (See Rule 12.18.1.)

6.8.4 In all cases involving an option, the umpires will confer and the plate umpire will then bring the coaches together to explain the options available to the offended coach. Once the coach makes a selection, that decision is final.

9. Dead Ball

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

6.9.2 A dead ball is also ruled when a fielder contacts a ball in live-ball territory when any part of her body is in contact with dead-ball territory. Exception: A fielder's foot may be on a line marking dead-ball territory.

6.9.3 While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, base runners may not advance and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of:

6.9.3.1 Acts that occurred while the ball was live (such as, but not limited to, an illegal pitch, interference, obstruction, an overthrow, a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field); or

6.9.3.2 As a result of a dead-ball appeal.

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

10. Suspension and Resumption of Play

6.10.1 "Dead Ball" or "Time" shall be called and signaled for the purpose of suspending play. (See Rule 15.10.)

6.10.1.1 Before the pitch, the umpire may hold up a hand instructing the pitcher not to pitch until the batter, catcher and umpire are ready. The ball is dead, and no other play shall be allowed until the umpire lowers his or her hand, signifying "Play ball."

6.10.1.2 Players and coaches will not be granted "Time" when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.

6.10.1.3 The umpire shall not suspend play until a play has been completed except in the case of significant injury to a player in which case the umpire may use discretion to immediately stop play.

6.10.1.4 After a base on balls, the umpire shall not suspend play until the batter-runner has stopped at first base and each other base runner forced to advance has stopped at her next base.

6.10.2 "No pitch" shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while play is suspended.

6.10.3 A runner, who is touching a base when play is suspended, may not advance nor return during the suspension of play.

6.10.4 After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher takes her place on the pitcher's plate with the ball in her possession, the catcher is in the catcher's box, all base runners have reoccupied the base they occupied at the time of the pitch and the umpire signals "Play ball."

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

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

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

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

11. Conferences

A charged conference is a delay in the game granted by the umpire to allow team representatives or team representatives and players to confer.

6.11.1 If either team is charged with a conference, both teams may hold conferences, including with base runners, who are no longer restricted to the vicinity of their bases.

6.11.2 If the umpire suspends play to allow team personnel to tend to an injured player, to administer an ejection or to resolve a protest on site, both teams may hold uncharged conferences, including with base runners, who are no longer restricted to the vicinity of their bases.

6.11.3 During the suspension of play for the administration of a substitution, both teams may hold uncharged conferences but base runners are restricted to the vicinity of their bases. Exception: Base runners are not restricted to the vicinity of their bases during warm-up pitches.

Note: In all cases, either team may be charged with a conference if not ready to play after the umpire's declaration to play.

6.11.4 Charged Defensive Conference. A defensive conference is a meeting that takes place anytime a defensive team representative(s) delays the game or requests a suspension of play for any reason and delivers a message (by any means) to any defensive player, or a fielder leaves her position, goes to the dugout area, and gives the umpire reason to believe she has received instruction.

6.11.4.1 There shall only be three (3) charged conferences between any team representative from the dugout with

any defensive player(s) in a seven (7) inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning.”

*Penalty for extra conference follows NCAA rules which would yield an ejection of coach calling conference.

6.11.4.2 The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when a defensive conference has been charged and record the inning on the team’s lineup card.

6.11.4.3 A charged defensive conference begins when the game is delayed or suspended to deliver a message to the defense and ends when the team representative(s) enters dead-ball territory or the player returns to her position.

EFFECT—(6.11.4 to 6.11.4.3)—The umpire shall not permit more than the allowable number of defensive conferences per inning. The team representative(s) or player(s) who initiates another charged conference shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Exceptions: The following are not charged defensive conferences:

6.11.4.3.1 Giving instructions from the dugout area to the defense without requesting a suspension of play.

6.11.4.3.2 Requesting a suspension of play in order:

- (a) To remove the pitcher from the pitching position or to make a defensive substitution, provided the umpire is informed of the change before the representative steps over the foul line or consults with any player(s) and provided the team is ready to resume play when the umpire has completed recording and announcing the substitution or, in the case of a pitching change, the pitcher has completed her warm-up pitches.
- (b) To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.
- (c) To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
- (d) For a defensive player to make an equipment change.

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

6.11.5.1 There may be only one charged offensive conference per half inning.

6.11.5.2 The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when an offensive conference has been charged and record the inning on the team’s lineup card.

6.11.5.3 A charged offensive conference begins when the game is delayed or suspended to deliver a message to the offense (player or coach) and ends when the team representative(s) returns to the coach’s box or dead- ball territory.

EFFECT—(6.11.5 to 6.11.5.3)—The umpire shall not permit more than one offensive conference per inning. The team representative(s) or player(s) who initiates another charged conference shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Exceptions: The following are not charged offensive conferences:

6.11.5.3.1 Giving instructions to the offense without requesting a suspension of play.

6.11.5.3.2 Requesting a suspension of play in order:

- (a) To make an offensive lineup change, provided the umpire is informed that a change will be made before any consultation with a player(s) or team personnel, and provided that the team is ready to resume play when the umpire has completed recording and announcing the substitution.
- (b) to attend to an obviously incapacitated player.
- (c) To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
- (d) For a batter or base runner to make an equipment change.
- (e) For a base runner to put on a jacket/sweatshirt.

6.11.5.4 When a defensive player requests time to speak to one or more defensive players, base runners may not abandon the vicinity of their bases without it being a charged offensive conference.

- If either team is charged with a conference, base runners are no longer restricted to the vicinity of their bases.
- If base runners leave the vicinity of their bases, it is a charged offensive conference, and if the team has already used its charged conference in the inning, the head coach is ejected. See Rule 13.2.1 (Administrative ejection).

12. Doubleheaders and Series

6.12.1 A doubleheader refers to two regularly scheduled games played in succession on the same day.

6.12.2 A series refers to two or more regularly scheduled games played consecutively against the same opponent.

6.12.3 The first game of a doubleheader or series must be completed before the subsequent game(s) may start.

6.12.4 The second game of a doubleheader should start 20 minutes after completion of the first game, unless otherwise determined by mutual consent.

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

13. Eight-Run Rule

There is no Run-Rule in regular season NPF competition.

14. Tie Game (Regulation)

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

Notes:

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

15. Tiebreaker Rule

If, after the completion of 9 (nine) innings of play, the score is tied, the following tiebreaker may be played to determine a winning team: to follow, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half inning being placed on second base (for example, if the No. 5 batter is the lead-off batter, the No. 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). A substitute may be inserted for the base runner. For scoring, see Rule 14.31.

Tiebreaker Rule in a Double Header Situation:

In the case of a scheduled double-header, the Tiebreaker Rule will go into effect at the beginning of the eighth (8th) inning. A "scheduled double-header is defined as a double-header that was on the regular season schedule from the beginning and/or intended from the outset to be a double-header - NOT a double-header resulting from weather or other postponement/cancellation issues.

16. Called Game

6.16.1 A called game is a regulation-length game ended by order of an umpire. It shall be declared by the plate umpire if, after five or more innings have been completed, he/she terminates play (for reasons such as lightning, darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the spectators or players in danger). The score shall be that of the last equal inning played, except that in the following circumstances, the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:

6.16.1.1 If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in its five offensive half-innings.

6.16.1.2 If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.

6.16.1.3 If a team is ahead by eight or more runs after five innings, or if the home team is at least eight runs ahead after four and one-half innings.

6.16.2 The record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game ends shall be recorded. If the scoring in an incomplete inning has no bearing on which team wins the contest, all individual and team statistics shall be

included.

6.16.3 Games must not be concluded before completion unless the UIC or Supervisor of Officials deems necessary due to weather or emergency. It is up to the Supervisor or UIC's discretion in talking with the Home Team Owner/GM and/or facility manager, whether the field is considered dangerous.

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

6.16.4 A travel policy that allows a game to conclude before its actual completion may be established by conference or tournament policy or agreed upon by opposing coaches. In the event that team air travel conflicts with continued play:

6.16.4.1 A forfeit shall not be declared as long as an ending time is communicated and agreed upon not later than the pregame meeting. The head coaches are required to agree on either a mandatory drop-dead time (in which case the playing action ceases the next time the ball becomes dead and the game outcome is determined as in Rule 6.3 or, if tied, 6.14) or a time at which no new inning will begin and communicate their choice to the umpires, on-site administrator and tournament personnel, if applicable.

6.16.4.2 The game could be a "Called Game" (see Rule 6.16), a "Halted Game" (see Rule 6.17) or "No Game" (see Rule 6.18).

17. Halted and Interrupted Games

6.17.1 . If play needs to be stopped before completion of the game, due to weather or emergency, and cannot continue on that day, the game will be suspended and resumed exactly where it left off, including the batter's count. Player substitution will be allowed for a current player in the resumed game ONLY IF a Player on the line-up card is injured (Doctor Verification is required) or has been traded at the time of the resumed game.

Note: If five (5) innings have been completed and one team is ahead (or if 4.5 innings have been completed and the Home Team is ahead), then the game is a Regulation Game and the results stand.

In general, halted games must be finished before beginning a new game, preferably within the parameters of the series. If the halted game is the last game of the current series, the scheduled make-up should be made prior to the next series and must be approved by the League Commissioner. Exceptions are allowed for financial considerations. Each Team must agree to make a best effort to play all games or schedule double-headers in the event of rain-outs, missed flights, etc. The League Commissioner shall have the authority to determine whether best efforts were made and levy fines (up to \$5,000) if he/she determines best efforts were not made by a team.

6.17.3 Before the restart of a halted or interrupted game, the plate umpire shall conduct a pregame meeting to verify the lineup information remains correct (for example, note uniform number changes necessitated by a change in jerseys, personnel no longer available, etc.). When play resumes after having been temporarily suspended, it must start at exactly the point of it being suspended. The lineups and batting orders of both teams must be exactly the same as they were, subject to the rules of substitution, and any player who played or was announced as a substitute before the game was suspended, must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game. Every effort should be made to continue the game with the plate umpire's original lineup cards.

6.17.4 During the regular season, if a game is both halted and regulation, regulation will take precedence assuming the reasonable efforts made to complete the game have failed.

Notes:

- *If the halted-game rule is not used, a game stopped with the score tied is considered a regulation tie game (if it qualifies under Rules 6.1 and 6.14) or no game (Rule 6.18), not a halted game, and may not be resumed.*
- *See Appendix G for Safety Guidelines regarding weather.*

18. No Game

Does not apply to NPF. See Halted Game provisions.

19. Forfeited Game

In all instances that a game may be considered for forfeit, Umpires will forward information to the League Commissioner and the Supervisor of Officials. The League Commissioner retains the sole right to determine a forfeited contest.

6.19.1 A forfeit is a game that could be declared ended and awarded to an offended team in the following cases:

6.19.1.1 If a team is on site but refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within five minutes after the umpire has called "Play ball," unless such delay in appearing or in commencing the game is unavoidable.

6.19.1.2 If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play.

6.19.1.3 If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume play within two minutes after the umpire has called "Play ball."

Note: For Rules 6.19.1.1 to 6.19.1.3, in addition to the forfeit, the head coach shall be ejected and then suspended for the next two previously scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring). See Rule 13.2.1.

6.19.1.4 If a team employs tactics obviously designed to delay or shorten the game.

6.19.1.5 If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully and persistently violated.

6.19.1.6 If the order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel is not obeyed in a timely manner, and a final 60-second forfeit warning has been issued and has elapsed.

6.19.1.7 If, because of the removal of players from the game by the umpire crew or for any cause, there is an insufficient number of eligible players to fill the lineup.

6.19.1.8 If, after consultation with host institution representatives, the umpire crew believes student-athletes, game officials, spectators or any umpire are in danger because of crowd or team behavior.

6.19.1.9 If an ejected or suspended person is discovered to be participating again.

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

Additional notes from NPF on when forfeit is appropriate:

Offending Team did not make best efforts to play a game (see Best Efforts Requirements for more information). The League Commissioner has the final say on this ruling if there is a dispute based on the supporting evidence. Offending Team put an Ineligible Player in a game. (See definition of an Ineligible Player). A Player from the Offending Team used a non-certified or altered bat in a game (regardless of the outcome as a result of the Player's participation with the bat).

Notes:

- *When a game is forfeited under postgame administrative actions, neither the outcome nor the statistics in any completed contest are reversible. The actual results of the game and the statistics shall be entered as such in both teams' all-time records, the coaches' records and in individual statistics.*
- *Games later forfeited shall be denoted by an asterisk and a footnote. If such a forfeit is declared while a game is in progress, all statistics (other than won- lost records and coaches' records) are voided, unless the game has progressed to a "reasonable point of conclusion" (five innings), in which case all statistics shall count and shall be reflected in all records. The team's won-lost record shall include the forfeit, but if the statistics are voided, all averages in future rankings shall be computed without inclusion of the forfeited game.*

20. No Contest (per NCAA Statistics Policies)

"No Contest" is declared when:

6.20.1 A team does not appear for its scheduled game. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract.

6.20.2 A protest is ruled valid but is not regulation and not resumed.

6.20.3 Both teams are unable to field teams to continue a game in progress.

If a Team does not make best efforts to play a game, the respective Team may be fined at the League Commissioner's discretion (up to \$5,000) plus a forfeit, based on the individual circumstances. League Commissioner will determine if best efforts were made to play the game based on presented facts.

RULE 7

Appeals and Protests

1. Appeals

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

7.1.1.1 Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at or overrunning first base. (See Rule 12.24.)

7.1.1.1.1 Must be a live-ball appeal.

7.1.1.1.2 Must be made before the batter-runner returns to first base.

7.1.1.2 Missing a base. (See Rule 12.22.)

7.1.1.2.1 May be a live- or dead-ball appeal.

7.1.1.2.2 Must be made before the next pitch.

7.1.1.2.3 Must be made before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory, and the catcher has clearly vacated her normal fielding position.

7.1.1.2.4 Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.

7.1.1.2.5 A runner is assumed to have touched the base and if a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.

(a) If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire shall make a safe signal and declare "No tag." If a proper appeal is made, by tagging the plate or runner before the runner returns to the plate, the runner shall be declared out.

(b) If a batter-runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made before she returns to first base.

A.R. 7.1.1.2: The runner misses second base by a step but just touches the corner of third base. The defense appeals that the runner missed third base. RULING: Even though an appeal is made at third base (the umpire called the runner safe), an appeal may be made at second base on the same runner.

7.1.1.2.6 If a runner misses an intervening base of a base award while the ball is dead, she may retreat to touch that base as long as she has not touched the final base of the award. Once she touches the final base of an award, she may not return and is vulnerable for an appeal.

A.R. 7.1.1.2.6: After an out-of-the-park home run, the batter-runner misses first base and while between second and third bases, the first baseman appeals to the umpire that first base had been missed. The batter-runner, hearing this, retreats to retouch second base, touches first base and completes her base-running responsibilities correctly. The defensive coach argues that the appeal came before the batter-runner touched first base. RULING: The batter-runner may legally retreat because she had not yet touched the final base of her award. The appeal cannot be ruled on until the player completes her base-running responsibilities, and because she corrected her own error, the appeal is denied.

7.1.1.2.7 If a base runner forced to advance (because the batter became a batter-runner) misses the base to which she was forced, that appeal is a force out. If a base runner misses a base to which she was not forced, it is a timing play. (See Rule 6.2.)

7.1.1.3 Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (See Rules 12.5 and 12.27.)

7.1.1.3.1 May be a live- or dead-ball appeal.

7.1.1.3.2 Must be made before the next pitch.

7.1.1.3.3 Must be made before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and left fair territory, and the catcher has clearly vacated her normal fielding position.

7.1.1.3.4 Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.

7.1.1.4 Participation by an improper player (batting out of order, player who is listed inaccurately on the lineup card, unreported player and illegal player): (See Rule 8.3 and Appendix B.)

7.1.1.4.1 Must be a dead-ball appeal.

7.1.1.4.2 Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.

7.1.1.5 Switching base runners on occupied bases. (See Rule 12.5.3.)

7.1.1.5.1 After the ball has been put in play, it may be a dead-ball appeal.

7.1.1.5.2 Must be made before the end of the half inning.

7.1.1.5.3 Must be made before the umpires leave the field.

7.1.2 Appeals may be made when the ball is live or dead. After a request by a player or coach, the umpire may solicit needed information from other members of the crew before ruling on the appeal.

7.1.2.1 Live-ball appeal:

7.1.2.1.1 A live-ball appeal is made by touching the base the runner missed or left before a fly ball was first touched or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided she is still on the playing field, and indicating to the umpire what is being appealed (if necessary).

7.1.2.1.2 Runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play.

7.1.2.1.3 A live-ball appeal can be made after a play on a runner.

7.1.2.1.4 When the ball goes out of play, a live-ball appeal cannot be made.

7.1.2.2 Dead-ball appeal:

7.1.2.2.1 Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called or the ball has become dead, a coach or any fielder (with or without the ball) may ask the umpire to make a decision on the appealed play.

7.1.2.2.2 Runners may not advance as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.

7.1.2.2.3 When the ball goes out of play, the dead-ball appeal cannot be made until the umpire places a new ball into the game.

7.1.2.2.4 If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitcher's plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.

7.1.2.2.5 When "Play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher, coach or a fielder then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call "Time" and allow the appeal process.

7.1.3 At the end of an inning, appeals must be made immediately after the third out.

A.R. 7.1.3: Bottom of the seventh inning, two outs, tie score. The batter in the sixth spot in the batting order (average hitter but slow base runner) is scheduled to bat, but the coach sends the batter in the ninth spot (fastest base runner on the team) to home plate with instructions to strike out for the third out. The defensive coach notices batting out of order, but waits to see the result of her turn at bat. RULING: Even though the defense got the strikeout as the third out, the team may appeal batting out of order to correct the batting order for the eighth inning when the tiebreaker was to begin.

7.1.4 A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left before a fly ball was first touched when:

7.1.4.1 She has left the field of play.

7.1.4.2 A following runner has scored.

7.1.4.3 She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed or left before a fly ball was first touched, and play is suspended by the umpire.

7.1.4.4 The ball is put back into play after having been dead.

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

2. Protests

7.2.1 A protest is the formal inquiry into the decision of an umpire and shall be allowed in the following cases:

7.2.1.1 Failure to apply the correct rule to a situation (for example, a batted ball hits the foul pole in flight and is declared a foul ball),

7.2.1.2 Failure to impose the correct effect for a given violation (for example, a runner is awarded one base for a fielder's throw that enters dead-ball territory).

7.2.1.3 Misapplication of a playing rule (for example, the umpire ejects a runner for failure to slide at home plate even though the catcher had not yet received the ball).

7.2.2 Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment of an umpire. Examples of protests that will not be considered are:

Equipment Protest:

In the case of a non-certified/illegal bat, if the bat cannot be deemed legal beyond a reasonable doubt, it must be confiscated immediately and sent to the League Commissioner post-game for evaluation. Upon evaluation by the League Commissioner, if the bat is determined to be an illegal bat, the player as well as the team will be fined (up to \$5,000 per infraction). A forfeit will be issued if the bat was used by a winning team.

If a game is played under protest (i.e. Ineligible Player), then the protest should be brought to the attention of the League Office following the game using the Protest Form found in the NPF Policies and Procedures Manual. If any Team Protest is not upheld, a \$250 fine will be imposed to the Coach and as well as the Team that issued the protest, in addition to any other fines imposed.

In the case of usage of unapproved equipment/apparel, i.e. visor, shoes, gloves, etc., see NPF Policies and Procedures Manual for process of reporting infraction(s).

7.2.2.1 Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.

7.2.2.2 Whether a runner was safe or out.

7.2.2.3 Whether a pitch was a ball or strike.

7.2.2.4 Whether a pitch was legal or illegal.

7.2.2.5 Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.

7.2.2.6 Whether a base runner did or did not leave her base before a fly ball was first touched.

7.2.2.7 Whether a fly was or was not caught legally

7.2.2.8 Whether a fly was or was not an infield fly.

7.2.2.9 Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.

7.2.2.10 Whether the field was or was not fit to continue or resume play.

7.2.2.11 Whether there was or was not sufficient light to continue play.

7.2.2.12 Whether a player or live ball did or did not enter a dead-ball area or touch some object or person in dead-ball territory.

7.2.2.13 Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.

7.2.2.14 Whether a batted ball was or was not touched by a fielder before clearing the fence in flight.

7.2.3 Protests may involve both a matter of judgment and the misinterpretation of a rule.

R. 7.2.3: With one out and base runners on second and third bases, the batter flies out. The base runner on third base tags up after the catch, but the base runner on second base does not. The base runner on third base clearly crosses home plate before the ball is played at second base for the third out. The umpire does not allow the run to score. RULING: The questions as to whether the base runners left their bases before the catch and whether the play at second base was made before the base runner on third base crossed the plate are solely matters of judgment and are not protestable. However, it is a misapplication of a playing rule and a proper subject for protest if the umpire fails to allow the run to score on the timing play.

7.2.4 Any game started on a nonregulation field shall not be protested for that reason.

7.2.5 During regular-season play, the coach shall immediately notify the plate umpire of his or her intent to protest before the next pitch. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team must voice its protest intentions before umpires exit the field. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules, the following steps shall be taken:

7.2.5.1 The protesting coach shall first identify the alleged failure to apply the correct rule, effect or misapplication of the rule. The opposing coach then may provide input followed by the crew privately collaborating to attempt to settle the dispute. These steps should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using an NCAA Softball Rules Book. Lastly, the crew brings both coaches together to explain its ruling with one final opportunity to use a rules book or to call the secretary-rules editor to determine the on-field resolution.

7.2.5.2 If the resolution of the above meeting is unsatisfactory, the protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and **submit an NPF Protest Form to the League Office.**

7.2.5.3 If the protesting coach decides to continue the game under protest:

7.2.5.3.1 The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, scorekeepers and cause the public-address announcer to announce the game will be resumed under protest.

7.2.5.3.2 The plate umpire and the protesting coach must note and record the relevant information, including:

- (a) The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
- (b) The names and contact information of the umpires and official scorer.
- (c) The rule and section of the official rules, or a copy of the ground rule, under which the protest is made.
- (d) The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.

7.2.5.3.3 If the protesting team wins the game, a written protest is not filed. However, if the protesting team loses the game, at the conclusion of the game and as soon as possible, the plate umpire will notify the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor of the protest. **Within 48 hours following the start of the protested game...and NPF Protest Form as found in the NPF Policies and Procedures.** If pertinent video is available, it shall be made available to the League office at the time of the reports.

(e) 7.2.5.3.4 The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:

- (a) The protest is considered to be invalid, **a fine is issued to the Protesting Team.** and the game score stands as played.
- (b) The protest is considered valid, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall either be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made. **In addition, the Offending Team will be issued fine, when applicable.**

7.2.5.3.5 When a protest is upheld and a game is rescheduled:

(a) The same lineup card shall be used when the game is resumed, a pregame meeting shall be held to verify accuracy (such as changed jersey numbers), and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.

(b) If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because she was legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew a suspension that has not yet been served.

Note: If the ejection resulted in suspension, the player shall serve the suspension during the first previously scheduled and played game(s) after the ejection. The suspension shall not be deferred waiting for the resolution of the protest.

(c) The game is resumed at the exact point and in the exact situation at which the mistaken ruling was made.

