# FASTPITCH

## RULE BOOK & BY-LAWS

17TH EDITION

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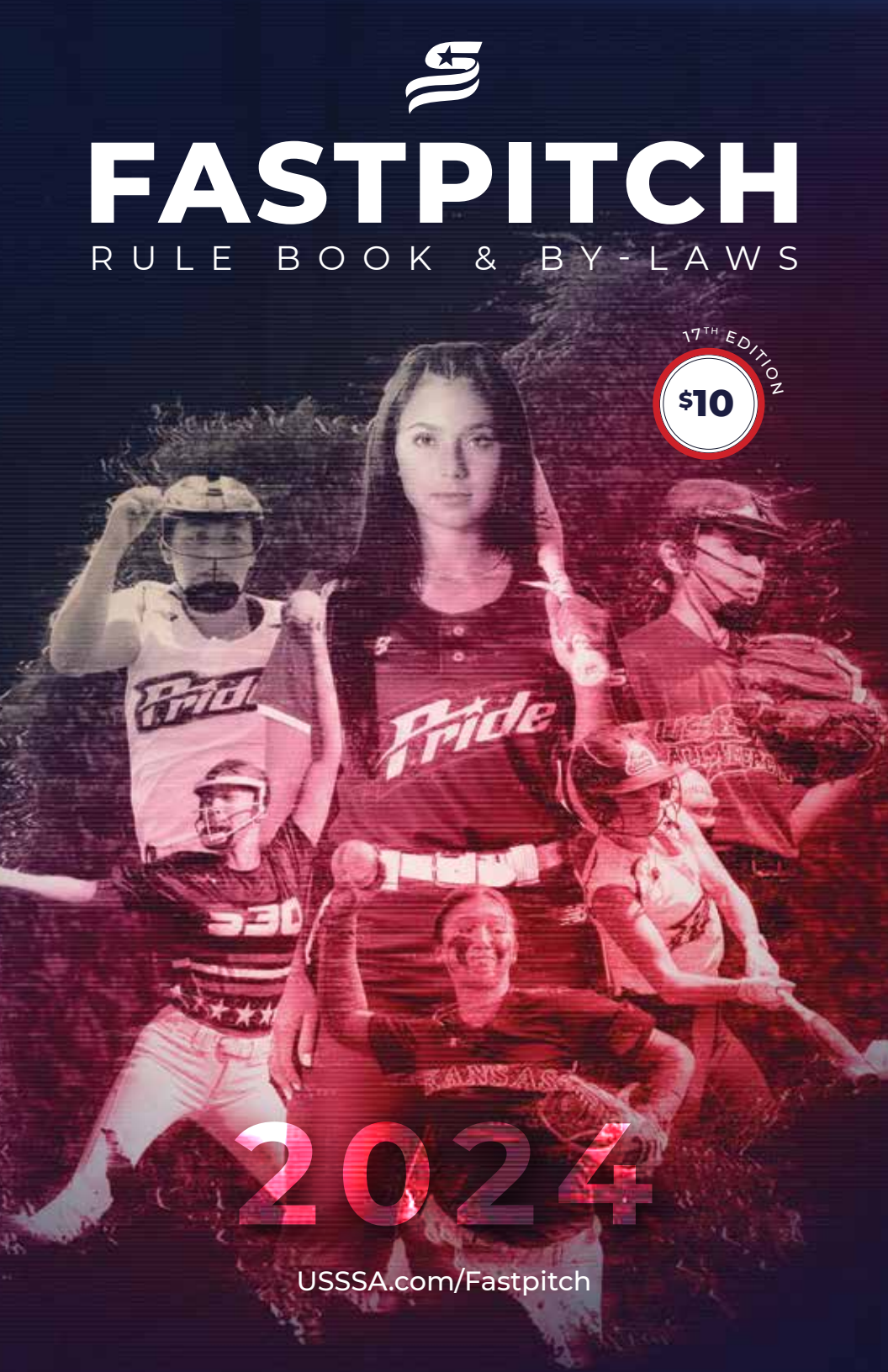