RULE 8

Players and Substitutes

1. Players on a Team

8.1.1 Number of Players. Each team shall have at least nine eligible players in the game at all times. The players and the defensive positions by which they are identified are as follows:

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

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

8.1.1.2 With a designated player—10 positions: designated player (DP) plus nine positions, one of which shall be occupied by the flex: pitcher (1), catcher (2), first baseman (3), second baseman (4), third baseman (5), shortstop (6), left fielder (7), center fielder (8), right fielder (9).

EFFECT—(8.1.1.1 and 8.1.1.2)—A forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team with sufficient players in the event one team is no longer able to field a full team of eligible players. In the event neither team can field a team, the game is declared “No Contest” (see Rule 6.20) unless the failure of one of the teams to field a team is as a result of a misconduct suspension(s). (See Rules 13.3 and 13.4.)

8.1.2 Players and Responsibilities.

8.1.2.1 Starter refers to the first nine or 10 (if a designated player is used) players listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter one time as long as she assumes her original spot in the batting order. (See Rule 8.4.)

Note: For statistical purposes, the starting pitcher is the player who throws the first pitch of the game.

8.1.2.2 Substitute refers to a player not listed on the lineup card as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first nine or 10 (if a designated player is used) players listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. A substitute who is replaced may not re-enter the game at any time for any reason. (See Rule 8.5.)

8.1.2.3 Designated Player (DP). The player who is initially listed on the lineup card in the team’s batting order but not in the defensive lineup. (See Rule 8.2.)

8.1.2.4 Flex. The player who is initially listed in the 10th spot on the lineup card who may play any defensive position and may only enter the game on offense in the designated player’s spot in the batting order. (See Rule 8.2.)

8.1.2.5 Offense Player (OP). The player in the batting order who is not playing defense because the DP has entered to play defense for her.

8.1.2.6 Catcher. The defensive player to whom the pitcher throws when pitching to a batter. She is restricted to the catcher’s box from the start of the pitch until the pitch is released.

8.1.2.7 Pitcher. The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters. She must begin the pitch from the pitcher’s plate and is restricted to the pitcher’s lane as she takes her one step forward toward home plate while delivering the pitch.

8.1.2.8 Fielders. The nine players on the defensive team who take positions on the field and attempt to stop the offensive team from scoring.

8.1.2.8.1 Infielders are the fielders who are positioned near or within the base lines and who defend the wedge-shaped portion of the field that is traditionally skinned of grass. They typically include the first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, pitcher and catcher.

8.1.2.8.2 Outfielders are the fielders who defend the portion of the field between the infield and home-run fence that is traditionally grass with or without a warning track. They typically include the left fielder, center fielder and right fielder.

8.1.2.9 A defensive player is entitled to change to a different defensive position at any time as long as the change is reported to the plate umpire. The plate umpire shall report the change to the official scorer and to the opposing coach before the next pitch.

EFFECT—Failure to report defensive changes to the plate umpire renders the player unreported. (See Rule 8.3.3.)

A.R. 8.1.2: The second baseman is located closer to first base than the first baseman who is playing in and away from the foul line for a slapper. **RULING:** They are not considered to have different defensive positions; however, if the catcher and first baseman exchange positions, they are considered to be unreported substitutes if the umpire is not notified.

2. Designated Player/Flex

NCAA Rules adhered to completely regarding the Flex player.

3. 8.3.1 Batting Out of Order. (See Rule 11.10.)

8.3.2 Inaccurate Lineup Card. (See also Appendix B.) A lineup card is considered inaccurate when eligible starting players and substitutes are listed incorrectly, such as an inaccurate or omitted first name, number or position.

Note: A player's name supersedes a listed uniform number. (See Rule 5.6.)

EFFECT—

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

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

If reported by the offensive team immediately after the offending player makes a play on defense, and before the next pitch, the lineup card shall be corrected, and the offensive coach shall have the option to:

- Nullify the play. The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the infraction was reported and continues her turn at bat. Each base runner returns to the last base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
- Take the results of the play and disregard the violation.

(b) If reported by the defensive team during the offending player's turn at bat:

- The error may be corrected without penalty.
- All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
- The lineup card shall be corrected.

(c) If reported by the defensive team while the offending player is on offense, after she has completed her turn at bat and before a pitch has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:

- The offending player shall be called out.
- All results from a ball batted by the offending batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, walk, dropped third strike or a base hit, shall be nullified.
- The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the offending player.
- The lineup card shall be corrected.

(d) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense, after she has completed her turn at bat and a pitch has been delivered to the following batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:

- The turn at bat is legal.
- All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
- The lineup card shall be corrected.

(e) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense as a pinch runner or the tiebreaker base runner, and it follows a pitch in which the base runner has advanced one or more bases and before the

next pitch has been thrown.

- The offending player shall be called out.
- Any advance by other base runners is nullified.

(f) The lineup card shall be corrected

(g) In all other cases regarding base runners who have not batted but are base runners, the error is correctable without penalty.

8.3.3 Unreported/Misreported Players. (See also Appendix B.) An unreported/misreported player is one who has a right to change defensive position, enter or re-enter the game but has not been reported or has been inaccurately reported to the umpire before her participation. The following regulations govern unreported/misreported substitutions, players, defensive changes and re-entries:

8.3.3.1 If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, there is no penalty regardless of the length of time the unreported/misreported player was in the game. The unreported/misreported player shall be declared officially in the game.

8.3.3.2 If an unreported/misreported player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is made, there is no penalty. The unreported/misreported player shall be declared officially in the game.

8.3.3.3 If the unreported/misreported player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:

8.3.3.3.1 A pitch has been thrown, but the unreported/misreported player still is at bat.

EFFECT—The unreported/misreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. All other play while the unreported/misreported player was at bat is legal.

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

EFFECT—The unreported/misreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. All other play as a result of the unreported/ misreported player becoming a batter-runner is nullified.

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

EFFECT—The unreported/misreported player is declared officially in the game. In addition, the unreported/misreported player, if on base, is declared out. All other play while the unreported/misreported player was at bat or due to her becoming a batter-runner is legal.

8.3.3.4 If the unreported/misreported player is the base runner placed on second base in the tiebreaker or is a pinch runner, and a pitch has been thrown and:

8.3.3.4.1 The unreported/misreported player is on her original base when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

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

8.3.3.4.2 The unreported/misreported player advances at least one base and before a pitch is thrown after the advance when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

EFFECT—"No pitch" is declared. The unreported/misreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. All other play is nullified.

8.3.3.4.3 The unreported/misreported player advances at least one base and a pitch has been thrown after the advance when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

EFFECT—"No pitch" is declared. The unreported/misreported player is declared officially in the game. In addition, the unreported/ misreported player, if on base, is declared out. All other play stands.

8.3.3.5 If the unreported/misreported player is reported by the offense before the defensive coach in violation informs the umpire, and:

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

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

8.3.3.5.2 The unreported/misreported player has made a play, and the next pitch has been thrown, or the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

8.3.3.5.3 The unreported/misreported player has not made a play, and a pitch has been thrown.

EFFECT—(8.3.3.5.2 and 8.3.3.5.3)—The unreported/misreported player is declared officially in the game, and all play will stand.

Notes:

1. *If an unreported/misreported player is also an illegal player, the penalty for an illegal player applies.*
2. *Violation of the unreported/misreported player rule may be reported to the umpire at any time as long as the player is still in the game.*
3. *If the player in violation is the pitcher or catcher, delivering or receiving a pitch is considered making a play.*

8.3.4 Illegal Player(s). (See also Appendix B.)

8.3.4.1 Players who compete in the game in a way in which they are not entitled to play include:

8.3.4.1.1 A starter who has entered or re-entered the game in a position to which she is not entitled.

8.3.4.1.2 A nonstarter who has entered the game a second time.

8.3.4.1.3 A player who is not listed on the lineup card.

8.3.4.1.4 A player rendered ineligible under Rules 13.2 and 13.3.

8.3.4.1.5 In the tiebreaker, a base runner other than the player scheduled to bat ninth in the inning or her substitute (reported or unreported) who is placed on second base.

8.3.4.1.6 The flex entered the game on offense in a batting-order spot other than that of the DP.

8.3.4.1.7 An ejected or suspended player entered or re-entered the game.

Note: The effect for violation of Rule 8.3.4.1.7 is forfeit in favor of the offended team.

8.3.4.2 The following regulations govern illegal players:

8.3.4.2.1 If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge.

EFFECT—The illegal player is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Any advance made immediately before the report shall stand regardless of the length of time the illegal player was in the game.

8.3.4.2.2 If the illegal player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is thrown.

EFFECT—The illegal player is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

8.3.4.2.3 If the illegal player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:

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

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

EFFECT—[8.3.4.2.3 (a) and 8.3.4.2.3 (b)]—The illegal player is called out and ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Any advance by the runners on the pitch immediately before the report shall be nullified. Any advance on previous pitches shall be legal.

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

EFFECT—The player is called out if on base and ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Any advance by base runners while the illegal player was at bat because of her becoming a batter-runner is legal.

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

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

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The illegal player is out and ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

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

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The illegal player is out and ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Any advance by other base runners is nullified.

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

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The illegal player is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) In addition, the illegal player, if on base, is declared out. Any advance by other base runners stands.

8.3.4.2.4 If the illegal player is reported by the offense before the defensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:

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

EFFECT—The player is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) The offensive team has the option of: taking the result of the play; or nullifying the play and having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count she had before the report of the illegal player and each base runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.

(b) The illegal player has made a play, and the next pitch has been thrown in the half inning.

(c) The illegal player has not made a play, and the next pitch has been thrown in the half inning.

EFFECT—[8.3.4.2.4 (b) and 8.3.4.2.4 (c)]—The player is ejected, and all play will stand. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Notes:

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

4. Starting Player

8.4.1 Once the lineup card has been reviewed and submitted to the umpire, it becomes official. Changes may be made from any previously provided lineup card. A listed starter and substitute may exchange roles at the pregame meeting and would then take on their respective new participation opportunities (that is, a starting player becomes an available substitute and a previously listed substitute becomes a starter who then has re-entry rights).

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

5. Substitute Player

8.5.1 Player substitutions. Player substitutions shall be governed by the following:

8.5.1.1 Any player may be substituted for at any time when the ball is dead as long as she immediately participates in the game.

8.5.1.2 A coach of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game. Projected substitutions and re-entries are not allowed.

8.5.1.3 The plate umpire shall record all substitutions on the lineup card and announce immediately, or cause to be announced, any such substitutions.

8.5.1.4 The plate umpire shall report the change to the opposing coach, the official scorer and the public-address announcer (if applicable) before the next pitch.

8.5.1.5 The substitute must take the place of the replaced player on the team's lineup card.

8.5.1.6 When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game simultaneously, the coach shall immediately designate to the plate umpire the spot of each in the team's batting order.

8.5.1.7 The batter may be removed before having received a pitch, whether or not she has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.

8.5.1.8 Substitutes shall be considered officially in the game when the substitution is reported to and accepted by the plate umpire and recorded on the official lineup card. The plate umpire shall then announce the substitution to the opposing coach, the official scorer and the public-address announcer (if applicable).

Note: It is the responsibility of both the reporting coach and the plate umpire to ensure the substitution is recorded on the lineup card as stated by the coach.

8.5.2 Pitcher substitution. A pitching substitution shall be governed by the following:

8.5.2.1 The pitcher may be removed from the pitching position before having delivered a pitch, whether or not the first batter facing her has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.

8.5.2.2 After a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw not more than the number of pitches/throws allowed between innings. Play shall be suspended during this time.

EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the next batter(s) for each warm-up pitch/throw in excess of the limit. Exception: This penalty does not apply if the pitching change is necessitated by an injury to the replaced pitcher.

8.5.2.3 A pitcher is not entitled to warm-up pitches if she returns to pitch in the same half inning.

EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the next batter(s) for each warm-up pitch.

8.5.2.4 A pitcher is considered to be in the game when the conditions of Rule 8.5.1.8 have been satisfied and she throws a warm-up pitch or a pitch to the first batter she faces if she is not entitled to warm-up pitches.

8.5.3 Injured-player substitutions. The following regulations govern substitutions for an injured player:

8.5.3.1 Substitutes for an injured player must be allowed adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.

8.5.3.2 If an injury to a runner prevents her from proceeding to an awarded base, the ball is dead and substitution may be made. The substitute must legally touch all awarded or missed bases not previously touched.

6. Re-entry

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

EFFECT—A player who illegally re-entered the game shall be ejected and subject to illegal-player penalties. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Notes:

1. *Violation of the re-entry rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*
2. *If a substitution violates both the re-entry and the player-substitution rules, the illegal/unreported player shall be ejected and subject to illegal-player penalties. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)*
3. *Projected re-entries, like projected substitutions, are not allowed. (See Rule 8.5.1.2.)*

RULE 9

Defense

1. Catch

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

For a legal catch:

9.1.1 A fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before stepping, touching or falling into a dead-ball area.

9.1.2 A fielder who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch.

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

A.R. 9.1.3: An outfielder straddles the line marking dead-ball territory waiting to catch a fly ball. As the ball is descending, the player lifts the foot that has been in dead-ball territory into the air as she makes a catch. RULING: This is a legal catch.

9.1.4 A fielder must re-establish herself with both feet in live-ball territory after entering dead-ball territory before contact with the ball if she did not maintain contact with the ground in live-ball territory.

A.R. 9.1.4: An outfielder crashes through the temporary home-run fence, rights herself on the other side and then runs back onto the warning track to catch a fly ball. RULING: If the outfielder brings both feet back into the outfield before contacting the batted ball, it is a legal catch.

9.1.5 A fielder may leave live-ball territory and be airborne at the time of a catch. EFFECT—(9.1.1 to 9.1.5)—The ball is live until the defender carries the ball into dead-ball territory. (See Rule 9.3.) The batter is out, but base runners may advance with liability to be put out while the ball is live.

2. No Catch

A catch shall not be credited when:

9.2.1 A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than her hand(s) or a properly worn glove/mitt.

9.2.2 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.

EFFECT—(9.2.1 and 9.2.2)—The ball is live, the batter-runner and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

9.2.3 The fielder contacts a fly batted ball in live-ball territory, but before securing possession of the ball, steps into dead-ball territory and bobbles the ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. No catch is ruled and a foul ball assessed.

9.2.4 The fielder uses any equipment or part of her uniform that is displaced from its proper position.

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

If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair batted ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, would have cleared

the home-run fence in flight, the batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate. The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by detached player equipment that is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

9.2.5 The only part of the foot that is in contact with the ground is touching dead-ball territory at the time of the catch.

A.R. 9.2.5: A fielder catches a batted fly ball with her toes on an elevated step to a dugout (which has been determined to be out of play in the pregame meeting) and with her heel hanging over, but not touching the ground, in live-ball territory. RULING: No catch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, a foul ball is declared if the ball was foul and a home run is awarded if the dead-ball territory is beyond the home-run fence in fair territory.

9.2.6 The batted ball strikes anything or anyone other than another defensive player(s) while it is in flight.

EFFECT—The ball is live and treated as a ground ball, if fair. The batter-runner and base runners may advance with liability to be put out. If the contact is in foul territory, the ball is dead, and base runners must return to the last bases occupied.

9.2.7 The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground beyond the original plane of the home-run fence when she catches the ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the batter is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.

9.2.8 The fielder traps the ball. A batted fly ball or line drive is considered trapped if it hits the ground or a fence on a short hop before being caught. A thrown ball is considered trapped if it is caught but the ball is on the ground and the glove/mitt/hand is over, rather than under, it and the fielder does not have secure possession. A pitch is considered trapped if it is a strike but touches the ground on a short hop before being caught by the catcher.

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

EFFECT—The ball is live and treated as a ground ball if batted and treated as an incomplete catch if thrown.

3. Catch and Carry

A fielder may not catch or field a live ball and carry it into dead-ball territory. See Rule 14.21.10 for scoring.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter and each base runner are awarded one base, without liability to be put out, from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory. Exception: If the ball is a legally caught fly ball, the batter is out.

If, in the umpire's judgment, a fielder carries, kicks, pushes, pitches or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory to prevent a runner from advancing further, the ball is dead, and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

Notes:

- 1. When a line is used to determine dead-ball territory, the line is considered in play.*
- 2. If a fielder's foot is touching the line or is in live-ball territory, she is considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball with no effect.*
- 3. If a fielder's entire foot or the entire portion of the foot that is in contact with the ground is beyond the line and touching dead-ball territory at the time she catches, fields or throws the ball, she has entered dead-ball territory, the ball is dead and no play is allowed.*
- 4. If a fielder has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, she legally may catch, field or throw the ball until and unless her entire foot contacts the ground in dead-ball territory, at which time the ball becomes dead and catch and carry applies.*
- 5. If a fielder contacts dead-ball territory with any part of her body, including her entire foot or the entire portion of her foot that is in contact with the ground, she is considered out-of-play. No subsequent play is allowed and if a play ends with the fielder contacting dead-ball territory, catch and carry applies.*

4. Obstruction

9.4.1 Obstruction is the intentional or unintentional act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes a

batter's attempt to make contact with a pitch or that hinders or impedes the progress of a runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball or in the act of catching a thrown ball. Obstruction applies to live-ball play only.

Notes:

1. *The defensive player must be in the process of catching the ball and not merely positioning, waiting for a throw to arrive.*
2. *Obstruction may be ruled even though there is no physical contact.*
3. *Base awards should be made even after the third out of an inning and if an obstructed base runner would have scored before the third out, the run would score on the base award.*

A.R. 9.4.1: Two outs with a base runner on second base on a base hit to the outfield. The base runner is obstructed rounding third base. The ball is thrown to home plate (even though there was no play) and on the throw, the batter-runner attempts to advance to second base but is thrown out for the third out of the inning. RULING: The base runner is awarded home plate, and the run scores if the umpires judge she would have scored but for the obstruction.

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

If the obstructed runner safely reaches the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction or she is put out at a base beyond the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction, no further action occurs.

If the obstructed runner is not put out and does not reach the base she should have had there been no obstruction, at the end of playing action she is awarded the appropriate base(s).

If the obstructed runner is put out before reaching the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction, a dead ball is called at the time of the apparent putout. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she/they should have reached had there not been obstruction.

Notes:

1. *If other runners are advancing and an umpire suspends play after an out on an obstructed runner (who did not reach the base she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had she not been obstructed), the other runners would be awarded the next base provided they had advanced more than halfway to the next base. If not, they must return to the previous base unless forced to advance.*
2. *If a runner is obstructed while a batted ball is fair but subsequently becomes a foul ball, obstruction is nullified. If the violation is a rounding or returning obstruction, a warning will still be issued.*

9.4.2 An obstructed runner is still required to touch all bases in proper order, or she could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

9.4.3 An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed unless one of the following occurs:

9.4.3.1 The obstructed runner, after being obstructed, safely obtains the base she would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play on a different runner. The obstructed runner is no longer protected if she leaves the base.

9.4.3.2 When another violation is being played upon.

A.R. 9.4.3.2: A base runner who leaves second base too soon on a touched fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second and third bases. RULING: If the base runner would not have returned safely to second base before the throw arrived, she would remain out.

9.4.3.3 The obstructed runner commits an act of interference. 9.4.3.4 The obstructed runner passes another runner.

9.4.3.5 A proper appeal is made for leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched.

A.R. 9.4.3.5: A base runner who leaves second base too soon on a touched fly ball is advancing toward third base when she is obstructed. RULING: The base runner is protected between the two bases where she was obstructed even if she is attempting to return to tag.

9.4.3.6 A proper appeal is made for missing a base.

9.4.3.7 When a batter hits a fly ball that is caught or an infield fly is declared and the batter-runner is subsequently obstructed running to first base.

9.4.4 If an obstructed runner is awarded a base she would have made had there been no obstruction and a preceding base runner is on that base, the obstructed runner will be awarded that base, and the preceding base runner shall be entitled to the next base without liability to be put out.

9.4.5 If an obstructed base runner is awarded a base she would have made had there been no obstruction and a trailing runner is on that base, the obstructed base runner will be awarded the base and the trailing runner will be returned to the preceding base unless forced to advance because of the actions of the batter-runner.

A.R. 9.4.5.a: With a base runner on first base, the batter singles to right field, and the base runner attempts to advance to third base. The ball is quickly fielded and the base runner, realizing she will not be safe at third base, stops and gets in a rundown. During the rundown, the batter-runner advances to second base, while the base runner remains in a rundown and is eventually obstructed diving back into second base, where she is apparently tagged out. **RULING:** The base runner is awarded second base on obstruction and the batter-runner first base, crediting her with a base hit.

A.R. 9.4.5.b: With a base runner on first base, the batter hits a line drive that goes through the infield but the base runner, thinking the line drive will be caught by an infielder, attempts to dive back into first base and is obstructed. **RULING:** Award the base runner second base and the batter-runner first base, crediting her with a base hit.

9.4.6 If the obstructed runner attempts to advance past the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction or past the base she would have been awarded for the obstruction, she is running with liability to be put out unless she is between the two bases where obstruction occurred. If she is put out, she remains out. The ball remains live.

9.4.7 Should an act of interference occur after any obstruction, enforcement of the interference effect takes precedence provided both violations involve the same runner.

5. Types of Obstruction

Obstruction includes:

9.5.1 Catcher Obstruction. The catcher shall not obstruct, hinder or prevent the batter's attempt to make contact with a pitch.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

(a) **The batter is awarded first base and an error is charged to the catcher.**

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

On a pitch that has not reached home plate, if the catcher prevents the batter from having a reasonable opportunity to contact the pitch, the ball is dead, and the batter and each base runner are awarded one base (whether forced or not).

Notes:

- 1. If a batter, during preliminary loosening-up swings, hits the catcher or the catcher's glove/mitt, the umpire should immediately suspend play and then reset without consequence. The pitch or swing should not be allowed since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected. Catcher's obstruction involving a batter should be called only on the batter's attempt to make contact with the pitch, not on contact during preliminary swings.*
- 2. If an umpire requests a catcher to move farther away from the batter to avoid injury or obstruction, the catcher must*

comply.

9.5.2 Fielder Obstruction.

9.5.2.1 A fielder who is not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not in the act of catching a thrown or pitched ball, shall not impede the runner.

9.5.2.2 A fielder shall not intentionally alter the course of a fair ball with the intent to cause the ball to go foul (for example, blow on a rolling ball or dig in the dirt).

9.5.2.3 A fielder shall not position herself in the base runner's line of vision to obviously prohibit her from seeing the first touch of a fly ball.

9.5.2.4 A fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball or in the act of catching a thrown ball shall not intentionally alter her motion to obstruct the batter-runner or base runner.

9.5.2.5 A fielder shall not fake a tag (a tag without the ball) on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

EFFECT—(9.5.2.1 to 9.5.2.5)—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

If the obstructed player safely reaches the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction or she is put out at a base beyond the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction, no further action occurs.

If the obstructed player is not put out and does not reach the base she should have had there been no obstruction, at the end of playing action she is awarded the appropriate base(s).

If the obstructed player is put out before reaching the base she should have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she/they should have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction.

Subsequent violation by the same individual may, at the discretion of the umpire, result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other base runner forced to advance. (Also see Rule 12.15.)

9.5.2.6 A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner rounding a base. 9.5.2.7 A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner returning to a base. 9.5.2.8 A fielder shall not use force to push a runner off the base she possesses in order to put her out. (See Rule 9.5.4.2 if excessive force is used.)

9.5.2.9 A fielder shall not position herself in the base runner's line of vision to obviously distract her or intentionally prohibit her from seeing the release of the pitch.