USSSA.com/Fastpitch

# FASTPITCH PROGRAMS

# *OFFICIAL FASTPITCH PLAYING RULES and BY-LAWS*

## *Seventeenth Edition*

**(Printed 1-2024)**


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# USSSA FASTPITCH RULES & BY-LAWS SEVENTEENTH EDITION

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# DIVISIONS AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

**Sec 1.** **THE YOUTH FASTPITCH PROGRAM WILL BE DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING DIVISIONS**. A player's age on December 31, of the previous sanction year (which ends on an August date immediately after the second full weekend in August to be specifically determined annually) determines the age classification in which the player is eligible to participate. For example, a player who turns 11 on December 30th, 2022 must play 11U or older in the USSSA 2023 event year which will begin on August 17, 2022.

Any player 17, or who reaches their 17th birthday, or who graduates from High School in the calendar year of the current World Series, shall be eligible to participate in the Adult Open World Series Tournament.

**Age Divisions Offered**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Boys or Girls 6 & Under | Boys or Girls 7 & Under | Boys or Girls 8 & Under |
| Boys or Girls 9 & Under | Boys or Girls 10 & Under | Boys or Girls 11 & Under |
| Boys or Girls 12 & Under | Boys or Girls 13 & Under | Boys or Girls 14 & Under |
| Boys or Girls 15 & Under | Boys or Girls 16 & Under | |
| Male or Female 18 & Under | Female 18 & Under Major | Male or Female Open |

**Sec 2.** The Fastpitch program is designed for both boys and girls however, the boys program shall be entirely separate from the girls program.

**Sec 3.** The fastpitch season and team registration will run from a date immediately following the second full weekend in August (to be specifically determined annually) until a corresponding August date the following year. Tournaments and leagues played after the season end date will qualify teams for the following season's State and World Series Tournaments. All teams playing between the season start date and December 31 must play by the following the USSSA playing year's eligibility classifications.

**Sec 4.** **Restrictions**

- **A.** Players can play in a higher division, subject to minimum age requirements for each division, but cannot play in a lower division for which they are not age eligible according to the criteria in Section 1. Exception: This does not apply to the Adult Open Division; a player cannot play up in this division unless they meet the criteria in Section 1.
- **B.** A player shall not compete in any sanctioned tournament of the association with more than one team during the same tournament.
- **C.** Team and player eligibility rules not specifically covered above shall be referred to the USSSA Fastpitch National Committee only. The National Committee shall have a policy and procedures manual or information data to be used by State and /or Area directors.

## Changes in the Seventeenth Edition

# 2024 RULES CHANGES

**RULE 6 PITCHING,** Sec 1.E.3, page 35 Clarifies that the pitcher's pivot foot may not bear weight again until release of the pitch

**RULE 8 BASE RUNNING,** Sec 18.O, page 52 Expands the rule to include any fielder who has a play on a batted ball

**RULE 8 BASE RUNNING,** Sec 18.Z, page 53 Expands the rule to prohibit unauthorized runner assistance during any playing action (including advances on dead-ball awards)

**RULE 17 COACH PITCH AND MACHINE PITCH RULES,** Number 7 Creates a division-specific courtesy runner rule for the catcher only

**RULE 17 COACH PITCH AND MACHINE PITCH RULES,** Number 11 Requires base runners to return to the base occupied at the time of pitch on ALL non-batted balls

# 2024 BY-LAW CHANGES

**ARTICLE III – TEAM ELIGIBILITY,** Sec 2, page 81 Expands definition of teams in the program

**ARTICLE IV – INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY,** Sec 4.2, page 81 Mandates online approval of State Director-authorized roster additions

**ARTICLE V – STATE AND INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS,** Sec 4, page 83 Defines final placement criteria for tournaments utilizing multiple brackets of unequal stature

**ARTICLE V – STATE AND INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS,** Sec 6, page 83 Mandates use of the online system for entering final results and placements

**ARTICLE VI – USSSA WORLD SERIES TOURNAMENTS,** Sec 2.B, page 84 Classifies the assignment of home and visitor in World Series events

**ARTICLE VI – USSSA WORLD SERIES TOURNAMENTS,** Sec 2.E.1a), page 85 Stipulates winning percentage is to be used in determination of final placement for uncompleted events

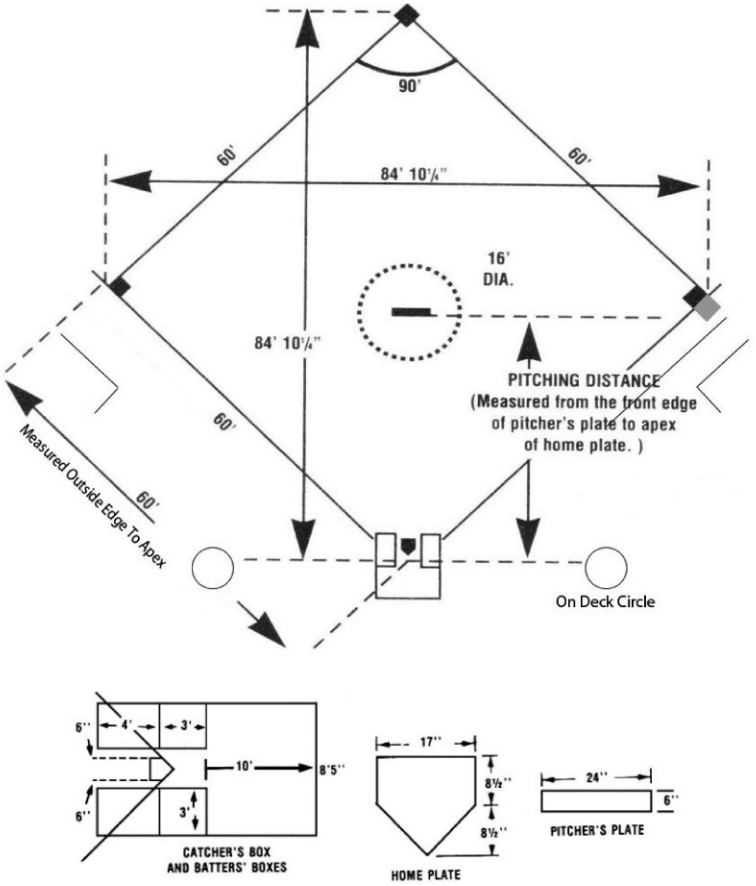
# USSSA Official Fastpitch Playing Rules
# SEVENTEENTH EDITION

USSSA's On-Line Fastpitch Rule Book is located at: www.USSSA.com
The On-Line Rule Book Supersedes the Printed Edition
There are no other rule books that govern USSSA Fastpitch.

## RULE 1. PLAYING FIELD

The Fastpitch Field Diagram

Base and Pitching Measurement – 60' bases



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

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

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

**Sec 2.** The **softball field** shall contain a 60-foot square infield diamond and an outfield area that may or may not be enclosed by a fence. All lines on the playing field shall be marked with a material, which is not injurious to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited. The catcher's box, bases, coach's boxes, batter's boxes and three foot first base line shall be as in the "The Field Diagram". The infield and outfield, including the boundary marks from the apex of home plate to 1st and 3rd, and their extended foul lines, are fair ground. All other areas are foul grounds. The recommended width of all marked (chalked) lines on the playing field is 2 1/2 inch.

**A.** **Home Plate** shall be a 5 sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable similar material. The sides shall be 8 ½ inches long, the edge facing the pitcher shall be 17 inches wide and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The sides facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long and on the foul lines.

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

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

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

**E.** The **batter's box** shall be 7 feet long. The front of the batter's box shall be 4 feet forward from the center of home plate and 3 feet wide starting 6 inches from the plate.

**F.** **Catcher's Box** shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's box and 8 feet, 5 inches wide..

**G.** **Three foot running lane** is a line drawn 3 feet from and parallel to the first base foul line starting halfway between home and first base and extending to first base.

**H.** **Pitcher's Circle** shall be a circle which is 16 feet in diameter (8-ft. radius) drawn from the mid-point of the front edge of the pitcher's plate.