EFFECT—(9.5.2.6 to 9.5.2.9)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation of the same rule by the same individual shall result in a one-base award to the obstructed base runner and each other base runner forced to advance. The awards shall be to the base beyond the base where obstruction occurred unless the base runner safely advances farther on her own, in which case no award is given.

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

(1) If the obstructed runner is safe or put out at a base beyond the one she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the ball remains live until the conclusion of the play. The umpire will then notify the offensive coach of his or her options, if any.

(2) If the obstructed runner is apparently put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she/they would have reached had there not been obstruction.

9.5.2.11 A fielder shall not position herself in the batter's line of vision or act in a manner to distract the batter.

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

If the batter does not reach first base safely or if one of the other base runners does not advance at least one

base, the coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or awarding a ball to the batter and advancing each other base runner one base. If the pitch is "Ball four" or hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base, and each base runner is awarded one base.

The pitch does not have to be released.

The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a behavioral ejection. (See Rule 13.2.1.)

9.5.2.12 On a pitch that has not reached home plate, a fielder shall not prevent the batter from having a reasonable opportunity to contact the pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead and the batter and all base runners are awarded one base (whether forced or not).

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

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

9.5.4 Flagrant Player Obstruction.

9.5.4.1 The fielder shall not at any time flagrantly (with excessive force) impede the batter, batter-runner or base runner.

9.5.4.2 The fielder shall not attempt to put out a runner occupying a base by using excessive force to push her off the occupied base.

EFFECT—(9.5.4.1 and 9.5.4.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The appropriate obstruction effect is applied, and in addition, the offender shall be ejected without warning. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6. Team (Offensive) Interference

9.6.1 Offensive team personnel (players not at bat, on deck or on base; coaches not in the coaches' boxes; managers; medical personnel; scorekeepers; and bat handlers) shall not stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

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

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

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

9.6.3 Offensive team personnel shall neither interfere with a runner(s) who is legally running the bases on a dead-ball award until the player(s) contacts home plate nor with the umpire's ability to see that all bases are properly touched.

9.6.3.1 Offensive team personnel, other than base coaches and base runner(s), shall not touch a runner(s) until the

player(s) contacts home plate.

9.6.3.2 Offensive team personnel shall congregate only in foul territory around home plate to congratulate the runner(s).

EFFECT—In all cases, for a first offense of Rule 9.6.3, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending team. If a subsequent offense of Rule 9.6.3 occurs that involves touching a runner, the player touched is immediately declared out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of interference. If a subsequent offense of Rule

9.6.3 occurs that involves being in fair territory, the batter-runner is declared out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time team personnel entered fair territory.

A.R. 9.6.3: In the bottom of the seventh inning of a tie game with a base runner on second base, the batter grounds the ball to the shortstop, who throws the ball over the first baseman's head and out of play. As the base runner is rounding third base, for the walk-off winning run, the dugout clears and players slap high fives along the third-base line. **RULING:** For a first violation of Rule 9.6.3, issue a warning to the offending team. If a warning has already been issued, the base runner is out and credited with reaching only third base. The batter is placed on the base legally touched at the time of the interference.

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

EFFECT—If the interference is with a defensive player fielding a ball, the ball is dead, the batter is out and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If the interference involves a runner, the ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance.

7. Umpire Interference

9.7.1 Umpire interference occurs:

9.7.1.1 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), or after passing a fielder (including the pitcher) but another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

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

EFFECT—(9.7.1.1 to 9.7.1.2)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a hit, but, if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: It is not interference and the ball remains in play, if the ball: (1) hits the umpire after passing a fielder, other than the pitcher, and no other fielder has a reasonable chance to make a play; or (2) hits the umpire after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

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

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

EFFECT—If the base runner is ruled out as a result of the catcher's initial throw, the ball remains live, and there is no interference. If the base runner is not out on the initial throw by the catcher, the ball is immediately dead and the base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch even if the base runner is caught off base and an opportunity for an out via rundown exists.

Note: It is not interference if a pitched or thrown ball strikes an umpire or if there's contact between an umpire and a runner or an umpire and a fielder playing a batted ball. The ball is live, and each runner is entitled to advance with liability to be put out.

8. Equipment Blocked Ball

9.8.1 No loose equipment (that is, gloves/mitts, hats, helmets, jackets, balls, on-deck batter's bats), miscellaneous items, or detached parts of a player's uniform, other than that being legally used in the game at the time, should be

within playable territory as it could cause a blocked ball. Official equipment that may be within playable territory with no effect includes the batter's bat, the catcher's mask or helmet, umpire paraphernalia, and any helmet that has inadvertently fallen off the head of an offensive or defensive player during the course of play.

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

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

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

EFFECT—The ball is live until it is judged by the umpire to no longer be playable, at which time it is declared dead. The batter-runner and base runners are awarded the bases that would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had the ball not become lodged.

A.R. 9.8.3: With two outs and base runners on first and second bases, the batter hits a hard one-hopper to the short-stop. The ball lodges in the web of the glove. RULING: If the glove with the ball can be tossed to the second or third baseman for a possible out, the ball is live and play allowed. If there is no play, the ball is declared dead, and base awards apply.

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

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

Notes:

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

9. Foul Batted Blocked Ball

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

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

10. Fair Batted Blocked Ball

A fair batted ball becomes blocked:

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

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

9.10.2 When it contacts loose equipment belonging to the defense.

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

9.10.4 When it deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory (excluding a ball deflected over the home-run fence in fair territory); or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a base runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(9.10.2 to 9.10.4)—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and credited with a two-base hit (double). Each runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

11. Live Thrown Blocked Ball

A live thrown ball becomes blocked:

9.11.1 When it is thrown and crosses into dead-ball territory whether the ball rebounds onto playable territory or not.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter and each base runner are awarded two bases from their respective positions when the ball left the fielder's hand. Exception: When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball became blocked.

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. Pitched Blocked Ball

A pitch becomes blocked when it lodges, wedges or gets stuck in or goes under, over or through the backstop or into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. If the batter receives a base on balls or legally advances on a dropped third strike and the pitch becomes blocked, she will be awarded first base only. Each base runner(s) is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

13. Catch and Carry Blocked Ball

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

EFFECT—See Rule 9.3.

14. Game Personnel in Unauthorized Areas

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

9.14.1 When a fair batted ball or live thrown ball contacts a member of the offensive team.

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

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

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

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

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

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

RULE 10

Note: The concept behind many NPF revisions to pitching rules is to provide a fan-friendly pace to the game without unnecessary delays.

Pitching

1. Defensive Positioning Required for a Legal Pitch

10.1.1 The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when with her hands apart, she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's plate, and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

10.1.2 The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without being in possession of the ball, and she may not simulate the pitching position with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.

EFFECT—(10.1.1 and 10.1.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

Pitching Procedure

2. Taking the Signal from the Catcher

10.2.1 Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following: 10.2.1.1 Both feet must be on the ground in contact with the pitcher's plate and a portion of the pivot foot must be on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. Any part of each foot in contact with the ground or pitcher's plate must be completely within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

10.2.1.2 Hands must be separated.

10.2.1.3 The ball must be held and remain in one hand, either bare or gloved.

Notes:

1. *Rolling (not tossing) the ball is legal as long as contact is maintained with the hand (including the wrist).*
2. *A ball dropped by the pitcher before her hands have come together and then separated shall be live and the base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.*

10.2.1.4 The ball may be held in front of, at the side of or behind the body.

10.2.2 While in this position, the pitcher shall pause to take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher.

Note: The rule does not preclude the pitcher from taking an earlier signal from someone who indicates the desired pitch and/or location nor the pitcher from referring to an armband prior to complying with Rule 10.2.2.

EFFECT—(10.2.1 and 10.2.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.2.3 After receiving the catcher's signal, the pitcher's hands must come together in view of the plate umpire for not more than five seconds.

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

EFFECT—The ball is dead and a ball is awarded to the batter if the hands come together for more than five seconds. (See Rule 10.18.) Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch enforced if the pitcher does not bring her hands together at all. (See Rule 10.8.)

3. Start of the Pitch

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

Pitching

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

4. Step/Stride

10.4.1 The pitcher must take only one step/stride forward toward home plate as she delivers the pitch.

10.4.2 In distinguishing the pitcher's feet, the pivot foot is the one that maintains contact with the pitcher's plate, absorbs the body's weight, pushes off against the plate during the initial "step" phase of the pitch, and drags along the ground during the final phase of the pitch. The stride foot is the one that extends forward toward home plate as the pitcher steps to deliver the pitch to the batter. The stride foot must land on or within the imaginary lines of the pitcher's lane. For a right-handed pitcher, the pivot foot is her right foot and the stride foot, her left.

10.4.3 *The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times before the forward drag, leap or hop.*

10.4.4 *In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher may take one step with the leading, non-pivot foot simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward toward the batter and within the 61.0cm (24 in) length of the pitcher's plate.*

NOTE: It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate and there is no movement backwards of the non-pivot foot. Lifting the pivot foot off the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate, creating a rocking motion, is an illegal act.

10.4.5 *The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate, and/or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate and/or be airborne prior to the stepping (non-pivot) foot touching the ground.*

Note: It is legal to drag, leap or hop and then land and throw as long as the only push starts from the pitcher's plate. It is not legal to crow hop. (The pitcher shall not establish a secondary push point, and finish the pitch). It is not legal to step off with the pivot foot and then drag, leap or hop and throw.

10.4.6 Crow hopping is not allowed. The pitcher may not replant, gain a second starting point and push off her pivot foot. Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may trail on the ground but may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.

EFFECT—(10.4.1 to 10.4.6)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

5. The Windup

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

10.5.1 Make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

10.5.2 Separate her hands and then return the ball to both hands. 10.5.3 Stop and change direction more than twice.

10.5.3 The pitcher must not use a windup in which there is a stop, or reversal, of the forward motion.

EFFECT—(10.5.1 to 10.5.3)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

6. Delivery

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

10.6.1 *The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm on the windmill pitch. However, the arm may drop to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. This allows the arm to pass the hip twice.*

10.6.2 The step/stride and delivery of the ball to the batter must take place simultaneously.

10.6.3 The pitch shall be released underhand and the hand shall travel below the hip.

10.6.4 The release of the pitch and follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forward.

10.6.5 The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.

EFFECT—(10.6.1 to 10.6.5)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

The Pitch

7. Dropped During Pitch

The effect for a pitch dropped during its delivery varies based on when it happens. 10.7.1 When the ball is dropped by the pitcher before her hands have come together and then separated.

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

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

EFFECT—If the batter does not have a reasonable opportunity to hit the pitch, a defensive player may retrieve it, the ball is live, a ball is awarded to the batter, and the base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out. If the batter would have had a reasonable opportunity to hit the pitch but the defensive player retrieves it, obstruction is ruled, the ball is dead and the batter and all other base runners are awarded one base (whether forced or not).

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

8. Illegal Pitch

An illegal pitch is a pitch that is thrown by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules or is an effect for a rule violation. When an illegal pitch occurs, it shall be called immediately by the plate or base umpire.

EFFECT—If an illegal pitch occurs but the pitch is not released, it is a dead ball. If the pitch is released, the umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for nearby players to hear. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

Simultaneously, the umpire gives the delayed dead-ball signal and waits to suspend play until the non-contact-ed pitch has reached the plate, or the play has been completed. Assuming no other violation has occurred (for example, leaving early):

(1) If the batter reaches first base safely and each other base runner advances at least one base, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached the base, even if she missed it.

(2) If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any runner fails to advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team may choose the result of the play or the standard effect for an illegal pitch, which is that a ball is awarded to the batter, and each base runner advances one base.

(3) If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch not swung at, the batter is awarded first base, and each base runner advances one base.

(4) If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each base runner advances one base.

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

9. Quick Pitch

A quick pitch, intended to catch the batter off balance or otherwise unprepared to bat, shall be ruled to be "No pitch."

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

10. No Pitch

"No pitch" shall be declared when:

10.10.1 The pitcher pitches while play is suspended.

10.10.2 A base runner is legitimately off base (namely, after a foul ball), and the pitcher fails to allow sufficient time for the base runner to return.

10.10.3 The pitcher delivers a quick pitch.

10.10.4 If a player violates the time between pitch rule (see Rule 10.18) and that causes her opponent to also violate the rule.

10.10.5 The batter is hit by a pitch that has not yet reached the front line of the batter's box, assuming she did not swing or attempt to bunt.

EFFECT—(10.10.1 to 10.10.5)—The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

10.10.6 A base runner is called out for leaving her base before release of the pitch.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. At the conclusion of the play, if the defensive head coach does not select the result of the play, “No Pitch” is declared, the offending base runner is out, the batter is returned to the batter’s box and other base runners returned to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared and a warning is given to the offending team. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the violator(s) being ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Regulations Governing Pitching Situations

11. Discontinuing a Pitch/Stepping Off the Pitcher’s Plate

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

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

EFFECT—(10.11.1 and 10.11.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

12. Ball Rotation

10.12.1 As a general rule, the current game ball is in play until such time as it leaves the playing field or is rejected by an umpire because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play. However, each pitcher shall have a choice of game balls at the start of her respective half-inning and may request a different ball at any time.

10.12.2 If the pitcher does not like the ball she has, she must return it to the plate umpire before receiving a different ball.

10.12.2.1 The pitcher may not hold more than one ball at a time for trial purposes.

10.12.2.2 The game shall not be unduly delayed (for example, to retrieve a particular ball that has been fouled away from the playing field).

EFFECT—(10.12.1 to 10.12.2.2)—The plate umpire shall control ball rotation and not allow a violation of the rule.

13. Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher

10.13.1 Under the supervision and within view of the umpire, a resin (a drying agent) may be used on the pitcher’s hand/fingers. Any substance (including resin, dirt or saliva) applied to the pitcher’s hands and fingers must be wiped off if it would transfer to the ball.

10.13.2 No player or other team personnel may apply moisture or any substance to the ball or into a glove that will then contact the ball or do anything else to deface the ball. Exception: All new game balls shall be sufficiently rubbed up so as to remove the manufacturer’s gloss before being put in play by the umpire.

EFFECT—(10.13.1 and 10.13.2)—For the first offense, an illegal pitch shall be called as soon as the substance comes in contact with the ball. (See Rule 10.8.) On the second offense, the pitcher shall be ejected. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

10.13.3 The pitcher who brings a resin bag to the pitching circle is responsible for removing it each half-inning as she leaves the field.

10.13.4 The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or thighs that an umpire considers distracting. This includes a batting glove, sweatband and loose lacing on a glove, or ball-colored logos. Exception: The pitcher’s fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.

10.13.5 Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard must be properly padded. In addition, any such device must be neutral in color so as not to be distracting and must function in a way that does not alter the natural motion

of the pitching arm.

EFFECT—(10.13.3 to 10.13.5)—The pitcher shall remove the item upon request of the umpire or be ejected from the game. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

14. Intentionally Pitching at a Batter or Umpire

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

EFFECT—If, in the umpire's judgment, such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall warn the pitcher, catcher and the head coach that future violations by any pitcher from his/her team will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher, catcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher and catcher without warning. The head coach of the offending team also may be ejected at this time if the umpire believes it is appropriate. A warning may be issued to one or both teams before the start of the game or at any time during a game if the umpire believes it to be appropriate. (Behavioral ejections; see Rules 13.2.1 and 13.7.) If the batter is hit by the pitch, the effect for hit by pitch also applies. (See Rule 11.15.)

10.14.2 The pitcher shall not intentionally attempt to hit an umpire with a pitch.

EFFECT—If, in the umpire's judgment, such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall eject the pitcher, catcher and the head coach. (Behavioral ejections; see Rules 13.2.1 and 13.7.) In addition, the head coach shall be suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring).

15. Intentional Base on Balls

If the pitcher purposely throws ball four to a batter, it is scored an intentional base on balls. All pitches (including a pitchout) must be legally pitched to the catcher.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter is awarded first base. If forced, other base runners advance one base without jeopardy of being put out but may advance further at their own risk. If not forced, other base runners may advance at the risk of being put out. Not delivering each pitch legally to the catcher is an illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.) Exception: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out.

16. Returning a Pitched Ball to the Pitcher

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

Exceptions:

1. To play on a base runner.
2. When the batter becomes a base runner.
3. After a strikeout.
4. After a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.
5. When "no swing" is ruled and help is requested on a checked swing, which might be strike three.
6. When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.
7. An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

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

In addition, on the first offense, the offending player shall be warned. On subsequent offenses, the offender shall be ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Exception: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter.

17. Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher's Plate

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

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

18. Time Allowed Between Pitches

At the beginning of each half inning, the pitcher must be prepared to pitch to the initial batter in not more than ninety (90) seconds from the completion of the previous half inning. (Exception can be made if television breaks dictate longer time lengths.)

Penalty will be a “ball” on the batter for every “delay” called by home plate umpire.

The pitcher must be on the pitcher’s plate, the catcher in the catcher’s box and the batter in the batter’s box within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch or after the umpire calls, “Play ball.” After the pitcher, catcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has 10 seconds to bring her hands together. The pitcher then has not more than five seconds to deliver the pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. If the batter is in violation of the timing, a strike is assessed. If the pitcher or catcher is in violation of any part of the timing sequence, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. Exception: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each base runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out. In addition, on the first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending player. On the second offense, the offending player shall be ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

A.R. 10.18.a: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, the pitcher steps backward off the pitcher’s plate. RULING: Since the umpire did not grant time, the umpire should continue the 10-second count and award a ball to the batter if the count expires.

A.R. 10.18.b: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, the batter leaves the batter’s box. RULING: Since the umpire did not grant time, the umpire should continue the 10-second count and award a strike to the batter if the count expires.

A.R. 10.18.c: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, one of the three aborts her position and her opponent reacts by aborting her position. RULING: Even though the umpire did not originally grant time, the umpire should call “No Pitch” and direct all three to take their respective position and then restart the count.

19. Warm-Up Pitches Allowed

10.19.1 A warm-up pitch is any pitch delivered to home plate during a suspension of play.

10.19.2 At the start of the game and beginning of each half-inning, the pitcher of record may throw not more than five pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base or any combination that is limited to five throws from the pitcher. Play shall be suspended during this time.

Note: If the catcher is the third out or on base when the third out is made, the offensive team should have someone ready to warm up the pitcher.

10.19.3 After a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw not more than five pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base or any combination that is limited to five throws from the pitcher. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher shall not be allowed warm-up pitches if returning to pitch in the same half-inning.

EFFECT—(10.19.1 to 10.19.3)—A ball shall be awarded to the next batter(s) faced for each excessive warm-up pitch/throw.

10.19.4 A player other than the pitcher of record throws a warm-up pitch.

EFFECT—For a first violation, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending coach. Subsequent violation by the same team shall result in ejection of the head coach. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

10.19.5 After injury to a pitcher, the relief pitcher must be allowed adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.

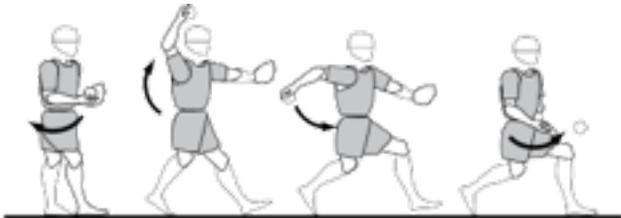
10.19.6 The pitcher shall be given adequate time to warm up after any substantial delay caused by inclement weather, injury or delayed play by the umpire.

20. Covering Pitcher’s Plate

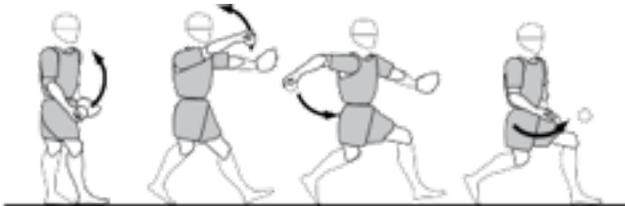
A team representative or player shall not intentionally cover the pitcher’s plate or erase a line of the pitcher’s lane.

EFFECT—For a first violation in a game, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. Subsequent violation by the same team shall result in the violator’s ejection. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

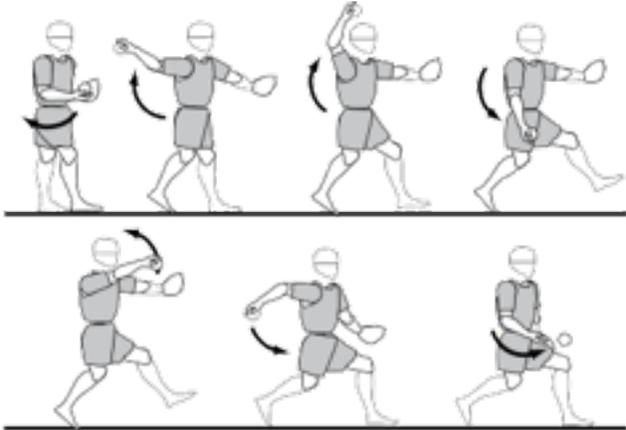
Legal Pitching Motions



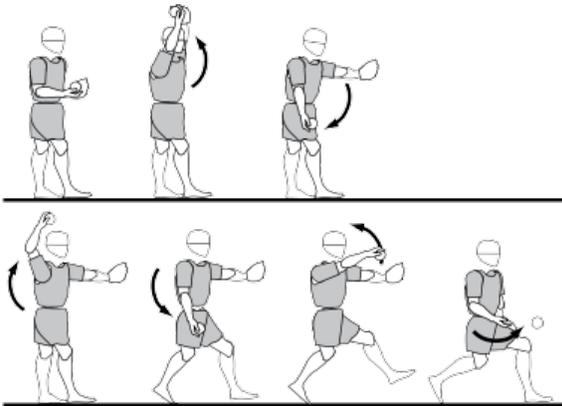
Straight Backswing



Straight Upswing



Rocker Windmill



Pendulum Windmill

RULE 11

Batting

Batter

The batter is entitled to one unobstructed swing at each pitch from the time it leaves the pitcher's hand until it is contacted by the catcher.

A.R. 11: The batter swings and misses the pitch; however, on her follow through, the pitch contacts the bat and rolls into fair territory. RULING: Dead-ball strike. Base runners must return to their bases at the time of the pitch. If contact is intentional, the batter is declared out.

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

1. On-Deck Batter

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

11.1.2 The on-deck batter may have not more than two bats in the on-deck circle. The on-deck batter may loosen up with one or two official softball bats; one approved warm-up bat; or one official softball bat and one approved warm-up bat.

11.1.3 The warm-up bat used by the on-deck batter must meet the specifications of Rule 3.4.

11.1.4 The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle to take her turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.20.

2. Legal Position in the Batter's Box

11.2.1 The batter must be in the batter's box, the catcher in the catcher's box, and the pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." After the pitcher, catcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has 10 seconds to bring her hands together. The pitcher has not more than five seconds to deliver the pitch.

EFFECT—If the batter does not comply, the ball is dead. A strike is called, and if this pitch is the third strike, the batter is declared out on strikes. If the pitcher or catcher is in violation of any part of the timing sequence, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. (See Rule 10.18.)

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

EFFECT—The batter leaves the batter's box at the risk of having a strike delivered, unless she requests and is granted a suspension of play from the plate umpire. If the plate umpire does not suspend play as requested by the batter and the pitcher legally delivers the pitch, it shall be called a ball or strike, depending upon the location of the pitch. The ball remains live.

11.2.3 Any part of each foot in contact with the ground must be completely within the lines of the batter's box until the pitch is released.

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

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

EFFECT—A strike shall be called on the batter.

Notes:

1. *Lines shall be redrawn at the discretion of the umpire. Every attempt should be made to avoid significantly delaying the game; however, if the lines can be redrawn between innings, the umpire may direct the grounds crew to do so.*
2. *A batter may not be intentionally walked by erasing lines.*

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

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

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

If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, "No pitch" is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

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

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

Notes:

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

3. Balls and Strikes

11.3.1 Strike zone. The zone is the area above home plate between the bottom of the batter's armpits and the top of her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. The top of the ball must be on or within the horizontal plane, and either side of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate. (See diagrams at the end of this rule.)

11.3.1.1 The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher.

11.3.1.2 The pitch shall be judged a strike or a ball in relation to the batter's natural position as the pitch crosses home plate.

11.3.2 Called ball. A ball is awarded to the batter:

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

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

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

11.3.2.2 When an illegal pitch is called and the pitch is not contacted, swung at or, if hit, the team does not elect to take the results of the play.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

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

EFFECT—See Rule 10.18.

11.3.2.4 For each excessive warm-up pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.19.

11.3.2.5 When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher after a foul tip and each pitch not contacted. See Rule 10.16 for exceptions.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.16.

11.3.2.6 When a member of the defense intentionally removes a line.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown.

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

11.3.3.1 For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground.

11.3.3.2 For each legally pitched ball that is swung at by the batter and missed. 11.3.3.3 For each foul tip.

EFFECT—(11.3.3.1 to 11.3.3.3)—The ball is live, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.

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

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

11.3.3.5 When the batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.3.3.6 For each pitch that touches any part of the batter's person as she swings and misses.

11.3.3.7 For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter's person or clothing when she is in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.

11.3.3.8 For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone. **EFFECT—(11.3.3.6 to 11.3.3.8)—The ball is dead, and base runners may not advance. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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

11.3.3.10 When an offensive player intentionally removes a line.

EFFECT—(11.3.3.9 and 11.3.3.10)—The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown. Each base runner must remain on the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

4. Fair Ball

A legally batted ball that:

11.4.1 Settles on or is touched on or over fair territory between home plate and first base, or between home plate and third base.

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

11.4.3 Touches first, second or third base, unless a fielder or runner previously touched it while the ball was in foul territory.

11.4.4 Bounces over or past first base or third base regardless of where the ball hits after passing the base.

11.4.5 First falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first or third base.

Note: Beyond first or third base is determined by the baseline between first and second base and the baseline between second and third base (see diagram at the end of Rule 2).

11.4.6 While in flight, hits the foul pole or while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the home-run fence.

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

11.4.7 Is in fair territory when a runner, who is in fair territory, interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.

11.4.8 Shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted.

EFFECT—(11.4.1 to 11.4.8)—The ball is live. The batter and base runners advance with liability to be put out.

Note: A batted ball signaled fair may be changed to foul if additional information provided to the calling umpire is accepted.

5. Foul Ball

A legally batted ball that:

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

11.5.2 Touches the bat or touches the dirt or home plate and then hits the bat a second time while it is still in the batter's possession and the batter is still within the batter's box.

11.5.3 Settles on or is touched on or over foul territory between home plate and first base or home plate and third base.

11.5.4 While on or over foul territory, first touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire or any object foreign to the natural playing surface.

11.5.5 Bounces or rolls past first base or third base on or over foul territory.

11.5.6 First falls or is touched on or over foul territory beyond first or third base.

Note: Beyond first or third base is determined by the baseline between first and second base and the baseline between second and third base (see diagram at the end of Rule 2).

11.5.7 Is in foul territory when a base runner in foul territory interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.

11.5.8 Goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than her hand or gloved hand.

11.5.9 Hits the pitcher's plate and rolls untouched to foul territory before reaching first or third base.

11.5.10 Shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted.

EFFECT—(11.5.1 to 11.5.10)—If a fly ball, the ball is live and if caught, the batter is out and base runners may advance with liability to be put out after tagging up. If a ground ball, the ball is dead, it is a strike on the batter unless she already has two strikes and base runners must return to the bases held at the time of the pitch.

Note: A batted ball declared foul cannot be changed to fair regardless of additional information that might be made available to the calling umpire.

6. Foul Tip

11.6.1 A ball that travels sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught unassisted by the catcher.

A.R.11.6.1: A ball travels directly from the bat, in a straight line, to the glove or bare hand and is deflected straight up into the air. RULING: If the catcher then legally catches the ball, it is a foul tip. If it is not caught unassisted by the catcher or is touched by or caught by someone else, it is a foul ball.

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

11.6.2 A base runner may advance on a foul tip without tagging. The foul tip is treated as a noncontacted pitch.

EFFECT—(11.6.1 and 11.6.2)—The ball is live, a strike is charged to the batter, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.

7. Hits, Bunts, Slaps

11.7.1 Hit. A hit is a legally batted fair ball.

11.7.1.1 No intent to contact the ball is necessary.

11.7.1.2 The batter becomes a batter-runner as soon as she legally hits a fair ball.

11.7.1.3 The ball is live.

11.7.1.4 The batter is liable to be put out.

11.7.1.5 Base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

11.7.1.6 If a fair-hit ball should touch a base runner or umpire while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.

11.7.2 Bunt. A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped into the infield with the bat.

11.7.2.1 Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn — pulled backward away from the ball.

11.7.2.2 On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third- strike rule applies.

11.7.2.3 If, with fewer than two strikes, the batter's attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike, and the ball is dead. With two strikes, the batter is declared out, and the ball is dead.

11.7.2.4 A bunt that is caught in the air remains live and in play, regardless of the number of strikes on the batter, and whether it is fair or foul.

11.7.3 Slap. A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

Regulations Governing Batting

8. Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing

The effect for a batted ball that hits the batter (including her clothing and attached equipment) or hits the dirt or home plate, and then hits the batter (including her clothing and attached equipment) varies depending on the location of the batter.

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

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

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

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

9. Batting Order

The batting order that is delivered to the plate umpire must be followed throughout the game, except that a starting

player may be replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the starting player in the batting order.

In addition, the flex may replace the designated player on offense. The first batter listed on each team's lineup card shall lead off her respective team's half of the first inning. After the first inning, the first (lead-off) batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed her full turn at bat in the preceding inning. If the third out in an inning is made before a batter completes her turn at bat, she shall be the first batter in the next inning, and she shall start with a 0-0 count.

10. Batting Out of Order (See also Appendix B)

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

11.10.2 Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one pitch has been made to the following batter or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

11.10.3 The effect for batting out of order varies depending upon when the infraction is reported to the plate umpire.

EFFECT—(11.10.1 to 11.10.3)—If the error is reported while the improper batter is at bat, the correct batter may take her place and legally assume any balls and strikes. Any runs scored or bases advanced while the improper batter was at bat shall be legal.

Note: The offensive team may correct an improper batter at home plate with no effect.

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

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

Notes:

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

11. Batting Practice

See Rule 5.1 (Pregame Practice) for specifications on batting practice.

12. Checked Swing

11.12.1 A checked swing is the restraining action taken by a batter to stop an attempted hit or slap that puts the batter in jeopardy of a strike being assessed.

11.12.2 If the batter is attempting to avoid being hit by a pitch rather than attempting to contact it, checked swing does not apply.

11.2.3 A pitch should be called a strike when it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.

11.12.4 A pitch should be called a ball when:

11.12.4.1 The swing is checked (resulting in no swing) and the pitch did not enter the strike zone nor was contacted by the bat;

11.12.4.2 The plate umpire is in doubt regarding a checked swing or blocked out.

11.12.5 If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help, the plate umpire shall ask for help. If anyone else (on either offense or defense) asks for help, the umpire may (but is not required) to ask for help.

11.12.6 If an out is made on the bases in addition to an out on a properly appealed checked swing, the checked swing out is assessed before the out on the bases.

A.R. 11.12.6: With two outs and two strikes on the batter, the runner on first base is thrown out attempting to steal second base. The defense properly appeals the checked swing so the batter is declared out on strikes. The batter becomes the third out for both scoring purposes and establishing the next batter.

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

13. Dropped Third-Strike Rule

11.13.1 A dropped third strike is called anytime there are two outs or with fewer than two outs and first base unoccupied and the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground.

EFFECT—The ball is live, the batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

11.13.2 When the batter is entitled to attempt first base on a dropped third strike and the pitch rebounds off the catcher and rolls against the discarded bat.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner and base runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out.

14. Hitting Ball a Second Time

11.14.1 The batter may not, after contacting a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

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

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

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

Batter	Bat	Batted Ball	Effect
In box	In hands	Fair or foul	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Fair	Batter out
Out of box	In hands	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Foul (intentional)	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Fair	Live
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Foul	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Fair	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (intentional)	Batter out

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

Hitting the Ball a Second Time

Notes:

1. *If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a base runner or a fielder, the ball remains live, and there is no interference.*
2. *If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.*
3. *If the batter simply drops her bat and the catcher trips over it, no interference is called.*

11.14.2 The batter may not intentionally make contact with a ball in foul territory or intentionally interfere with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike.

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

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

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

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

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

15. Hit Batter (by Pitch)

11.15.1 A batter is awarded first base when a pitch, neither swung at nor called a strike, is entirely within the batter's box and it strikes the batter or her clothing. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required; however, the batter may not obviously try to get hit by the pitch. (See Rule 11.15.3.1.)

11.15.2 A batter is awarded first base when a pitch neither swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box, except as noted in Rule 11.15.3 that follows.

EFFECT—(11.15.1 and 11.15.2)—The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Base runners may not advance unless forced.

Notes:

1. *It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.*
2. *The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.*
3. *If a batter swings and the ball hits her hands sending it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter. If it is strike three, the batter is out.*

11.15.3 The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:

11.15.3.1 The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch (which is not entirely in the batter's box) or she obviously tried to get hit by the pitch (regardless of its location).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a ball or strike (depending on its location), and the batter remains at bat, except the batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike or the batter is awarded first base if the pitch was "Ball four." Base runners advance if forced.

Note: The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter and could include a batter freezing and unable to move due to the unusual movement or speed of the pitch.

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

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

11.15.3.3 The pitch touches any part of the batter's person, including her hands or clothing, as she swings and misses for a third strike.

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

11.15.3.4 The batter is hit by a pitch that has not yet reached the front line of the batter's box, assuming she did not swing or attempt to bunt.

EFFECT—“No Pitch.” See Rule 10.10.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 10.14.1 for pitching at a batter and Rule 10.14.2 for pitching at an umpire.

16. Illegally Batted Ball

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter contacts the pitch and: 11.16.1 Either one or both of the batter's feet are in contact with the ground entirely outside the lines of the batter's box.

Note: In cases in which there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

11.16.2 Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate, even though she may be touching the lines of the batter's box.

EFFECT—(11.16.1 and 11.16.2)—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out immediately, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.16.3 An inappropriate bat is used.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.3.2.

17. Infield Fly Rule

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

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

Notes:

- 1. If the ball is near the foul line, the umpire shall declare, “Infield fly, the batter is out if fair.”*
- 2. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches its highest point and based on the position of the closest infielder, regardless of who makes the play.*
- 3. Any defensive player who positions herself in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule.*
- 4. An outfielder may catch an infield fly in the outfield provided an infielder could have caught the ball with ordinary effort.*
- 5. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.*
- 6. If a declared infield fly ball falls untouched to the ground in foul territory and rolls into fair territory before passing first or third base, it is an infield fly.*
- 7. If interference occurs during the flight of a potential infield fly, the ball is immediately dead and the plate umpire shall judge if the ball is in fair or foul territory. If fair, the batter shall be declared out and if foul, infield fly would not have applied so the batter is returned to the batter's box and a foul ball assessed to her count. In any case, the violator is out and runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.*

18. Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball

11.18.1 An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is trapped or guided to the field shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped

11.18.2 An infielder may not intentionally drop a fair fly ball, a line drive or a bunt when there are fewer than two outs and base runners are on first base; first and second bases; first and third bases; or first, second and third bases.

EFFECT—(11.18.1 and 11.18.2)—The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. (See Rule 11.17.) If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

19. Interference

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

EFFECT—As a general rule, when batter, base runner, on-deck batter or coach interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes dead, (2) an out is called, and (3) each base runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner. If the batter-runner has not touched first base at the time of the interference, each base runner shall return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. When a base runner(s) is called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice.

20. Interference by On-Deck Batter

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

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

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

21. Interference by Batter

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

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the batter is out and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the batter is out and each base runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference.

Exceptions:

- 1. If a base runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the base runner, instead of the batter, is out.*
- 2. If the batter strikes out and, while still in the batter's box, interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner, the base runner also is out.*
- 3. If the catcher is not making a play on a base runner but the batter or umpire interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the base runner, therefore, advances safely, the umpire should suspend play and return each base runner to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.*

Notes:

- 1. The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at home plate.*
- 2. If the catcher or her throw to a base hits the batter or her bat while the batter is in the batter's box, the ball is live and there is no interference unless the contact is intentional and initiated by the batter.*

11.21.3 The batter, after being declared out, may not interfere with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the base runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. In addition, each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Exception: If the batter struck out and is still in the batter's box when she interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner, the base runner being played on, not the runner closest to home plate, is out.

A.R. 11.21.3: With runners on first and third bases, the catcher attempts to pick off the runner on first base after a called third strike. The batter, although not entitled to run, runs to first base in fair territory and prevents the first baseman from catching the throw. RULING: The batter is out on strikes, the runner on third base is declared out and the runner from first base is returned there.

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

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

Note: If the batter swings and misses the pitch but accidentally hits it on the follow-through, it is a dead-ball strike and all base runners must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.21.5 The batter may not release the bat in such a manner that it: 11.21.5.1 Hits the catcher and prevents her from making a play.

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

11.21.5.2 Is thrown (that is, discarded with force) into fair or foul territory, whether intentional or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play; interference shall be called.

EFFECT—(11.21.5.1 and 11.21.5.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the batter is out and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a double play, two outs may be declared.

11.21.5.3 Is thrown into fair or foul territory, whether intentional or not, and it endangers an umpire or a defensive player who is not making a play on the ball; interference shall be called.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. For a first violation, the offending team is warned. For any subsequent violation by the same team, the offended coach is given the option of either the results of the play or the batter being declared out and base runners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a double play, two outs may be declared.

22. Batter is Out

The batter is out when:

11.22.1 The on-deck batter or any other member of the team at bat interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball.

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

11.22.2 The batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an inappropriate bat.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.3.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 11.10.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 11.16.1.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 11.16.2.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 11.21.5.2.

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

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

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

EFFECT—See Rule 11.14.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 11.14.4.

11.22.10 The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.3.3.5.

11.22.11 The batter's third strike is a foul tip.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Base runners may advance without tagging but with liability to be put out.

11.22.12 A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher. 11.22.13 The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is occupied.

EFFECT—(11.22.12 and 11.22.13)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

11.22.14 A pitch touches any part of the batter's person, including her hands or clothing, as she swings and misses for a third strike.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.15.3.3.

11.22.15 The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.15.3.1.

11.22.16 The batter hinders the catcher or any fielder from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or intentionally hinders a player (for example, on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

The Strike Zone

View from behind Home Plate
Horizontal View



The width of the strike zone is **fixed** and does not change with each batter. It extends to the outer edge of the ball when the inner edge is over any part of home plate.

Home plate is 17" wide and the diameter of a softball is 3.82". Therefore, any pitch completely within that 24.64" is a strike.

The space between the outer edge of home plate and the inner edge of the batter's box is 6". It is shared space for pitchers and batters and for balls and strikes.

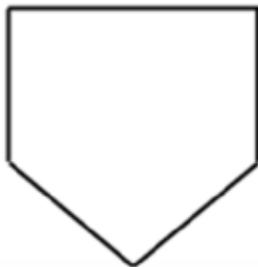
The Strike Zone

View from behind Home Plate
Vertical View

The height of the strike zone is **variable** extending from the top of the ball at the bottom of each batter's sternum...



to the top of the ball at
the top of her knees.



EFFECT—See Rule 11.21.2.

11.22.17 The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.21.1.

RULE 12

Base Running

Batter-Runner

1. Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner

The batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out:

12.1.1 When with two outs or fewer than two outs and first base unoccupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground. (See Rule 11.13.)

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base is occupied, the batter is automatically out, the ball is live, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.1.2 After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.

12.1.3 When a fair untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner (not in contact with a base) or an umpire after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

Note: Any ball that touches a base runner or umpire while still in flight is considered a ground ball and cannot be caught as a fly ball.

12.1.4 When a fair untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner (not in contact with a base) or an umpire after passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), and no other fielder had a chance to make a play.

12.1.5 When she legally overruns or overslides first base, but attempts to advance further.

Note: If the batter-runner immediately and directly returns to first base without feigning to second base, she is not in jeopardy of being put out.

EFFECT—(12.1.1 to 12.1.5)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

12.1.6 When awarded a base.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.

2. Batter-Runner is Out

The batter-runner is out under these circumstances and those listed under "Runner." (See Rules 12.2.9, 12.8 and 12.11.)

12.2.1 When she hits a fair ball and is legally put out before reaching first base.

12.2.2 When she hits a fair or foul ball, other than a foul tip, and it is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

12.2.3 When she is legally put out before reaching first base when the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base is occupied, the batter is automatically out.

EFFECT—(12.2.1 to 12.2.3)—The ball is live. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether

forced or not.

12.2.4 When she does not proceed to first base after:

12.2.4.1 A fair batted ball, a base on balls, or a dropped third strike.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.11.1.

12.2.4.2 Being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.11.2.

12.2.4.3 Catcher obstruction. (See Rule 9.5.1.)

EFFECT—See Rule 12.11.3.

12.2.5 When, after reaching a base safely, a batter-runner abandons her base (for example, obviously heads toward her position or the dugout believing she was put out, the batted ball was foul, etc.), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.11.4.

12.2.6 When she hits an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.17.

12.2.7 When she runs to first base in a manner that interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.19.1.3.2.

12.2.8 When with fewer than two outs and first base, first and second bases, first and third bases, or first, second and third bases occupied, an infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive that could have been caught with ordinary effort.

Note: An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A trapped ball or a ball that has been guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.18.2.

12.2.9 When she runs the bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

Note: Retreating to a base during a rundown is not considered running the bases in reverse order.

12.2.10 When she steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

EFFECT—(12.2.9 and 12.2.10)—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.2.11 When she interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out.

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

12.2.12 When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box, makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base or interferes with a dropped third strike.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner being played on also shall be called out.

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

12.2.13 When the immediate preceding base runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play.

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

12.2.14 When, after hitting an out-of-the-park home run, providing her team previously was warned under Rule 9.6.3, the individual is touched by any member of the offensive team other than the base coaches, before touching home

plate.

12.2.15 When, after hitting an out-of-the-park home run, providing her team previously was warned under Rule 9.6.3, a member of the offensive team enters fair territory to congratulate the batter before she touches home plate.

EFFECT—(12.2.14 and 12.2.15)—The ball is dead. The batter is out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the touching by her own team or when team personnel entered fair territory to congratulate a teammate.

Base Runner(s)

3. Base Runner(s) May Advance With Liability to be Put Out

A base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out:

12.3.1 When a pitch leaves the pitcher's hand (whether pitched or dropped).

12.3.2 After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.

12.3.3 When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.

12.3.4 When a pitch hits an umpire.

12.3.5 When a pitch enters foul territory but is not blocked.

12.3.6 When a foul tip is legally caught.

12.3.7 When an infield fly is not caught.

Note: No tag-up is necessary.

EFFECT—(12.3.1 to 12.3.7)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

4. Base Runner Is Out

The base runner is out:

12.4.1 When, on a force play, a fielder:

12.4.1.1 Contacts the base while having and maintaining possession of the ball before the runner reaches the base;

12.4.1.2 Touches the ball to the base; before the runner reaches the base or 12.4.1.3 Tags the base runner before she reaches the base.

12.4.2 When, after play has resumed, she fails to return to touch the base she previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.

EFFECT—(12.4.1 and 12.4.2)—The ball is live. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out. Exception: It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the base runner's proper path, and the base runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

12.4.3 When she is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes a fielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable opportunity to make a play.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.4.

12.4.4 When the umpire rules intentional interference (with the ball or with the fielder making the play) as she is struck by a batted ball while in contact with a base.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.4.5 When she leaves the base she is occupying before the pitch is released and the defensive coach does not take the result of the play.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled, "No Pitch" is declared, and the batter returned to the batter's box. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.4.6 When she is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, she fails to immediately return to her base or attempt to

advance to the next base.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the offending base runner is out. Each other base runner remains at the base occupied at the time the ball is returned to the pitcher in the pitcher's circle.

12.4.7 When she uses a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

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

5. Base Runner Is Out After a Proper Appeal

The base runner is out after a proper appeal:

12.5.1 When she fails to retouch her base before a fielder tags her or the base, after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.

12.5.2 When she leaves her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball first touches the fielder. Either the base runner or the base may be tagged.

Note: Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.

EFFECT—(12.5.1 and 12.5.2)—The ball may be live or dead at the time of the appeal. The base runner is out after a proper appeal without effect on other base runners.

12.5.3 When, after a conference, base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied, the ball has been put back in play, and before the end of the half-inning.

EFFECT—Each base runner on the improper base shall be declared out and ejected. In addition, the head coach shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike behavior. (Behavioral ejections.)

A.R. 12.5.3: After a conference with the bases loaded and no outs, the base runner from third base returns to her base but the base runners from second and first bases switch places. The base runner from third base scores on a sacrifice fly (first out) and then the defense appeals switching bases at second and first bases. **RULING:** Although the second and third outs are made on the appeal, they are timing plays so the run would score. (Note: Both players and the head coach are also ejected.)

6. Base Runner Is Not Out

12.6.1 When she is hit with a fair batted ball over foul territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live and in play. The base runner who was struck and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.6.2 When she is hit by a batted ball while touching her base, unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. See Rule 12.17.3.

12.6.3 When not in contact with a base, the base runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball that has passed a fielder (excluding the pitcher), and, in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.6.4 When not in contact with a base, the base runner is hit by a fair batted ball after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

12.6.5 When she keeps contact with her base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.

12.6.6 When she legally starts to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while in the pitcher's circle.

12.6.7 When she runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.

12.6.8 When she returns to a base left too soon.

EFFECT—(12.6.3 to 12.6.8)—The ball is live. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

Runner(s)

7. Runner(s) May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out

A runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out:

12.7.1 After a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner (not in contact with the base) or an umpire after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

12.7.2 After a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner (not in contact with the base) or an umpire after passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), and no other fielder had a chance to make a play.

12.7.3 When a thrown ball hits an umpire.

12.7.4 When a thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.

12.7.5 When a runner is hit by a fair untouched batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.

12.7.6 When a ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.

EFFECT—(12.7.1 to 12.7.6)—The ball is live. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

8. Runner is Out

The runner is out:

12.8.1 If the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder Exceptions: 1) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Other runners may advance with liability to be put out; and 2) When a runner reaches a base safely but the tag is applied with excessive force that causes her to lose contact with the base.

12.8.2 When she physically passes (that is, completely overtakes) a preceding runner 1) before that runner has been put out, unless the passed runner was obstructed or 2) who was tagging up on a fly foul ball that is ultimately uncaught.

Notes:

1. *If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding runner would count.*
2. *Runners are returned to proper order as soon as the ball is declared dead.*

A.R. 12.8.2: With fewer than two outs, a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding runner. RULING: The batter is out, but all preceding runners score. With two outs, only those preceding runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. This is a timing play, not an appeal play.

12.8.3 When a coach or anyone other than another runner who has not yet crossed the plate physically assist her while she is actively running the bases and the ball is in play.

12.8.4 When she is running to any base in regular or reverse order, and she attempts to avoid or delay a tag by running out of the base path.

EFFECT—(12.8.1 to 12.8.4)—The ball is live. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Exception: It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the runner's proper path, and the runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

12.8.5 When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base unless she is the player in violation. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally

touched at the time of the interference.

If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the base runner is put out, the runner being played on also shall be called out.

Notes:

1. *If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make a play, the runner will be ruled out if she intentionally interferes with the second fielder.*
2. *If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play, and only that fielder is protected from interference by the runner. The runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and she comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made a play.*

12.8.6 When she intentionally contacts a ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base unless she is the player who illegally contacts the ball. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. The offending runner is out. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.8.7 When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

12.8.8 When a coach, while in the coach's box, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner.

Note: If a thrown ball accidentally touches an offensive coach in foul territory, the ball is live and in play.

12.8.9 When the offensive coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and draws a throw to home plate.

EFFECT—(12.8.7 to 12.8.9)—The ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.8.10 When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player. See Rule 12.13.

Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender also shall be ejected. (Behavioral ejection)

12.8.11 When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

Note: Members of a team include all people authorized to be in the team's dugout. EFFECT—(12.8.10 and 12.8.11)—The ball is dead. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction.

12.8.12 When she is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, she fails to immediately return to her base or attempt to advance to the next base.

12.8.13 When, once she returns to a base for any reason, she leaves the base, unless:

12.8.13.1 A play is made on her or another runner;

12.8.13.2 The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle; or

12.8.13.3 The pitcher releases a pitch to the batter.

EFFECT—(12.8.12 and 12.8.13)—The ball is dead. Each other runner must return to the base legally touched at the time of the infraction.

12.8.14 When, after reaching a base safely, a runner abandons her base (for example, obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another runner was put out to end the inning).

EFFECT—The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.

9. Runner is Out After a Proper Appeal

The runner is out after a proper appeal:

12.9.1 When she fails to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the runner or the missed base may be tagged.

Notes:

1. No runner may return to touch a missed base after a trailing runner has scored or after leaving the field of play.
2. No runner may return to touch a base that she left too soon if she has left the field of play or if a trailing runner has scored.

EFFECT—The ball may be live or dead at the time of the appeal. The runner is out after a proper appeal without effect on other runners.

10. Runner is Not Out

The runner is not out in the following situations:

12.10.1 When she fails to return to a base at the end of playing action because she is not given sufficient time. She will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball.

EFFECT—“No pitch” will be called by the umpire. The runner is directed to return to her base.

12.10.2 When she does not run in a direct line to a base, provided a fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.

12.10.3 When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire’s judgment, could not have made a play.

12.10.4 When she slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

12.10.5 When she is touched while off a base:

12.10.5.1 With a ball not securely held by a fielder.

12.10.5.2 With a hand or glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player’s other hand.

EFFECT—(12.10.2 to 12.10.5.2)—The ball is live.

12.10.5.3 With a ball by a fielder who, by using force, pushes a runner off the base she possesses.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. See Rule 9.5.2.8 or 9.5.4.

12.10.6 When the defensive team does not request the umpire’s decision on an appeal play until after the next pitch, or until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

EFFECT—An appeal will not be accepted.

12.10.7 When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or base runner while using an illegal glove/mitt.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.18.

12.10.8 When she returns to a base missed before an appeal is made, or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead.

Regulations Governing Base Running

11. Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases

No batter-runner or base runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

12.11.1 Not proceeding to first base after a fair batted ball, a base on balls or a dropped third strike.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.11.2 Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base without being declared out. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced.

12.11.3 Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction. (See Rule 9.5.1.)

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The offensive coach may elect to take the result of the play or to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, in which case, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each base runner may advance only if forced.

12.11.4 After reaching a base safely, the runner abandons her base (for example, obviously heads toward her position or the dugout believing she was put out, the batted ball was foul, etc.), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner or base runner(s) is out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.11.5 Regarding the scoring of runs when, with two out, the runner does not proceed to a base to which she is forced to advance.

EFFECT—The ball is live and the runner is out. Whether or not a run scores is determined by the defense. If the runner is declared out for abandonment, it is a timing play and the run would score if another runner touched home plate before the offending runner is declared out. If the defense puts the runner out by force out (tagging her or playing the ball to the base to which the runner was forced), the run would not score.

A.R. 12.11.5: In the bottom of the seventh inning of a tied game, base runners are on first and third bases with two outs. The batter singles to right field, the base runner on third base scores but the base runner from first base joins in the celebration rather than advancing to second base. **RULING:** The offending base runner is declared out for abandonment but as a timing play, if the base runner from third touched home plate before the out, the run would score. If, however, the defense properly appeals that the forced base runner did not touch the base to which she was forced, the run would not score.

12. Base Awards

12.12.1 In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for a base-running violation.

Note: If a base runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an award.

In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

12.12.2 First base. The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

12.12.2.1 After a base on balls.

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. The batter may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.12.2.2 After catcher obstruction.

EFFECT—See Rule 9.5.1.

12.12.2.3 After being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.15.

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

12.12.2.5 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of an umpire after passing a fielder (including the pitcher), but another fielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.12.2.4 and 12.12.2.5)—The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. If the official scorer

judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a hit, but, if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

12.12.2.6 When a base runner intentionally contacts the ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and the offending base runner is out. Each other base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.2.7 When a fair untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner before touching a fielder (including the pitcher) or before passing a fielder (other than a pitcher) who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.12.2.8 When a fair untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner after passing a fielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.12.2.7 and 12.12.2.8)—In general, the ball is dead, and the batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a hit, but, if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice.

If not in contact with the base when struck by a fair ball, the base runner is out, and each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base she legally touched at the time of the interference. If forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. The ball is dead.

If in contact with the base when struck by a fair ball, the base runner is not out. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is live. If the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.3 Second base. The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:

12.12.3.1 When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.

12.12.3.2 When a fair batted ball bounces over, wedges under or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field, or becomes blocked.

12.12.3.3 When a fair batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.

12.12.3.4 When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory (excluding a ball deflected over the home-run fence in fair territory), or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a base runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.12.3.5 When a fair batted ball deflects off a fence and then off a fielder before going over the home-run fence.

12.12.3.6 When a fair batted ball deflects off a member of the defensive team in an unauthorized area.

12.12.3.7 When a fair batted fly ball clears a home-run fence as noted in Rule 2.17.2.

EFFECT—(12.12.3.1 to 12.12.3.7)—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and is credited with a two-base hit (double). Each other base runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.4 Third base. The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:

12.12.4.1 When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

12.12.4.2 When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, might become fair.

EFFECT—(12.12.4.1 and 12.12.4.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter is awarded third base and credited with a three-base hit (triple), but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner is awarded home plate.

12.12.5 Home plate. The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:

12.12.5.1 When a fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without being caught, touching the ground or going through the fence.

12.12.5.2 When a fair batted fly ball is deflected by a fielder or fielders over the home-run fence in fair territory.

12.12.5.3 An illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home-run fence in flight.

Note: The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment that is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

EFFECT—(12.12.5.1 to 12.12.5.3)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.

12.12.6 Judged bases. A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:

12.12.6.1 When a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not in the act of catching a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes her.

EFFECT—See Rules 9.5.2.5 and 12.15.

Notes:

1. A base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.
2. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed. For exceptions, see Rule 9.4.3.

12.12.6.2 When a spectator reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator, except that a fielder may reach into the stands or over a fence to attempt to catch a batted fly ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 4.9.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 9.8.2.

12.12.6.4. When an umpire suspends play to protect a player who was seriously injured.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter, batter-runner and base runners are awarded the appropriate bases.

12.12.7 One base. A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:

12.12.7.1. If forced to vacate a base because of a one-base award to the batter

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each base runner advances one base if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.12.7.2 When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, provided the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Each base runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is awarded a ball. If the pitch is “Ball four” or the batter is hit by the illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base.

12.12.7.3 When a pitch is blocked (that is, it lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball. Each base runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.7.4 When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory. (See Rule 9.3.)

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.

12.12.7.5 When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters dead-ball terri-

tory or becomes blocked.

12.12.7.6 When a fielder legally catches the ball but it falls into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—(12.12.7.5 and 12.12.7.6)—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

12.12.8 Two bases. A base runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

12.12.8.1 If forced to vacate a base because of a two-base award to the batter. **EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each base runner advances two bases if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

12.12.8.2 When a fair ball deflects off a defensive player and enters dead-ball territory.

12.12.8.3 When a fair ball deflects off a base runner or umpire and enters dead-ball territory after having passed a fielder (excluding the pitcher), provided no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

12.12.8.4 When a fair batted ball deflects off a member of the defensive team in an unauthorized area.

12.12.8.5 When a fair batted fly ball clears a home-run fence as noted in Rule 2.17.2.

EFFECT—(12.12.8.2 to 12.12.8.5)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner and each other base runner are awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.8.6 When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines), deflects off a member of the defensive team in an unauthorized area, or is blocked.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two base runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead base runner.

Exceptions:

- 1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters dead-ball territory or becomes blocked, each base runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball became blocked.*
- 2. If the ball becomes blocked because of offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead, and each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, the base runner being played on is called out. (If this player has scored before the blocked ball was ruled, the runner closest to home plate is called out.)*

12.12.8.7 If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.

12.12.8.8 When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Exception: If no play is apparent, there is no penalty.

12.12.9 Three Bases. A fielder shall not intentionally contact or catch a fair batted ball or with a batted foul ball, which might become fair, with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place or her person.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance three bases from the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

12.12.10 Home Plate. A runner is entitled to advance to home plate with no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three- or four-base award to the batter.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance to home plate.

13. Collisions

The rules committee is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions with the catcher at home plate and with infielders at all bases. The intent of this rule is to encourage runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions, whenever possible.

12.13.1 A defensive player shall not block the base, plate or baseline without possession of the ball or not in the immediate act of catching the ball if it impedes the runner.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Obstruction is called and the runner is declared safe. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. Exception: If the runner collides flagrantly, the ball is dead, and although the runner is declared safe on the obstruction call, she is ejected. (Behavioral ejection)

12.13.2 In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if she remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The runner is called out for deliberately crashing into a fielder, even if the ball is dislodged. If the runner deliberately crashed into a fielder holding the ball before she was put out and, in the umpire's judgment, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the offender and player being played on shall both be declared out. If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will also be declared out. If an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out.

Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected for misconduct under Rule 13 (Behavioral ejection).

12.13.3 Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

Note: The first fielder fielding a batted ball is protected from obstruction but thereafter, if the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected for misconduct under Rule 13 (Behavioral ejection).

A.R. 12.13.3.a: The right-handed batter who lays down a bunt in front of home plate is on a collision course with the catcher if she runs in a direct line to first base. Each player at this point is acting appropriately, the batter taking a path in a direct line to first base, and the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball. The questions that have to be answered are: (1) Did the batter alter direction in any way and draw contact in an attempt to receive an obstruction call? (2) Did the catcher alter her attempt to field the ball in any way so as to draw an interference call? and (3) Could the catcher actually make an out on the play? **RULING:** 1) If yes, interference is ruled; 2) if yes, obstruction if ruled; 3) if no, no call.

A.R. 12.13.3.b: The batter-runner collides with the first baseman who is attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line (toward home plate). **RULING:** The runner has a right to the baseline in this case, and the first baseman has the right to field an errant throw. This is the result of the "normal" flow of the game, and the play should be ruled incidental contact with no effect. **Note:** The fielder is not protected as she would be if she were the first fielder fielding a batted ball.

12.13.4 The runner, although not required to slide to avoid contact with the defensive player, slides in a manner that, in the umpire's judgment, was malicious (for example, spikes up).

12.13.5 The runner shall not slide out of the baseline nor outside her reach of the base she is attempting to slide into in order to slide directly at a fielder.

EFFECT—(12.13.4 and 12.13.5)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out and ejected, and each other runner shall return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

14. Dislodged Base

12.14.1 When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt

to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.14.2 Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs.

12.14.3 At the conclusion of play, play is suspended and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

15. Fake Tag

A fake tag occurs when a fielder who neither possesses the ball nor is in the act of catching a thrown ball, obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag, which causes the runner to slow down or stop. A fielder may not fake a tag on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance.

16. Forfeits Exemption From Liability to Be Put Out

A runner forfeits exemption from liability to be out:

12.16.1 If, after making the turn at or overrunning first base, the batter-runner feints or attempts to continue to second base.

12.16.2 If, after dislodging a base, the runner attempts to reach the next base.

12.16.3 If, while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other base runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if she is standing on a base beyond the base she missed or left too soon when play is suspended.

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

12.16.4 If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching an awarded base, attempts to advance farther.

12.16.5 If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching base safely, abandons her base (for example, obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another runner was put out to end the inning).

EFFECT—(12.16.1 to 12.16.5)—The ball is live and the player in jeopardy to be put out.

17 Hit by a Batted Ball

An umpire or runner is considered hit by a batted ball when the ball contacts his or her person, attached equipment or clothing:

12.17.1 When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is struck by a fair untouched batted ball after it has passed a fielder (other than the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.17.2 When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is unavoidably struck by a fair batted ball after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

EFFECT—(12.17.1 and 12.17.2)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

Note: Any ball that touches the umpire or runner while still in flight is considered a ground ball and cannot be caught as a fly ball.

12.17.3 When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, she is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or the fielder making a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the closest defensive player is behind the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, and credited with a base hit, and each other base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the base runner are out. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

12.17.4 When a runner is struck by a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base and:

12.17.4.1 Before the ball touches a fielder, including the pitcher;

12.17.4.2 Before the ball passes a fielder, excluding the pitcher; or

12.17.4.3 After passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher, and another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.17.4.1 to 12.17.4.3)—The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If two base runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first base runner is out.

If the base runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the base runner and the batter are out. However, if the base runner is touching a base when she is struck by an infield fly, only the batter is out.

12.17.5 When a base runner intentionally contacts a ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, and the offending runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base unless she is the player who illegally contacts the ball. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.17.6 When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball over foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live and in play. The runner who was struck and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

18. Illegal Glove/Mitt Used to Make a Play on a Batter or Runner

12.18.1 A fielder shall not make a play on a batter or runner while using an illegal glove or mitt.

EFFECT—The coach of the offended team shall have the option to:

- a. *Nullify the entire play.*
 - *The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the pitch and continues her turn at bat.*
 - *Each base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.*
- b. *Take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.*

12.18.2 A fielder shall not use any equipment or part of her uniform that is displaced from its proper position to make a play.

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

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

Note: If the illegal glove/mitt does not meet specifications (see Rule 3.6), it shall be removed from the game (that is, not returned to the dugout).

19. Interference

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

EFFECT—As a general rule, when on-deck batter, batter, batter-runner, base runner or coach interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes dead, (2) an out is called, and (3) each base runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire’s judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner. If the batter-runner has not touched first base at the time of the interference, each base runner shall return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. When a runner(s) is called out for interference with a batted ball, the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder’s choice.

12.19.1 Interference by Batter-Runner

12.19.1.1 The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. For example:

12.19.1.1.1 She may not contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.14.1.

12.19.1.1.2 She may not throw the whole bat into fair territory and thereby interfere with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.21.5.2.

12.19.1.1.3 She may not make contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base.

12.19.1.1.4 She may not intentionally make contact with a ball in foul territory.

12.19.1.1.5 She may not make contact with a foul ball that, in the umpire’s judgment, might become fair.

12.19.1.2 The batter-runner may not interfere with the catcher’s attempt to field a third strike.

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

R. 12.19.1.2: The batter-runner unintentionally kicks the ball that had deflected off the catcher who attempted to field a dropped third strike. **RULING:** Live ball, no interference.

12.19.1.3 The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder’s attempt to throw or to receive a thrown ball. For example:

12.19.1.3.1 The batter-runner may not slide into first base to interfere with the play whether on her or another runner.

12.19.1.3.2 The batter-runner may not run to first base in a manner that interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

Notes: The batter-runner has not interfered if a fielder does not throw, hesitates before throwing or makes an errant throw.

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

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

EFFECT—(12.19.1.2 to 12.19.1.4)—The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and each base runner must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

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

12.19.2 Interference by Runners

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

12.19.2.1.1 The runner may not contact a fair untouched batted ball, while off base, before it touches a fielder or before it passes a fielder (other than the pitcher).

12.19.2.1.2 The runner may not contact an untouched, fair batted ball after it passes a fielder if another fielder has a chance to make a play.

12.19.2.1.3 The runner may not intentionally contact a ball that an infielder has missed.

12.19.2.1.4 Physical contact by the runner with a fielder attempting to field a fair batted ball or a foul ball that might become fair shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play and was prevented from doing so.

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

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

12.19.2.1.4.2 The runner may not at any time unnecessarily wave her arms or verbally distract the fielder. Merely running in front of the fielder or jumping over the ball while proceeding to the next base is not interference, even though it may be distracting to the fielder or screen her view of the ball.

12.19.2.1.4.3 It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to make a play, and the runner contacts the fielder. However, if the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact, interference or obstruction subject to the opinion of the umpire.

12.19.2.1.4.4 If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the base runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall determine which one is entitled to field the ball, and only that fielder is entitled to protection.

12.19.2.1.4.5 Interference occurs when the ball ricochets off one defensive player, and another player still has the opportunity to make a play, but the runner intentionally interferes with the second fielder.

EFFECT—(12.19.2.1.1 to 12.19.2.1.4)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base unless she is the player guilty of interference. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. The offending runner is out. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

Exceptions:

1. *If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the runner being played on also is called out. If the interference occurs after the runner is put out, the runner closest to home plate also is called out.*

2. *If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fly ball, the batter is also out.*

12.19.2.1.5 Physical contact by the runner with a fielder attempting to field a foul batted fly ball shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, a foul ball is charged to the batter and the offending runner is out. Each other base runner must return to the base touched at the time of the pitch. If the foul ball is a bunt attempt with two strikes on the batter, the batter is also declared out if there are less than two outs. If there are two outs at the time of the interference on the foul bunt, the at-bat is scored as a fielder's choice. In either case, the first batter in the next inning is the batter who was in the on-deck circle at the time of the foul bunt.

12.19.2.2 The runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.

12.19.2.3 The runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball.

Note: A runner hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference. EFFECT—(12.19.2.2 and 12.19.2.3)—The ball is dead. The offending runner is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted

ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. If forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Exception: If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the offending runner is put out, the player being played on also shall be called out.

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

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

12.19.2.5 A runner may not remain on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. (See Rule 12.13.)

EFFECT—See Rule 12.13.2.

12.19.2.6 It is not interference, and the runner is not out:

12.19.2.6.1 When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made a play.

12.19.2.6.2 When the runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed a fielder (other than the pitcher) and, in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play. If the ball contacts the runner while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball; it cannot be caught as a fly ball.

12.19.2.6.3 When the runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.

12.19.2.6.4 When a batted ball is misplayed, the ball bounds away or past the fielder, and then the fielder and runner collide.

12.19.2.6.5 When the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder.

12.19.2.6.6 When the runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball (that has not touched or passed a base) while standing in foul territory and no fielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.19.2.6.7 When a fielder fields a ground ball and attempts to tag the runner who crashes into her causing the ball to come loose.

Note: It is not interference because the fielder is no longer fielding the ball.

12.19.2.6.8 When a fielder is standing watching the ball roll near the foul line and the runner makes incidental contact, the fielder is not protected as she is not fielding the ball.

EFFECT—(12.19.2.6.1 to 12.19.2.6.8)—The ball is live, and all runners (including the batter-runner) may advance with liability to be put out.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.3.

12.19.3 Interference by a Retired Member of the Offense

An offensive player, who no longer has status (a retired member of the offense or a player who has scored), may not interfere with a defensive player making a play on an active runner.

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

A.R. 12.19.3: Base runners on first and third bases with one out. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop, who throws to second base for the second out. During the attempt to throw out the batter-runner, the base runner who started on first base interferes with the throw. Meanwhile, the base runner on third base has crossed home plate (before the interference). RULING: On the interference, the base runner closest to home plate is called out (the bat-

ter-runner). Since the batter-runner is the third out, the run does not score.

20. Leaving A Base

12.20.1 A runner may not leave the base she attained at the conclusion of play once the ball is in the pitcher's possession in the pitcher's circle.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The violator is called out at the moment she loses contact with the base. Exceptions: (1) a play is made on her or another runner, or (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle. (See Rule 12.21.)

12.20.2 A base runner may not leave the base she attained until the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with her base at the time a pitch leaves the pitcher's hand. Exception: When the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a base runner to return to a base, the base runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. At the conclusion of the play, the coach of the defensive team shall have the option of 1) taking the result of the play or 2) "No pitch" is declared, the batter is returned to the batter's box and the offending base runner is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Notes:

1. *In determining the result of play, ignore the leaving-early violation and apply the effects for any other rule violations in the order in which they occurred. That end result becomes the first option.*
2. *The second option is the traditional effect for the leaving-early violation and is applied with no regard for any action that follows the pitcher's windup.*

21. Look-Back Rule

12.21.1 The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base and the pitcher has possession (for example, has the ball in her hand or glove, under her arm or chin, or between her legs) and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both her feet are within the circle or on the lines.

12.21.2 When a runner is legally off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat and she is in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner may continue moving forward in the direction she is going without stopping; or she may immediately and directly go back in the other direction. If the runner is stopped as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner must immediately and directly go forward or back. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a base hit as long as the batter-runner continues past first base.

12.21.3 Once the runner has determined a direction, she may not reverse direction unless the pitcher:

12.21.3.1 Throws the ball from within the pitcher's circle.

12.21.3.2 Carries the ball outside the pitcher's circle.

12.21.3.3 Has one foot completely outside the pitcher's circle, on the ground, while in possession of the ball.

12.21.3.4 Sets the ball on the ground or no longer has the ball in her possession and control (including handing it to another player).

12.21.3.5 Makes a play on the runner or another runner.

Note: When the pitcher's circle is not visible, the umpire must use good judgment in determining if she would or would not be in the circle.

12.21.4 The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

12.21.4.1 She fakes a throw.

Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher's arm moves forward.

12.21.4.2 She makes any aggressive body movement toward the runner (for example, steps toward the runner, head and body fakes toward the runner).

12.21.5 There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the runner to comply

with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the runner.

12.21.6 When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:

12.21.6.1 A runner standing off her base must immediately return to the base she last occupied or advance to the next base.

12.21.6.2 A runner who starts back to the base she last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.

12.21.6.3 The batter-runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.

12.21.6.4 The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.

12.21.6.5 The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return nonstop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the batter-runner is heading back toward first base within the baseline extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended baseline in foul territory commits her to first base while stepping beyond the baseline toward the second-base side commits her to second base.

EFFECT—(12.21.1 to 12.21.6.5)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two runners are off base and both are called out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first as it is not possible to obtain more than one out under the look-back rule. The ball is dead when the first runner is called out, and the other runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.

22. Missing a Base or Home Plate

12.22.1 A runner must touch each base in order when she is advancing or returning to a base and the ball is in play. A runner, in the course of running the bases, is considered to have acquired the base if she touches the base or passes the base (within a body's length). If she passes the base but has failed to touch it, she is considered to have touched it until the defense appeals she has missed the base. See Rule 7.1.1.

12.22.2 A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.

12.22.2.1 If a runner misses home plate and the fielder misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire should make a safe signal and declare "No tag." If an appeal play is made (that is, by tagging either the runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.

12.22.2.2 If a runner misses home plate, she is considered to have scored on a timing play. If she returns and touches home plate, the time is established upon contact with home plate. If she does not return, the time is established at the time she passes home plate.

A.R.12.22.2.2: With a runner on second base and two outs, the batter singles to centerfield. The throw to the plate is cut off and relayed to second base and a tag applied to the batter-runner. The runner from second base missed home plate just before the out at second base. RULING: The run scores on the timing play if there is no appeal or no attempt to touch home plate. If the runner returns to touch home plate, the run does not score because the third out preceded touching home plate.

12.22.2.3 If a batter-runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

12.22.3 An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.

12.22.4 A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. Exception: A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.

12.22.5 A runner may not return to touch a missed base if:

12.22.5.1 She has left the field of play;

12.22.5.2 A trailing runner has scored;

12.22.5.3 She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed, and play is suspended;

12.22.5.4 The ball is put back into play after having been dead; or

12.22.5.5 On a dead-ball base award, she has touched the final base of the base award.

Note: If the runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, she can continue.

12.22.6 During a dead ball, a runner may return to a missed base or a base she left illegally even though she is awarded bases by the umpire. If she fails to legally touch the appropriate base, a proper appeal may result in the runner being ruled out.

12.22.7 The failure of a preceding runner to touch a base (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order.

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

23. Occupying Bases

12.23.1 A runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner.

12.23.2 Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball or glove/mitt holding the ball.

Note: If a runner is being run down between bases and the trailing runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the trailing runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner, however, returns safely to the base she left and both runners then are occupying the same base, the trailing runner is out if touched with the ball.

12.23.3 A runner who is touching a base when play is suspended may not advance or return during the suspension of play.

24. Overrunning or Oversliding Bases

12.24.1 When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return nonstop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the batter-runner is heading back toward first base within the baseline extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended baseline in foul territory commits the batter-runner to first base while stepping beyond the baseline toward the second-base side commits her to second base.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.21.6.5.

12.24.2 If the batter-runner feints or makes an attempt to advance to second, she may be tagged out (while she is off base) by a defensive player with the ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 7.1.1.1.

Note: A batter who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike is treated the same as if she batted the ball.

12.24.3 A runner who overruns or overslides a base and loses contact with it is in jeopardy of being put out, except as noted in Rules 12.24.1 and 12.24.4.

EFFECT—The runner is out if tagged while not in contact with the base.

12.24.4 A runner may overrun or overslide home plate after legally touching it without liability to be put out.

Note: For scoring purposes, a runner who overslides a base and is tagged out, whether attempting to return or advance, is not credited with attaining that base. If a batter-runner, she is credited with no more than a triple. If a base runner attempting to steal, charge her with caught stealing. For all other purposes, the player is considered to have attained the base.

A.R. 12.24.4: With a base runner on second base, the catcher obstructs the batter, who somehow puts the ball in play to the shortstop. She fields the ball and throws out the base runner from second, who overslides third base and is immediately tagged while off the base. The batter attains first base safely. RULING: Catcher obstruction is canceled because the batter and each base runner advanced at least one base on the batted ball. Therefore, the result of the batted ball stands.

25. Running Out of the Base Path

12.25.1 The base path is the traditional path traveled by a runner who is attempting to advance to the next base. It is

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

EFFECT—The ball is live. The runner is out if she deviates from the base path when the fielder is attempting to put her out, but each other runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out. Exceptions: 1) A base runner is not out when she runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base line in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the batted ball in the base path; and 2) The runner is not out when she fails to run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.

12.25.2 The batter-runner shall not run to first base in a manner that interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

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

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

EFFECT—(12.25.3)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out and ejected, and each other runner shall return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

26. Tag and Force Plays

12.26.1 A runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand(s) or glove/mitt holding the ball.

Exceptions:

1. *A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides it may immediately return without liability to be put out provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second base.*

2. *When a batter-runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.*

3. *When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.*

12.26.2 A batter-runner is out when she legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.

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

12.26.4 A runner is considered forced out if she must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another runner, but:

12.26.4.1 She is legally tagged before she reaches the forced base.

12.26.4.2 The fielder, while having and maintaining possession of the ball, contacts the base in advance of the runner.

12.26.4.3 The fielder touches the ball to the forced base in advance of the runner.

12.26.5 The base runner is out if she is off base when a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught, and she fails to retouch the base (occupied at the time of the pitch) before a fielder tags her or the base.

12.26.6 If an appeal is upheld at a base to which a base runner was forced to advance and the out is a force out, no runs would score if it was the third out. If a forced base runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.

12.26.7 It is still a force out when a base runner misses a base to which she was forced to advance and is subsequently appealed after the batter-runner or a trailing base runner has been retired.

Note: There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner.

12.26.8 The batter-runner or runner is not out:

12.26.8.1 When touched while off a base with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.

12.26.8.2 When excessive force is used to push her off the base she held. (See Rule 9.5.4.2.)

12.26.8.3 When touched while off a base with a fielder's hand or glove/ mitt when the ball is in the fielder's other hand.

12.26.8.4 When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt.

12.26.8.5 When an improper live-ball appeal is made. (See Rule 7.1.)

27. Tagging Up after a Caught Fly Ball

12.27.1 A base runner must return to her base or remain in contact with her base until a batted fly ball is first touched by a fielder. The initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the base runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch. Either the base runner or the base may be tagged by the defender if the runner left before the ball was contacted. This is an appeal play.

12.27.2 An appeal must be upheld even if the base left too soon was before or after an award. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.

12.27.3 A base runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. Exception: A base runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.

12.27.4 A base runner may not return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball if:

12.27.4.1 She has left the field of play;

12.27.4.2 A trailing runner has scored;

12.27.4.3 She is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon, and play is suspended by the umpire;

12.27.4.4 The ball is put back into play after having been dead; or

12.27.4.5 On a dead-ball award, once she has touched the final base of the base award.

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

12.27.5 The failure of a preceding base runner to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding base runner is declared out for failing to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

12.27.6 If a base runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a timing play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored in advance of the appealed base runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.

12.27.7 A base runner may not use a running start from a position behind and not in contact with a base.

EFFECT—(12.27.1 to 12.27.7)—The ball is live and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.

28. Touching the Bases

12.28.1 An advancing runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home plate). All awarded bases also must be touched, and in legal order.

Note: Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in legal order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

12.28.2 A base runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. Exception: A base runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.

EFFECT—(12.28.1 and 12.28.2)—For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the base runner is out if, before she reaches each untouched base, she is legally tagged.

If the base is one to which the base runner is forced, she is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base she failed to touch (including home plate).

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

Note: Retreating to a base during a rundown is not considered running the bases in reverse order.

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

12.28.4 The batter-runner may not step back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

12.28.5 The failure of a preceding base runner to touch or retouch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

12.28.6 When a runner has legally started to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while in the pitcher's circle.

12.28.7 When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, play is suspended, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

12.28.8 When a batter-runner or base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, she is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

EFFECT—The base runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of the fielder.

12.28.9 Between pitches and after a dead ball, each base runner must return to her base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the base runner to return to her base, and the base runner is obligated to return to her base without undue delay.

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

When the ball is dead, the ball will not be put in play until each base runner has retouched her base. However, a base runner may be declared out if, after being allowed a reasonable amount of time, she fails to retouch the base.

12.28.10 Should play be suspended while a base runner is touching a base, she may not advance.

RULE 13

Misconduct

The highest standards of good sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Codes of Conduct.

1. Warnings

Inappropriate conduct by participants may result in either informal or formal warnings at the discretion of an umpire. Umpires are not required to warn participants for inappropriate behavior before assessing a penalty except as noted specifically in the rules.

13.1.1 An informal warning may be given for circumstances where preventative umpiring is used to prevent a situation from escalating to a degree when the umpire will be compelled to act. They are advisory in nature and carry no consequences if the undesirable behavior ceases.

A.R. 13.1.1: The pitching coach asks the plate umpire about the location of a pitch for two successive batters. RULING: The plate umpire may advise the coach that frequent discussions regarding the strike zone are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

13.1.2 A formal warning is issued for circumstances when the umpire needs to intervene and prevent inappropriate behavior from occurring or reoccurring. When given, they are to be clearly articulated as warnings and noted on the plate umpire's lineup card.

A.R. 13.1.2: On the way to the coaches' box between innings, the base coach comments to the plate umpire that his batters are being forced to swing at pitches well out of the strike zone, which is hampering their offense. RULING: The plate umpire issues a warning for commenting on the strike zone and notes it on the team's lineup card.

2. Ejections

13.2.1 Whether a warning is issued or not, umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for rule violations, unsporting acts, behavioral or verbal misconduct. The on-site administrator shall make him/herself available to assist the umpire crew as the violator exits the field.

13.2.1.1 An administrative ejection is given for rule violations regarding equipment, lineup management, conferences and warm-up activities.

13.2.1.2 A behavioral ejection is given for rule violations relating to play, including all violations of Rule 13 and actions of batters, runners, pitchers and fielders.

EFFECT—(13.2.1.1 and 13.2.1.2)—an ejected player must remain in the clubhouse or designated area as determined by the Home Team. This area should be away from Teams and away from the public or she/he will be escorted by security and the Team will be fined up to \$1,000. The Ejecting Umpire should fill out an Ejection Report, which should be given to the League Supervisor of Officials and forwarded to the League Office.

Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field, dugout and other team areas. They may occupy the space near or behind the home-run fence, or may leave the complex and be out of sight and sound. Out of sight and sound means unable to view the remainder of the contest and the umpires cannot hear any additional comments. In either case, they shall not communicate (visually, electronically or verbally) further with the teams or umpires.

Note: In the event of an ejection of a head coach, an umpire shall ask the departing coach to identify an acting head coach.

If the head coach declines to do so, the umpires shall initiate forfeit proceedings.

13.2.2 Team personnel and players shall not continue to argue, excessively express themselves, use offensive language or taunt the umpires after an ejection.

EFFECT—The umpire should notify the offender that failure to comply as noted above will result in a forfeit. If the directive is not obeyed in a timely manner, a one-minute forfeit warning shall be issued to the head coach. If the warning expires, a forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team not at fault.

3. Physical Contact with an Umpire or Opponent

Any threat of physical intimidation or harm, including *future league scheduling or Championship Series scheduling*, pushing, shoving, spitting, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make aggressive physical contact, or use of equipment in a combative manner, shall not be tolerated and is grounds for a behavioral ejection combined with suspension.

EFFECT—The ejecting umpire shall notify the head coach and the on-site administrator that the reason for the ejection is violation of Rule 13.3. Notice shall take place not later than at the conclusion of the game (if video review is not requested or available) or after video review by the umpires after the game, if allowed under Rule 5.9.7.

The perpetrator shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring). For a second offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall serve a four-game suspension. For a third offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition (if applicable).

All conditions for the effect of an in-game behavioral ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1 EFFECT. In addition, as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident, the offending head coach is responsible for submitting an incident report and the opposing coach may submit one as well.

Exceptions:

1. A coach or player involved in a fight who was defending himself/ herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
2. If a coach or player makes physical contact with an opponent in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, he/she shall not be ejected or suspended.

Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area from the time umpires enter the field until after they leave the field, and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension. Exception: Players suspended under Rule 13.3 may be restricted to the dugout if the suspension is to be served while the team is on the road and no other suitable supervisory options are available.

4. Leaving Team Area to Join a Brawl

Leaving a team area (that is, a dugout or bullpen) or coach's box in order to join a brawl or potential fight will not be tolerated.

EFFECT—The ejecting umpire shall immediately notify the head coach and the on-site administrator that the reason for the ejection is violation of Rule 13.4. Notice shall take place not later than at the conclusion of the game (if video review is not requested or available) or after video review by the umpires after the game, if allowed under Rule 5.9.7.

The perpetrator shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring). For a second offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall serve a four-game suspension. For a third offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition (if applicable)

All conditions for the effect of an in-game behavioral ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1 EFFECT. **In addition, as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident, the offending head coach is responsible for submitting an incident report and the opposing coach may submit one as well. Exception: If a coach leaves a team area (that is, a dugout, bullpen) or coach's box to prevent his or her own players from joining a brawl or potential fight, Rule 13.4 shall not apply.**

Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area from the time umpires enter the

field until after they leave the field, and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension. Exception: Players suspended under Rule 13.4 may be restricted to the dugout if the suspension is to be served while the team is on the road and no other suitable supervisory options are available.

5. Ejection Prevents Play

13.5.1 When an ejection renders a team unable to field a team of eligible players to complete a game.

EFFECT—A forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team with sufficient players.

13.5.2 When the subsequent suspension of multiple players renders a team unable to field a team of eligible players for future competition.

EFFECT—The head coach may request the staggering of the suspensions. Requests shall be made to the team's conference commissioner or, in the event the team is an independent, to the NCAA softball secretary- rules editor.

6. Equipment Misuse

13.6.1 No player or coach shall deliberately throw or kick a piece of equipment as a result of disgust or frustration.

EFFECT—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual, unless the umpire judges the act to be so flagrant that the offender shall be ejected without warning. (Behavioral ejection) Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1.

13.6.2 No player or coach shall use equipment in any way other than what is intended by the manufacturer (for example, banging bats and balls in a dugout).

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending head coach. Subsequent violation shall result in the abused equipment being removed from the game (not returned to the dugout) and the ejection of the head coach (Behavioral ejection). All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1.

7. Intentionally Pitching at a Batter or Umpire

A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter or umpire.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.14.1 for pitching at a batter and Rule 10.14.2 for pitching at an umpire.

8. Verbal Misconduct

No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere:

13.8.1 Use profanity or vulgarity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.

13.8.2 Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials or question the integrity of an umpire (for example, suggesting bias or cheating).

13.8.3 Make disparaging public comments on officiating to the media.

EFFECT—(13.8.1 to 13.8.3)—If the violation occurs during the game, the offender shall be ejected with or without a warning. (See Rule 13.2.1.) If the violation occurs after the game but while still under the jurisdiction of the umpires, the offender shall serve a postgame ejection. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.3.) If the violation occurs at any other time, the institution's director of athletics and conference office shall be notified as well as the NCAA Championship Committee in the event of a violation during the postseason.

EFFECT—A team warning shall be issued for the first offense in a game. Subsequent violations by the same team shall result in a behavioral ejection of the violator(s). All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1.

Note: A coach or player may, on occasion, request feedback regarding the specific location of a pitch or ask a point of rule without applying Rule 13.8.4 as long as it is not made in an argumentative fashion and does not delay play.

13.8.5 Make a verbal threat of physical harm to an opponent or umpire.

EFFECT—The violator shall be ejected (behavioral ejection) and shall serve a two-game suspension in the team's next previously scheduled and played games in the traditional season (spring). The umpire shall notify the appropriate head coach that the reason for the ejection is a violation of Rule 13.8.5 (threat of physical harm) not later than the end of the game.

9. Inciting the Crowd

No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere, incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators (e.g., re-enacting the play, charging the umpire in a hostile and aggressive manner, jumping around or waving arms in disgust).

EFFECT—The offender shall be ejected with or without a warning. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. (Behavioral ejection, see Rule 13.2.1.) Umpires should request the assistance of the on-site administrator in dealing with the provoked spectators.

10. Calling Timeout when Ball is in Play

No member of the offense may call "Time" or employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act, while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher throw an illegal pitch.

EFFECT—If an illegal pitch is thrown, "No pitch" is declared. (See Rule 10.10.) Whether or not an illegal pitch is thrown, a team warning shall be issued. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the offender(s) being ejected from the game. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. (Behavioral ejection, see Rule 13.2.1.)

11. Tobacco Use

13.11.1 The use of tobacco and alcohol products by NPF Athletes, Managers, Coaches, Medical Personnel, and Umpiring Staff is prohibited while on site for practice, competition, camps, clinics, appearances, special events, etc. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens, dugouts, restrooms, stands, concourse, parking lot, and press box (or Official Scorer's area) are considered to be on site.

12. Refusal to Play

Refusal to continue to play as noted in Rule 6.19.1 will not be tolerated.

EFFECT—The coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring).

All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1) In addition, as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident, the offending head coach is responsible for submitting an incident report and the opposing coach may submit one as well.

13. Refusal to Leave after Ejection

The order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel must be obeyed in a timely manner. Team personnel may not continue to argue, excessively express themselves, use offensive language or taunt the umpires after an ejection.

EFFECT—A one-minute forfeit warning shall be issued to the head coach or the acting head coach in the event the head coach has been ejected. If the warning expires, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire crew in favor of the team not at fault.

14. Subsequent Violations by Ejected/Suspended Personnel

13.14.1 An ejected or suspended player may remain in the dugout but may not communicate with opponents or umpires.

13.14.2 Ejected or suspended nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field, dugout and other team areas. They may occupy space near or behind the home-run fence or may leave the complex and be out of sight and sound.

EFFECT—(Rules 13.14.1 and 13.14.2)—Subsequent violation of any rule by the previously ejected or suspended person shall result in the game being forfeited.

RULE 14

Scoring

Note: Failure of an official scorer to adhere to Rule 14 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines and expectations for the official scorer.

1. Official Scorer

The host team, conference commissioner or tournament director shall appoint and identify (at the pregame meeting) an official scorer for each game. The official scorer shall be responsible for the following:

14.1.1 The official scorer shall record in writing the team lineups, names of the head coaches and umpires, and inning, score, number of outs, base runners' positions and count on the batter throughout the game.

14.1.2 The official scorer shall have sole authority to make all decisions involving scoring judgment. The scorer shall be objective and shall score for both teams in a similar manner.

14.1.3 The official scorer shall have a current copy of the NCAA Softball Rules at the game and shall know the rules pertinent to his/her responsibilities (for example, illegal re-entry, unreported substitution, designated player).

14.1.4 The official scorer shall sit in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout), whenever possible.

14.1.5 The official scorer's decision shall be communicated to both teams and members of the media present.

14.1.6 The official scorer shall inform the public-address announcer of all substitutions recorded and relayed by the umpire.

14.1.7 The official scorer's decision shall be in agreement with the NCAA Softball Rules and the umpire's decision. The official scorer shall have the authority to rule on any scoring matter not specifically covered in the rules.

14.1.8 The official scorer shall notify the umpire immediately if the teams attempt to change sides before three outs are recorded in one half of an inning.

14.1.9 The official scorer shall notify an umpire immediately in the bottom of an inning if the home team has enough runs to win.

14.1.10 The official scorer shall not notify an umpire if the offensive team is batting out of order or if either team has an unreported substitution or an illegal player. This is the responsibility of the opposing team.

Note: In the unfortunate circumstance that the official scorer is in the team dugout, he/she may communicate with his or her own team.

14.1.11 If the game is protested or halted, the official scorer, in addition to the plate umpire, shall make note in writing of the exact situation at the time of the interruption. The inning, score, number of outs, base runners' position and count on the batter shall be recorded.

2. Scoring Terms

14.2.1 Assist: Credit given to a defensive player when she handles or effectively deflects the ball during action that is connected with a putout.

14.2.2 At-Bat: A plate appearance that does not include sacrifices, hit by pitch, base on balls, gaining first base by interference, obstruction, or an incomplete turn at bat.

14.2.3 Base Hit: A batted ball that permits the batter to reach first base safely because of a fair hit; because a base runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball or because the umpire is hit by a batted ball (and the scorer judges it not to be a fielder's choice; see Rule 14.3.10); when a fielder attempts to put out a preceding base runner but is unsuccessful, although there is no fielding error and the official scorer believes the batter-runner would have

reached first base with perfect fielding; or when a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that any fielder attempting to make a play has no opportunity to do so. A hit shall be scored even if the fielder deflects the ball from or cuts off another fielder who could have put out a base runner.

14.2.4 Base on Balls (Walk): An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, receives four pitches that are declared balls.

14.2.5 Batters Faced: A statistic kept for each pitcher that indicates the number of opposing batters who make plate appearances.

14.2.6 Caught Stealing: Action of a base runner who is thrown out by the catcher as she attempts to steal a base.

A.R. 14.2.7.a: In the bottom of the seventh inning with no one out and the winning run on third base, the batter taps the ball to the pitcher who makes no throw to first base to prevent the winning run from scoring. RULING: Credit the batter with a fielder's choice to gain first base and an additional fielder's choice if she gains second base due to indifference.

A.R. 14.2.7.b: In the bottom of the seventh inning with no one out, base runners on first and third bases, the base runner from first base advances to second base with no play by the catcher to prevent the winning run from scoring. RULING: Credit the base runner with a fielder's choice to gain second base due to indifference. (See Rules 14.7.2.5 and 14.15.)

14.2.8 Double Play: A play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between the putouts.

14.2.9 Error: A misplay charged to a defensive player when it is judged by the official scorer to have prolonged the time at bat (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) of an offensive player or contributed to an offensive player being declared safe.

14.2.10 Extra-Base Hit: A hit that allows the batter-runner to safely advance past first base in continuous action without an error or indifference by a defensive player. It may be a double, triple or home run.

14.2.11 Fielder's Choice: Charge a batter-runner with a fielder's choice when a defender fields a ground ball and attempts to put out a preceding base runner rather than the batter-runner at first base when a throw to first base would have put out the batter-runner. Advance a base runner by a fielder's choice when she advances safely while another runner is played on.

14.2.12 Force Out: A putout in which a runner, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder having and maintaining possession of the ball and touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance.

14.2.13 Game-Winning Run Batted In: The run batted in that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.

14.2.14 Games Started: Credit given to the players listed as starters on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game, whether or not they actually pitch, field or bat.

14.2.15 Games Played: Credit given to starting players and their substitutes reported in the game, as recorded on the umpire's official game lineup card.

14.2.16 Hit Batter by Pitch: An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, was hit by a pitch, including a pitch that would have resulted in a base on balls. (See Rule 11.15.)

14.2.17 Illegal Pitch: Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.

14.2.18 Intentional Base on Balls (Intentional Walk): An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to a batter who, during her time at bat, received a fourth ball that the pitcher intentionally threw outside the strike zone. An intentional base on balls also is referred to as an intentional walk.

14.2.19 Left Early: Action of a base runner who is called out for leaving the base she occupied before the release of the pitch.

14.2.20 Left on Base: A base runner legally occupying a base at the end of a half-inning. This includes a batter-runner whose batted ball results in another base runner being the third out.

Note: Every player who completes a plate appearance must be put out, score a run or be left on base.

14.2.21 Passed Ball: A pitch that the catcher can reasonably be expected to catch but misses, resulting in a base run-

ner advancing.

14.2.22 Pick-Off: An action initiated by the defense trying to retire a base runner at the base she occupied at the time of the pitch. The catcher is credited with a pick-off for a throw behind a base runner that catches that base runner off base and results in an out.

14.2.23 Pitcher of Record: The pitcher who is the player who will receive a decision (that is, a win or loss). (See Rules 14.30.6 and 14.30.7, respectively.)

14.2.24 Plate Appearance: Any time a batter completes a turn at bat. Exception: When a batter leaves the game with two strikes and the substitute batter strikes out, the substitute receives credit for the game played but neither a plate appearance nor a time at bat. The first batter is credited with a game played, plate appearance, at-bat and strikeout.

14.2.25 Putout: Credit given to a defensive player for retiring a batter or runner.

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

14.2.27 Run Batted In: Credit given to the batter for each run that scores as a result of a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded.

14.2.28 Sacrifice: Credit given to a batter who, with fewer than two outs, advances one or more base runners by bunting and is called out at first base; would have been called out had no error occurred; or is not called out because the defense plays on another base runner who advances safely.

14.2.29 Sacrifice Fly: A legally batted fly ball with fewer than two outs that results in a base runner scoring a run. If the fielder drops the ball but, in the scorer's opinion, the base runner would have scored had the fielder held the ball, the play shall be scored as a sacrifice fly, and an error shall be given to the defensive player.

14.2.30 Stolen Base: An action initiated by the offense when the base runner attempts to advance unaided on a pitch. The base runner is credited with a stolen base when she advances a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.

14.2.31 Strikeout: A putout that is credited to the catcher as a result of the batter being charged with three strikes in a single at-bat.

14.2.32 Throw Out: Credit given to the catcher for initiating the play on an attempted stolen base when an out results. It also is given to a catcher for throwing in front of a base runner who subsequently is put out in a rundown that does not involve a batted ball.

14.2.33 Total Bases: The sum of all bases a player earns in a game as a result of a hit(s).

14.2.34 Triple Play: A play by the defense in which three offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between putouts.

14.2.35 Wild Pitch: A pitch that the catcher misses and could not be expected to catch, resulting in a runner advancing.

Batting

3. Base Hit

A base hit is credited to a batter when she advances to a base safely:

14.3.1 On a fair ball that settles on the ground or clears or touches the home-run fence before being touched by a fielder.

14.3.2 On a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that more than a routine play is required to put out the batter-runner.

14.3.2.1 It should not be anticipated that an off-balance throw would retire a runner. A hit is credited to the batter even if the throw is wild.

14.3.2.2 When a ground ball is fielded and no throw or a late throw is made, a hit is credited to the batter unless a throw was not made or was made late because of checking or holding a base runner on base.

14.3.2.3 If a slowly hit ball or a hard-hit ball is deflected and eliminates a routine play for another fielder, a hit is credited to the batter.

14.3.3 When a fair-batted ball deflects off a fielder playing in front of first or third base, a hit is credited to the batter.

14.3.4 When a play is made on a lead base runner unsuccessfully and the batter would have been safe had a play been made on the batter. This includes bunts and running slaps.

14.3.5 When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder does not recover in time to gain good position.

14.3.6 On a fair ball that takes an unnatural bounce so that the ball cannot be handled with ordinary effort or that bounces off the pitching plate or any base (including home plate) before being touched by a fielder and at an angle such that it cannot be handled with ordinary effort.

14.3.7 On a ball that reaches the outfield untouched by an infielder, unless the ball should have been handled by an infielder with ordinary effort (for example, ball between the legs).

14.3.8 On a fair ball that might have touched a fielder but was blown by the wind, lost in the sun or lights, or falls to the ground because the fielder slips on the field or an object on the field (for example, catcher's mask, base, home plate, sprinkler).

14.3.9 On a fair line drive hit to the outfield that drops to the ground, if the outfielder is attempting to catch the ball on the run or if the outfielder had to cover considerable distance or make the catch running at a high rate of speed. A hit is credited even if the ball is touched.

14.3.10 On a fair batted ball not touched by a fielder that touches a base runner or umpire if the official scorer believes the batter earned a hit (rather than a fielder's choice).

14.3.11 On a fair batted ball that strikes a hat or glove thrown at it.

14.3.12 When no one covers the base or a fielder is late in covering the base. 14.3.13 If the official scorer judges the batter would have earned a base hit had runner interference not occurred.

14.3.14 If the ball is not touched because of confusion as to who should have fielded it.

14.3.15 When a fielder obstructs a preceding base runner.

Note: Always give the batter the benefit of the doubt and score a hit when exceptionally good fielding fails to result in a putout. When in doubt, scoring should always award base hits instead of charging errors.

4. Base Hit Not Credited

A hit is not credited to the batter in the following situations:

14.4.1 When a batter advances one or more bases while a fielder who handles a fair hit attempts to put out a preceding base runner.

14.4.2 When a batter misses first base and is then called out on an appeal.

14.4.3 When a batter hits safely and a preceding base runner misses the first base to which she was forced to advance. This is an appealed force out, and the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

14.4.4 When a base runner is called out for being touched by an infield fly ball.

14.4.5 When a runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.

14.4.6 When a fielder fails in an attempt to retire a preceding base runner and, in the official scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.

14.4.7 When the base runner interferes with a batted ball and the official scorer judges that the batter would have been put out but for the interference. In this case, the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

5. Extra-Base Hit

14.5.1 A batter is credited with an extra-base hit when she reaches a base beyond first base solely because of her hit. It may be a double, triple or home run. Exception: A batter never gets credit for a triple if a preceding base runner is out at home plate or would have been out had no error occurred. The same applies with receiving credit for a double.

Note: When the batter is tagged out after oversliding or overrunning second or third base, for scoring purposes, she is not credited with reaching such base unless she touched the base before oversliding or overrunning and is tagged out while

attempting to return. When a batter misses a base, she gets credit only for the bases touched before missing a base.

14.5.2 A batter is credited only with the base she would have reached had no play on a preceding base runner taken place. If she stops, sees another play and then advances, she does not receive credit for that base.

14.5.3 If a fielder merely holds the ball too long, the batter gets credit for all the bases she takes.

14.5.4 A batter is credited with a home run when any fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without being caught, touching the ground or going through the fence, even if the ball is deflected by a fielder. Exception: A batted ball that hits the fence, rebounds into the field and then caroms off a fielder over the home run fence is a ground-rule double. See Rule 12.12.3.5.

6. Game-Ending Hit

14.6.1 A hit that scores a winning run is credited with only as many bases as the scoring base runner traveled as long as the batter advances at least the same number of bases. Exception: On an out-of-the-park home run, ground-rule double or awarded bases, the batter is credited with the appropriate bases as long as all runners legally touch all bases. In these cases, the winning margin may be more than one run.

14.6.2 When the winning run scores on a home run, but a preceding base runner stops running before reaching home plate, the batter is credited with her last legally touched base.

7. Fielder's Choice

A fielder's choice is credited in the following situations:

14.7.1 To a batter:

14.7.1.1 When a ground ball is put in play and any preceding base runner is out on the hit or would have been out had no error occurred.

14.7.1.2 When a ground ball is put in play and the lead base runner is safe, but the batter would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.

14.7.1.3 When a ground ball is put in play and any preceding base runner, who is forced to advance, is called out on an appeal for missing the first base to which she was advancing.

14.7.1.4 When a base runner is checked and no throw or a late throw is made, but the base runner would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.

14.7.1.5 When the base runner interferes with a batted ball and the official scorer judges that the batter would have been put out but for the interference.

14.7.2 To the base runner:

14.7.2.1 When, after reaching base safely, a batter earns extra bases because of a play on a preceding base runner.

14.7.2.2 When other base runners advance while the catcher makes a play on the batter on a dropped third strike.

14.7.2.3 When a fielder makes a play on a base she thought the base runner was advancing to, but was wrong, and the batter-runner would have been out if the fielder had made a play on her at first base.

14.7.2.4 When a runner safely advances and another runner is:

14.7.2.4.1 Put out in a rundown;

14.7.2.4.2 Safe because of an error; or

14.7.2.4.3 Credited with a stolen base.

14.7.2.5 When a base is gained by a runner who is allowed to advance because of defensive indifference. (See Rule 14.2.7.)

Exception: See Rule 14.15 for first and third situations

8. Sacrifice

A sacrifice is credited to the batter in the following situations:

14.8.1 When a plate appearance meets the following four criteria: 1) there are fewer than two outs, 2) the batter advances one or more base runners by bunting, 3) the ball must be bunted (that is, not swung at, not slapped at, not

chopped at), and 4) the batter is called out at first base or would have been out had no error occurred.

Note: Just as the official scorer should award base hits instead of charging errors in cases involving doubt, a play that meets all four criteria for a sacrifice should be scored as such instead of simply awarding a putout and assist (if applicable).

14.8.2 When, with fewer than two outs, the defense (without error) fails to get the lead base runner out on any type of bunt.

Note: If the lead base runner is tagged out in an attempt to advance more than one base, it is scored a fielder's choice. If the batter is obviously bunting for a hit in a situation in which a sacrifice is not normally used, credit the hitter with an at-bat.

14.8.3 When, with fewer than two outs, the lead base runner advances by means of a bunt even though a trailing runner is out.

14.8.4 When, with fewer than two outs and base runners at first and third bases, the pitcher fields a bunt, holds the base runner at third base, throws the base runner out at first base and the base runner at first advances safely to second base.

9. Sacrifice Not Credited

No sacrifice is credited in the following situations:

14.9.1 When a lead base runner advances on a bunt because of a dropped good throw.

14.9.2 When a batter inadvertently taps the ball into fair territory and it results in a base runner advancing and the batter being retired. The intent to sacrifice bunt must exist.

Note: Scoring for the left-handed running slapper should be the same as for a traditional left- or right-handed batter. If the running slapper clearly shows the intent to advance a base runner by bunting, credit a sacrifice. If the running slapper slaps or swings, charge an at-bat, even if a base runner advances.

14.9.3 When a play made on the lead base runner is successful and she is put out, charge the batter with an at-bat and fielder's choice.

10. Sacrifice Fly

A sacrifice fly is credited to the batter in the following situations:

14.10.1 When a plate appearance meets the following four criteria: 1) there are fewer than two outs, 2) the batter hits a fly ball or line drive that scores a base runner, regardless of where the ball is caught (in fair or foul territory), as long as it is in play, 3) a run must score, and 4) a run batted in must be credited to the batter.

14.10.2 When a fair ball is dropped and an error charged, credit the batter with a sacrifice fly if the base runner would have scored with the catch

Notes:

- 1. Although the batter in this case reaches base by virtue of an error when a sacrifice fly is not caught, she is not charged with an at-bat but is credited with a sacrifice fly, and the fielder is charged with the error.*
- 2. Just as the official scorer should award base hits instead of charging errors in cases involving doubt, a sacrifice that meets all four criteria for a sacrifice fly should be scored as such instead of simply awarding a putout.*
- 3. If the catcher clearly has the ball in her possession before the runner arrives but drops the ball as the runner attempts to score, the catcher is charged with an error, and a sacrifice fly and run batted in are not credited to the batter.*
- 4. Unlike scoring for a sacrifice (bunt/hit), the batter's intentions are irrelevant for a sacrifice fly.*

11. Run Batted In (RBI)

A run batted in is credited to the batter for each run that scores as a result of a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded (whether caused by ball four or an illegal pitch), a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded. A game-winning run batted in is the RBI that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.

Notes:

- 1. On a play involving an error, an RBI is credited to the batter only if the base runner would have scored without the error. In addition, an RBI is credited when, with fewer than two outs, an infielder makes an error on a play made to a base other than home plate. On a third out, when the base runner crosses the plate before the third out is made on another runner, credit an RBI.*

2. *No RBI is credited when a) a runner rounds third base, stops, notices a misplay and then advances safely to home plate, or b) on a base award such as catch and carry or a thrown ball that goes out of play.*

12. Appeal Plays

14.12.1 **Improper Batter.** When an improper batter (for example, batting out of order, unreported or misreported batter) is reported after she is retired and before the next pitch is thrown, the player who should have batted is out and the play is scored as if she had been the correct batter. If the improper batter becomes a batter-runner and is then reported out of order, the proper batter is out and the putout is credited to the catcher. If a pitch has been thrown, all play is legal and the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who batted out of order. If more than one batter bats out of order, score all play as it stands and skip the turn at bat of those who missed their turns.

14.12.2 **Inaccurate Lineup Card.** If submitting an inaccurate lineup card results in a base runner being removed from a base and declared out, the results of her at-bat are nullified, and the putout is credited to the catcher.

14.12.3 In all other appeals, credit the fielder closest to the misplay with the putout.

14.12.4 If an out is made on the bases in addition to an out on a properly appealed checked swing, the checked-swing out is assessed before the out on the bases.

13. Strikeout

The batter is charged with a strikeout in the following situations:

14.13.1 When her third strike is caught by the catcher before striking the dirt.

14.13.2 On a dropped third strike, whether or not the batter-runner is safe at first base.

14.13.3 When, with first base occupied and fewer than two outs in the inning, she is put out on a dropped third strike because she cannot legally advance to first base.

14.13.4 When the catcher catches a foul tip directly from the bat to the glove/ mitt on a third strike.

14.13.5 When a foul bunt on the third strike is not caught in the air.

14.13.6 When, with two strikes, the batter violates the time-between-pitches rule.

14.13.7 When the batter receives two strikes, a substitute batter is inserted and the substitute batter strikes out. Both the plate appearance and the strikeout are charged to the first batter and not the substitute batter. When after sharing a turn at bat with more than one other batter, none of whom received more than one strike, the final batter receives the strikeout.

14. Stolen Base

As a general rule, a stolen base is not credited to a runner unless she was in jeopardy of being charged with a caught stealing if she was unsuccessful. A stolen base is credited:

14.14.1 To a base runner who advances to a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.

14.14.2 To a base runner, if the base runner starts for the next base on the release, and the pitch results in what would otherwise be scored a passed ball or wild pitch. If the base runner advances another base because of the wild pitch or passed ball, only the initial base is stolen.

14.14.3 To a base runner, regardless of the accuracy of the throw and whether an accurate throw would have resulted in a sure putout. No error is charged unless another base is gained due to the wild throw.

14.14.4 To a base runner who gets caught in a rundown attempting to steal and advances to the next base safely, only if the next base was unoccupied and no error is made. The base runner must show the intent to steal.

14.14.5 To a base runner awarded a base due to obstruction during an attempted steal.

14.14.6 To a base runner who advances to a base because of a pick-off play on another base runner, provided the base runner broke for the next base before the release of the catcher's throw.

14.14.7 To each base runner who successfully advances in a double- or triple- steal attempt, whether played on or not, as long as no other runner is put out. If a base runner is played on and she is safe without the aid of an error, she is credited with a stolen base as are any other base runners who safely advance. If a base runner is played on and she is safe by virtue of an error, charge the error to the fielder, and any other base runner who advances is safe on a

fielder's choice. If a base runner is played on and she is put out, she is charged with a caught stealing and any other base runner who advances is safe on a fielder's choice. If the lead base runner fails to advance but is instead safe at the base she occupied at the time of the pitch (and no error occurred), credit the trailing base runner who successfully advances with a stolen base.

14.14.8 To a base runner who advances on a bobbled (not dropped) pitch, even if the base runner decides to advance after seeing the bobble.

14.14.9 To a base runner who advances a base when the defense leaves a base undefended in mid-play. Statistically, a stolen base shall be charged to the catcher if she was involved in the play and charged to the "defensive team" if the catcher was not involved in the play.

Note: When electronic scoring is used, "defensive team" is entered into the program as a pitcher. In the event a stolen base is charged to the "defensive team" or a run is scored by the base runner placed on second base in the tie breaker, it is recorded against "defensive team" and not any other player.

A.R. 14.14.9.a: After a base on balls, the batter-runner rounds first base and, noticing the infielders are not defending second base, takes off and safely attains second base. Seeing no fielder, the catcher makes no throw but instead holds onto the ball after the last pitch. RULING: Stolen base is charged to the catcher.

A.R. 14.14.9.b: After a single to right field, the batter-runner rounds first base and, noticing the infielders are not defending second base, takes off and safely attains second base. Seeing no fielder, the right fielder makes no play but instead walks the ball into the infield. RULING: Stolen base is charged to the "defensive team."

15. Stolen Base Not Credited

14.15.1 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner who advances to a base with the aid of a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference, obstruction, or defensive indifference.

14.15.3 A stolen base is not credited to any base runner when any other base runner is thrown out on an attempted double or triple steal.

Exceptions:

1. On a double-steal attempt, with base runners on first and third bases, credit the base runner from first base with a stolen base if she advances on an unsuccessful but legitimate attempt made to put her out at second base, and the base runner at third base is thrown out at home plate on a continuous play.

2. With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to second base even if the initial throw is not to second base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.

3. With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to home plate even if the initial throw is not to third base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.

4. With a base runner on third base, credit a stolen base to the batter-runner, who after touching first base, successfully advances to second base if no throw is made even if the advance was immediately after a base on balls, unless defensive indifference applies. (See Rule 14.2.7.)

14.15.4 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner if another base runner is put out in a rundown or an error allows the base runner to be safe. In these cases, the base runner not in the rundown who safely advances does so on a fielder's choice.

16. Caught Stealing

As a general rule, a caught stealing is not charged to a runner unless she had an opportunity to be credited with a stolen base if she was unsuccessful. Caught stealing is charged:

14.16.1 To a base runner who is put out or would have been put out had no error occurred on her attempt to steal a base.

14.16.2 To a base runner who, after a throw, immediately attempts to advance to the next base and is thrown out.

14.16.3 To a base runner who attempts to advance after a pick-off throw and is subsequently called out on the play.

14.16.1.4 To a base runner who attempts to steal a base but is tagged out while oversliding or overrunning the base.

Note: When in question, give the benefit of the doubt to the base runner.

17. Throw Outs

The catcher is credited with a throw out when she throws in front of the base runner, resulting in a rundown that does not involve a batted ball, regardless of the base at which the putout occurs. If the catcher initiates the play on an attempted stolen base and an out results, she also is credited with a throw out.

18. Pick-Off

The catcher is credited with a pick-off when a throw behind the base runner results in a putout regardless of whether the putout is made at the base occupied at the time of the pitch or the base runner attempts to advance and is put out. In either case, it is tallied as caught stealing in the box score.

Fielding

19. Putout

14.19.1 Credit a putout to a fielder who catches a fly ball or line drive, tags out a runner or tags the base to force out the runner.

14.19.2 Credit a putout to the catcher in the following instances:

14.19.2.1 A legally caught third strike.

14.19.2.2 The batter is called out for an illegally batted ball.

14.19.2.3 A batter is out on a third strike foul bunt.

14.19.2.4 A batter is out for being touched by her own fair batted ball while one or both feet are completely out of the batter's box or for stepping on home plate.

14.19.2.5 A batter is out for intentionally interfering with her own foul batted ball.

14.19.2.6 A batter interferes with the catcher.

14.19.2.7 A batter who batted out of order becomes a batter-runner and a proper appeal is made.

14.19.2.8 A batter-runner fails to touch first base after a base on balls.

14.19.2.9 A catcher steps on the plate with the ball in her possession with the bases loaded. This includes a dropped third strike.

14.19.2.10 A runner is out for not advancing legally to home plate for the game-winning run.

14.19.2.11 A runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return. The catcher properly appeals, and the runner is called out.

14.19.3 Credit a putout to the nearest fielder in the following instances:

14.19.3.1 A batter is out on an infield fly that is not caught.

14.19.3.2 A base runner is out when the traditional penalty for a base runner leaving a base early is enforced.

14.19.3.3 A base runner is out for being hit by a fair batted ball.

14.19.3.4 A runner is called out for being out of the baseline in order to avoid a tag.

14.19.3.5 A batter-runner steps backward in the first-base line to avoid a tag.

14.19.3.6 A runner is out for passing another base runner or removing her helmet while the ball is in play.

14.19.3.7 A runner is out for running the bases in reverse order.

14.19.3.8 A runner is out for interfering with a fielder. If the interference is a deliberate attempt to impede another play, a second runner also may be declared out.

Note: If the fielder was in the act of throwing or fielding a ground ball, the fielder is credited with an assist, but the putout is credited to the fielder for whom the throw was intended.

14.19.3.9 A runner is out when a proper appeal is made on a missed base or home plate.

14.19.3.10 An unreported player or an illegal player is declared out.

14.19.3.11 A proper appeal is made on a batter who batted out of order but was put out. The proper batter is out and the play scored as if she had batted.

20. Assist

An assist is credited to a fielder in the following situations:

14.20.1 A fielder deflects a batted or thrown ball that results in a putout.

14.20.2 A fielder throws a ball that results in a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders. A fielder may receive a putout in addition to an assist as long as at least one other fielder touches the ball between the assist and the putout.

14.20.3 A fielder throws or deflects a ball that results in a runner being called out for interference or running out of the baseline.

14.20.4 A fielder makes a wild throw and, after the throw, the runner is tagged out before reaching the next base. If the runner reaches the next base safely and, in an attempt to advance to another base, is tagged out, charge the initial fielder with an error.

Note: Do not credit the pitcher with an assist on a strikeout or when after a pitch, the catcher tags out or throws out a runner.

21. Error

14.21.1 An error is charged against any fielder for each misplay (that is, fielding, wild throws, missed catches on good throws) that prolongs the life of a batter (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) or a base runner or permits a base runner to advance. This includes a dropped foul ball (unless it was allowed to drop intentionally to prevent a base runner from advancing), whether or not the batter subsequently is put out.

14.21.2 A single error is charged for each miscue even if more than one base is gained by a runner or more than one runner advances as a result of the play.

Note: An error is charged when a wild throw allows a runner to be safe only if the runner would have been put out had the throw not been wild. Exception: See Rule 14.22.13.

14.21.3 An error shall be charged against any fielder when she catches a thrown ball or fields a ground ball in time to put out any runner on a force play and fails to tag the base or the runner, including a batter-runner on a play at first base.

14.21.4 An error shall be charged against any fielder whose throw takes an unnatural bounce, touches a base or the pitcher's plate, or touches a runner, a fielder or an umpire, thereby permitting any runner to advance. Apply this rule even when it appears to be an injustice to a fielder whose throw was accurate. The scorer must account for every base advanced by a runner.

14.21.5 When a throw is made to a base and more than one fielder could have received the throw but neither did, an error is charged to the fielder who should have received the throw.

14.21.6 An error is charged to a fielder (including the catcher) committing obstruction when an additional base is gained as a result of the obstruction.

14.21.7 An error is charged to a defensive player who collides with a fielder making the initial catch on a fly ball that is dropped.

14.21.8 An error is charged when an unnecessary throw allows a runner to advance.

Note: This does not include a throw made to play on a different runner.

14.21.9 An error is charged to the thrower when an otherwise good throw hits a runner, umpire or discarded bat.

14.21.10 An error is charged to a fielder if a catch and carry applies (see Rule 9.3) but the fielder could have legally caught the ball with ordinary effort and remained in live-ball territory.

22. No Error Is Charged

No error is charged to a fielder in the following situations:

14.22.1 When a ball is misplayed because it is lost in the sun or lights, blown by the wind, or the fielder slips and falls—even if contact is made with the ball.

14.22.2 When there is a mental mistake. Throwing to the wrong base is considered a mental mistake.

14.22.3 When a catcher attempts a pick-off, unless the base runner advances an additional base.

14.22.4 When a base runner returns safely to her original base on a rundown. 14.22.5 When a runner beats a wild throw or dropped catch (unless an additional base is gained or a good throw would not have led to a different result).

Note: A dropped ball by the receiver is an error if the runner would have been out.

14.22.6 When a trailing runner beats a wild throw or is not out on a tag attempt for what would be the second out of a double play or third out of a triple play.

14.22.7 When a ball is hit with such force, so slowly or with erratic spin that it would require more than ordinary effort to play the ball.

14.22.8 When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder cannot recover in time to make the play.

14.22.9 When a fielder drops a ball after running a considerable distance or if she fails in her attempt to catch the ball while running at a high rate of speed.

14.22.10 When a fielder drops a line drive after moving more than a few steps to catch the ball.

14.22.11 When a catch is made with extraordinary effort but the fielder could not complete the catch without entering dead-ball territory or the fielder could not remain in live-ball territory immediately after a completed catch. In general, fielders making extraordinary plays resulting in putouts are not expected to obtain additional outs or prevent other runners from advancing. See Rule 9.3.

14.22.12 As a result of an illegal pitch, wild pitch, passed ball or hit batter, even if more than one base is gained from the initial misplay.

14.22.13 When a base runner advances on a dropped third strike. In such a case, a wild pitch or passed ball shall be charged; however, if an accurate throw or proper catch would have resulted in an out, an error shall be charged to the appropriate player.

14.22.14 When a pitcher mishandles a sharply batted ball. Wild throws and the mishandling of routine ground balls and bunts are reason for charging the pitcher with an error.

14.22.15 When a wild throw is made in an effort to prevent a base runner from stealing, no error is charged even if a good throw would have resulted in a putout, unless the base runner advances at least one additional base.

14.22.16 When a fielder intentionally does not catch a foul fly ball to prevent a base runner from advancing.

14.22.17 When the scorer charges the pitcher with a wild pitch or the catcher with a passed ball.

14.22.18 When a batter advances on a dropped third strike that is also a wild pitch or passed ball. In this case, the batter is charged with a strikeout and the pitcher or catcher with a wild pitch or passed ball, respectively.

23. Double Play/Triple Play

14.23.1 A double or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time the pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is in the possession of the pitcher in her pitching position. Play must be continuous. If an error occurs between putouts, no double or triple play is credited. In addition, a double or triple play is credited when an appeal play results in a second or third out after the pitcher has the ball in her possession but before the next pitch is thrown.

14.23.2 The second part of a double play never should be assumed. If an overthrow is made, no error is recorded unless the runner advances to another base. If the second throw is catchable and is dropped, an error is charged to the person receiving the throw.

Pitching

24. Earned/Unearned Run

14.24.1 Earned runs are runs for which the pitcher is statistically accountable and the offense deserves to have scored (earned). An earned run shall be charged against the pitcher when a runner scores as a result of a base on balls, a fielder's choice, a hit, a putout, a batter hit by a pitch, an illegal pitch, a sacrifice bunt, a sacrifice fly, a stolen base and

a wild pitch (including a third strike wild pitch). Earned runs are determined by reconstructing the inning as if there were no errors or passed balls. The pitcher should be given the benefit of the doubt in determining the advancement of runners had the defensive team been errorless.

Note: A batter who gets on base as a result of a fielder's choice can score an earned run only if the base runner that was out as a result of the fielder's choice was a potential earned run.

14.24.2 When a base runner who began the inning on second base during the tiebreaker scores and the pitcher is held accountable for all bases gained, score the run as earned but charge it to the team total and not to the individual. (See Rule 14.31 for information on the tiebreaker rule.)

14.24.3 Unearned runs are runs directly attributed to the defense's miscues (including those made by the pitcher in her role as a fielder) and the offense did not deserve on their own merit to have scored (unearned). After the defensive team has had an opportunity to record three outs employing only ordinary effort, any subsequent runs that score shall be unearned. A run is always unearned if the runner who scores reached first base by error or had prolonged life because of a dropped foul fly or obstruction.

25. Runs Charged to Starting Pitcher

A starting pitcher who is replaced while leaving base runners is charged with every run that scores up to and including the number of runners she left on base minus one for each of those inherited runners who are out caught stealing, picked off base, or called out for interference when the batter-runner does not reach first base safely.

26. Runs Charged to Relief Pitcher

14.26.1 A relief pitcher is charged with every run that scores when the batter has reached base while she was pitching. Exception: If a batter reaches base on a fielder's choice that puts out an inherited base runner and the batter subsequently scores, the run is charged to the previous pitcher, not the relief pitcher.

14.26.2 When a relief pitcher enters the game to pitch to a batter in midcount and the batter gets on base and scores, charge the first pitcher with the run if the batter has a count of two or three balls and fewer than two strikes, or if the count is full, and in either case, the batter walks. Charge the relief pitcher with any other action of the batter (including a strikeout).

14.26.3 A relief pitcher does not receive the benefit of previous chances of outs when reconstructing the inning to determine earned and unearned runs charged to her. The original pitcher does. Thus, a relief pitcher could be charged with an earned run that does not appear in the team's totals.

27. Strikeout

14.27.1 The pitcher who throws the third strike to a batter is credited with the strikeout, even if the batter reaches first base on a dropped third strike.

14.27.2 The official scorer determines whether it is scored as a strikeout- passed ball or strikeout-wild pitch.

14.27.3 For all circumstances scored as strikeouts, see Rule 14.13.

28. Wild Pitch

A wild pitch is charged to a pitcher when the pitch is so high, wide or low that the catcher cannot handle the ball with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Any pitch in the dirt is wild. Only one wild pitch is recorded regardless of the number of base runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher because it was wild, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a wild pitch and a strikeout. No wild pitch is charged if a base runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A wild pitch is not an error.

29. Passed Ball

A passed ball is charged to the catcher when she fails to stop or control a pitch with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Only one passed ball is recorded regardless of the number of base runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher that could have been handled with ordinary effort, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a passed ball and a strikeout. No passed ball is charged if a base runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A passed ball is not an error.

Statistics

30. Pitching Statistics

14.30.1 Credit a pitcher with a complete game, no-hitter, shutout, etc., if she pitches the first pitch and every subsequent pitch of a new game. For statistical purposes, she is considered the starting pitcher; however, she does not have the substitution rights of a starting player unless she is listed on the lineup card in one of the nine or 10 starting spots.

14.30.2 The flex player is charged with a game played in terms of eligibility, but not statistically (unless she participates in the game as a pitcher), if she is replaced in the lineup before the first pitch.

14.30.3 If a pitcher is removed from the game offensively by a batter or a base runner, all runs scored by her team during the remainder of that half inning are credited to her benefit in determining when her team is in the lead.

14.30.4 A shutout is recorded if the starting pitcher pitches scoreless ball for the entire game or if a relief pitcher pitches scoreless ball after relieving in the first inning before any outs or score. If two or more pitchers combine for a shutout, it shall be noted in the game summary as a combined shutout.

14.30.5 A pitcher is credited with a perfect game when she faces the minimum number of batters required for the number of innings played, none of whom reaches any base safely.

Note: The tiebreaker does not change this requirement.

14.30.6 Winning Pitcher.

14.30.6.1 The winning pitcher is the pitcher on the lineup card at the moment her team takes the lead and keeps it. (See Rule 14.30.3.)

14.30.6.2 The starting pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:

14.30.6.2.1 She has pitched at least four total innings (cumulative, not necessarily consecutive) of a game of six or more innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced, and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.

14.30.6.2.2 She has pitched a total of three innings (cumulative, not necessarily consecutive) when a regulation game is called after five innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced, and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.

14.30.6.2.3 She has pitched the required (as noted above) number of innings, her team is ahead or tied when she is replaced, she re-enters the game with her team behind, and her team subsequently recaptures the lead.

Note: A pitcher cannot receive credit for a save if she receives the win.

14.30.6.3 The relief pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:

14.30.6.3.1 The starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, or her team fell behind.

14.30.6.3.2 The relief pitcher who pitches most effectively after the starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, more than one relief pitcher was used and the lead was never lost.

14.30.6.3.3 The relief pitcher was the pitcher of record when her team gained the lead and stayed in the lead.

14.30.6.3.4 A relief pitcher left the pitching position while the score was tied or her team was behind, and she re-entered as the pitcher and regained the lead.

14.30.7 Losing Pitcher.

14.30.7.1 Each pitcher is responsible for the scoring of a run if she was the pitcher of record when the batter reached base, except if she reached by virtue of a fielder's choice, regardless of who was the pitcher of record at the time of the score. Account for all base runners left on base in determining if her team is ahead, tied or behind at the time she is replaced.

14.30.7.2 A starting pitcher receives the loss if she is relieved while:

14.30.7.2.1 Her team is behind and her team remains behind for the remainder of the game, regardless of the number of innings pitched.

14.30.7.2.2 Her team is tied but she has responsibility for base runner(s) who score and her team remains behind for the remainder of the game.

14.30.7.3 A relief pitcher receives the loss if she is the pitcher of record when the opponent goes ahead and stays

ahead for the remainder of the game.

14.30.8 Save. A pitcher must meet all three of the following conditions to be credited with a save:

14.30.8.1 She is the last pitcher in the win.

14.30.8.2 She is not the winning pitcher.

14.30.8.3 She meets one of the following conditions:

14.30.8.3.1 She enters or re-enters the game to pitch with a lead of not more than three runs and pitches for at least one inning.

14.30.8.3.2 She pitches effectively for at least three innings. 14.30.8.3.3 She enters or re-enters the game to pitch with the potential tying run on base, at bat or on-deck.

Note: Not more than one save may be credited in a game

31. Tiebreaker Rule

14.31.1 A run scored by the player starting as a base runner at second base shall be charged to the "defensive team" and not the pitcher. Whether a run scored by any other player shall be charged to the pitcher is up to the judgment of the official scorer.

14.31.2 If action by a subsequent batter, such as a fielder's choice, causes the tiebreaker runner to be put out, the first run scored that inning may be charged to the "defensive team." (Example: If a batter-runner reaches first base safely on a fielder's choice as a result of a first-to-third putout, this new runner still is charged to the "defensive team.")

14.31.3 If the tiebreaker runner at second base is put out without action by the batter (for example, caught stealing, picked off or leaving the base early), then no run scored in that half-inning is charged to the "defensive team."

Notes:

1. *A run charged to the "defensive team" is neither earned nor unearned because there is no actual person to whom the run is to be charged. It is technically impossible for the "defensive team" to have an earned-run average because the "defensive team" will always have zero innings pitched.*

2. *In the statistical pitching summary for a game using the tiebreaker rule, "defensive team" is listed as a pitcher. The only statistic recorded for "defensive team" is total runs allowed. The total runs allowed by a team may exceed the sum total of earned and unearned runs. The box score will not prove as it normally does since there is usually an extra base runner left on base for each inning in which the rule is in effect.*

3. *The respective pitchers of record receive the win and loss.*

4. *See Rule 6.15 for an explanation of the tiebreaker rule.*

32. Cumulative Performance Records

14.32.1 A consecutive-at-bat hitting streak continues with a hit or if all the plate appearances result in a base on balls, hit batter, obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly ends a streak even though it is not counted as an official at-bat.

14.32.2 A consecutive-games hitting streak continues without a hit when all plate appearances result in either a base on balls, hit batter, obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly, as well as no other hit, ends the streak.

14.32.3 A consecutive-games playing streak continues by playing one half of an inning on defense (three outs) or by completing one turn at bat. Pinch running does not continue the streak.

14.32.4 If a player is ejected from a game before an official at-bat and before meeting any of the above requirements, a streak continues.

14.32.5 For purposes of a streak, all performances in the completion of a halted game are considered as occurring on the date when the game officially began.

33. Called, Forfeited and Protested Games

14.33.1 Called Game. If a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is called, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game ends (as specified in Rule 6.16) shall be recorded. If the scoring in an in-

complete inning has no bearing on which team wins the contest, include all individual and team statistics. If a called game is a tie, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

14.33.2 Forfeited Game. When a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is forfeited, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game is forfeited shall be recorded. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault. Exception: If the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score shall stand and be credited as played.

If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall be designated. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or the score is tied at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, no statistics shall be recorded. Refer to the NCAA Statistics Policies as listed on NCAA.org for more information concerning statistics from forfeited games.

14.33.3 Protested Game. When a protest is ruled valid but the game is not replayed to conclusion, it shall be declared "No contest." The record of all individual and team actions shall be recorded; however, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

SYMBOL	DEFINITION		SYMBOL	DEFINITION
A	assist		L	loss
AB	at-bat		LE	left early
BA	batting average		LOB/ left	left on base
BB	base on balls (walk)		OB	obstruction (defensive)
BF	batters faced		O	outs made (offense)
BIP	balls in play		PA	plate appearance
BT	bases touched		PB	passed ball
CG	complete games pitched		PKO	pick-off
CS	caught stealing		PO	putout
DP	double play		R	run scored
E	error		RBI	run batted in
ER	earned runs		SB	stolen base
ERA	earned-run average		SBA	stolen base attempt
GP	games played		SAC/SH	sacrifice
GS	games started		SF	sacrifice fly
GWRBI	game-winning run batted in		SHO	shutout
H	base hit		SO	strikeout
HBP	hit by pitch		SV	save
HR	home run		TB	total bases on safe hits
IBB	intentional base on balls		TO	throw out
ILP	illegal pitches thrown		TOA	throw-out attempt
INT	interference (offensive)		TP	triple play
IP	innings pitched		W	win
K	strikeout (swinging)		2B	double
	strikeout (called)		3B	triple

34. Proving the Box Score

To prove a box score, the total of the team's plate appearances (times at bat, bases on balls, hit batters, sacrifice hits, sacrifice flies and batters awarded first base because of interference or obstruction) and the international tiebreaker runner must equal the total of the team's runs, players left on base and the opposing team's putouts.

TABLE OF SYMBOLS

RULE 15

Umpires

Note: Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 15 shall not be grounds for protest.

1. Apparel and Equipment

15.1.1 The umpiring crew shall be dressed alike.

15.1.1.1 The standard uniform *is detailed in the NPF Umpire's Manual.*

15.1.1.3 All umpires must wear the same color shirt, but individual umpires may wear a short- or long-sleeve shirt.

15.1.1.4 All umpires must wear the same color and style (with the same trim) jackets, but individual umpires may choose to not wear a jacket.

1. A 3-by-2-inch patch of the American flag may be sewn with its bottom edge on the hem of the uniform shirt's left sleeve.

15.1.2 The plate umpire shall wear a black mask with natural or black padding. 15.1.3 It is required that the umpiring crew has a current NCAA Softball Rules Book accessible during the competition.

15.1.4 It is strongly recommended that all umpires wear appropriate protective equipment.

2. Duties

Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team personnel to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce prescribed penalties. The umpires are approved officials of the institution or conference by which they have been assigned to a particular game and are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpires shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is general information for umpires:

15.2.1 All umpires shall adhere to the policies, procedures and umpire mechanics as outlined in the current Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) Softball Umpire Manual.

15.2.2 It is strongly recommended that the umpires not be affiliated with a team or its institution.

15.2.3 The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and should report to the site at least 45 minutes ahead of time, start the game at the designated time and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when he/she arrives on the field and reports to the on-site administrator or host coach, and it ends when he/she leaves the confines of the field after the game.

15.2.4 The umpires should introduce themselves to the coaches and other appropriate games management personnel, including the on-site administrator.

15.2.5 The umpires shall inspect the playing field and equipment.

15.2.6 At the pregame meeting, the plate umpire shall clarify all ground rules for the representatives of each team.

15.2.7 Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension of play.

15.2.8 No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his or her respective duties as outlined in these rules.

15.2.9 An umpire should, but is not required to, consult his or her associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it is to make the decision and who requests the opinion of the other umpire(s).

15.2.10 In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes shall be designated as the plate umpire, while the umpire(s) whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions shall be designated as the base umpire(s).

15.2.11 The plate umpire and base umpire(s) shall have equal authority to:

15.2.11.1 Call delayed dead ball for a base runner out for leaving a base too soon;

15.2.11.2 Suspend play;

15.2.11.3 Warn or eject a player, coach or other team personnel; and

15.2.11.4 Call illegal pitches and declare an infield fly.

15.2.12 The umpire shall declare the batter or runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases in which such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire shall not render a decision on:

15.2.12.1 Participation by an improper player (that is, batter out of order, player who is listed inaccurately on the lineup card, unreported/ misreported substitute and illegal player). (See Rule 8.3 and Appendix B for effect.)

15.2.12.2 Missing a base. (See Rule 12.22 for effect.)

15.2.12.3 Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (See Rules 12.27 and 12.28 for effect.)

15.2.12.4 Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base. (See Rule 12.16.1 for effect.)

15.2.12.5 Switching base runners on occupied bases. (See Rule 12.5.3 for effect.)

15.2.13 The umpire shall vocalize calls (for example, "Play," "Infield fly," "Early," and "Illegal pitch") loud enough for nearby players and coaches to hear. Failure of players and coaches to hear the call shall not void the call.

15.2.14 The umpire shall not impose an effect on a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the effect would be an advantage to the offending team.

15.2.15 The umpires are empowered to rectify any situation in which a delayed call or a reversal of a call on a live ball places a player in undue jeopardy or prevents her/them from making the appropriate play. See Rule 15.9.3.

Note: Once a batted ball is declared foul or a live ball declared dead, the call cannot be reversed even to correct an apparent mistake.

A.R. 15.2.15: With base runners on first and second bases, the batter bloop a pitch into short center field. The center fielder dives, and as she catches the ball on her shoe tops, the base umpire calls the batter out. Immediately, the center fielder hits the ground, and the ball rolls out of her glove, causing the umpire to reverse the call, declaring no catch. Both base runners returned to their bases on the out call and are now in undue jeopardy of being out on the force plays. **RULING:** The umpire shall award the base(s) as deemed appropriate.

15.2.16 The umpire shall use his/her authority to protect the well-being of the participants by granting warm-up pitches, fielding and/or throwing to players after an injury, in inclement weather, or as deemed appropriate.

3. Plate Umpire

The plate umpire shall:

15.3.1 Have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.

15.3.2 Have the authority to ensure the pace of the game is acceptable and take action to address a situation that could create an unnecessary delay or interrupt the flow of the game. This includes consideration to grant a timeout request by the offense or defense.

15.3.3 Conform with the prescribed mechanics of, and render base decisions as indicated in, the CCA Softball Umpires' Manual.

15.3.4 Have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.

15.3.5 Call and count all balls and strikes and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes.

15.3.6 By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire(s), rule on plays regarding fair/foul balls and catches, apply the applicable effects for rules violations and administer all option plays. On plays that necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield in a two-umpire system, the plate umpire will assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.

15.3.6.1 If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help regarding a checked swing, the plate umpire must ask for help. If anyone else (on either offense or defense) asks for help, the umpire may (but not shall) ask the base umpire for help.

15.3.7 Determine and declare whether:

15.3.7.1 A batter is out when, with two strikes, a batted ball is bunted foul;

15.3.7.2 A batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter; and

15.3.8 Call or indicate "Play ball" to start the game or resume play, "Time" to temporarily suspend play, and "Game" to terminate play for a regulation game.

15.3.9 Document and announce each substitution to the opposing coaches, official scorer and public-address announcer, if applicable.

15.3.10 Have the lights turned on when necessary. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.

15.3.11 Be the final judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play should inclement weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game. The on-site administrator shall keep the umpire crew informed of relevant weather changes. (See Appendix G for Safety Guidelines.)

15.3.12 For the second game of a doubleheader, the plate umpire from the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of a second game of a doubleheader.

15.3.13 Penalize rule infractions, such as illegal pitch, interference, delay of the game, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsportsmanlike conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher.

15.3.14 Conduct the pregame meeting with the opposing coaches before the scheduled starting time.

15.3.15 Assume all duties when circumstances warrant starting or finishing a game as a single umpire.

15.3.16 Document all conferences, warnings, incidents and protests.

4. Base Umpire(s)

The base umpire(s) shall:

15.4.1 Assist the plate umpire in administering the rules of the game.

15.4.2 Conform to the prescribed mechanics of, and render base decisions as indicated in, the CCA Softball Umpires' Manual.

15.4.3 On a decision regarding a pick-off attempt, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with his or her partner.

5. Change of Umpires

Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless incapacitated by injury or illness.

6. Pregame Responsibilities

Before the start of each game (even of successive games or a doubleheader), the umpires shall:

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

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

15.6.3 Acquire the 12 game balls and determine whether they meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play.

15.6.4 Have balls available to replenish the supply of game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:

15.6.4.1 A ball has been hit out of the playing field.

15.6.4.2 A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play.

15.6.4.3 The pitcher requests a different ball.

Note: The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

7. Pregame Meeting

The plate umpire shall conduct the pregame meeting per Rule 5.7.

8. Procedures at End of Game

15.8.1 At the completion of the game, the umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play or protest. Once the umpire crew has exited the field, an appeal or protest cannot be considered.

15.8.2 The plate umpire shall return the game balls to the appropriate game management staff or coach and leave the field together escorted by the on-site administrator.

15.8.3 After the game, the plate umpire shall report any flagrant conduct or irregularity associated with the game to the on-site administrator (if applicable) and complete all necessary documentation for the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor (using Appendix E).

9. Umpire's Judgment

15.9.1 Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed, but is never subject to protest (see Rule 7.2.2). Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with his or her associate(s) before taking any action, but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules. Exceptions: 1) On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the catcher, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball; and 2) On a decision regarding a pick-off, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with his/her associate(s).

15.9.2 Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.

15.9.3 The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire on a live ball places a batter, batter-runner, a base runner or the defensive team in jeopardy or prevents her/them from making the appropriate play. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

Note: Once a batted ball is declared foul or a live ball declared dead, the call cannot be reversed even to correct an apparent mistake.

10. Suspension of Play

15.10.1 An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations: 15.10.1.1 When, in his or her judgment, conditions justify halting the game.

15.10.1.1.1 Play should be suspended at the end of the half inning whenever possible (for example, as darkness approaches and there are no game lights, as an impending storm approaches or as field conditions begin to deteriorate).

15.10.1.1.2 Play should be suspended immediately without regard to timing within the inning when spectator or par-

participant safety is compromised (for example, in the event of lightning detected within the danger zone, serious injury to a participant or if players' footing or grip on the bat or ball is obviously compromised).

15.10.1.2 As noted in the Safety Guidelines in Appendix G (information provided by the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports regarding concussions, lightning and extreme cold).

15.10.1.3 When he/she leaves his or her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.

15.10.1.4 When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.

15.10.2 An umpire shall not temporarily suspend play in the following situations: 15.10.2.1 While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.

15.10.2.2 After the pitcher has started her delivery.

15.10.2.3 In case of injury until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at her base. Exception: When necessary to protect a player with a significant injury, the umpire may suspend play immediately and before resumption, award a base or bases that offensive players would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had play not been suspended.

15.10.2.4 At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed.

11. Umpire's Responsibility for a Protest

Umpires are responsible for attempting to resolve a protest on site, but in the event the result remains unsatisfactory to the protesting coach, the crew shall follow the protocols in Rule 7.2.5.1 for in-season competition and in Rule 7.2.6.1 for competition in the postseason.

12. Umpire's Responsibility for an Appeal

Once the appeal is made to the umpire responsible for the play, that umpire will make the proper call.

13. Umpire's Responsibility for a Forfeited Game

The umpire crew must concur in order to declare a game forfeited. If the umpire crew declares the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (see Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours after the game. The institution's director of athletics and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

14. Umpire's Responsibility for Ejections

Each umpire has the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game.

15.14.1 For ejections for administrative rule violations, unsporting acts, behavioral or verbal misconduct, see Rule 13.2.1.

15.14.2 For ejections tied to suspensions, the plate umpire is responsible for immediately notifying the appropriate head coach and the on-site administrator that the reason for the ejection is Rule 13.3 or Rule 13.4. If institutional video is available and requested, the umpire crew may review it after the game to determine participants in a fight or those who left team areas to join a brawl.

15.14.3 In all cases involving an ejection of an NCAA player or team representative, the ejecting umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (see Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the game.