**I.** **Coach's Boxes** shall be 8 feet from the foul lines, and 15 feet long from the back edge of the first and third base extending toward home plate and 3 feet wide.

**J.** **On-deck circles** shall be circular, 2 ½ foot radius, a safe distance to the side and away from home plate; at least 30 feet if space allows. Neither team's players shall warm up in the other team's on-deck circle. The on-deck circle does not have to be occupied, but if a player wishes to warm up, they shall do so in their team's on-deck circle.

## RULE 2. EQUIPMENT

**Sec 1. BATTING HELMET**

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

All fastpitch batting helmets shall be equipped with a NOCSAE-approved face protector. The phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture" must be permanently affixed to the face protector.

If an eye shield is worn attached to the batting helmet, it must be constructed of a molded rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

A chinstrap is optional.

In the **Adult program**, NOCSAE approved helmets are required. An attached face mask/guard is highly recommended. If an eye shield is worn attached to the batting helmet, it must be constructed of a molded rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

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

**Sec 2. CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT**

In the **Youth program**, the catcher shall wear a NOCSAE approved head protector (with dual earflaps), an approved mask with throat protector, a body chest protector and shin guards. If a hockey style NOCSAE approved catcher's helmet is used, a separate throat protector is not needed. A male catcher or any male player warming up a pitcher shall wear an approved protective cup.
In the **Adult program**, the catcher shall wear a mask with throat protector. All protective equipment must conform to industry standards.
Any non-adult warming up a pitcher within the confines of the playing, field shall wear an approved protective mask with throat protector. In all divisions, if an eye shield is worn attached to the catcher's helmet, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

**Sec 3. THE BALL**

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

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

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

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

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

All 10 year old and younger divisions shall use the 11-inch softball. All other programs shall use the 12-inch softball.
Altered Balls and the potential of a ball being altered and those suspected of altering, owning or using an altered ball (or determined to have altered, owned

or used an Altered Ball) shall be viewed as falling under the same rules in place for Altered bats.

**Sec 4. SHOES**

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

**A.** **(Youth 12U** and younger**)** The sole may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats. Shoe sole or heel protectors other than the standard shoe plate are prohibited.
In all divisions 12 and Under and younger, metal cleats and metal toe plates are prohibited.
**PENALTY:** In divisions which do not allow metal cleats and toe plates, a player who participates with metal cleats or toe plates where prohibited is subject to penalties as per Rule 11 Sportsmanship. Metal cleats and toe plates must be removed prior to continuing play.

**B.** (**Adult or13U** and older ) The sole may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal cleats. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

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

Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire as dangerous, is not permitted and must be removed. Medical alert items are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body so medical alert information remains visible.

Flat, unadorned items with no sharp edges or points, such as bobby pins, barrettes, and hair clips (no longer than 2 inches) may be worn as hair control devices.

Coaches wristbands (play indicators) are legal but must be worn as designed.

Violations are penalized per Rule 11 - Sporting Behavior.

**Sec 6. PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT**

Equipment such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, etc., is prohibited.
**EXCEPTION:** See ADA protocol on Page 75.
Casts, splints and braces may be worn, if padded.
Any equipment deemed distracting or dangerous by the Tournament Director or Umpire shall be prohibited.

**Sec 7. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

As a general rule, USSSA continues its long standing policy of permitting players to determine the use of the protective equipment when they deem it appropriate. USSSA encourages players to utilize any protective equipment that they deem appropriate. Such protective equipment will be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, unless by rule or by Director/Umpire ruling such protective equipment is disallowed as unsafe or as providing an unfair

competitive advantage. If used, the equipment must not be detached. Detached equipment can result in an obstruction or interference ruling. Repeated acts could be grounds for ejection.

Defensive face masks – While the use of defensive face masks is optional, if they are worn, they must meet the transparency requirements applicable to batting and catching helmets. If an eye shield is attached, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 per cent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

**Sec 8. UNIFORMS**

At all national and world qualifying tournaments, teams must wear identical uniforms. This includes jerseys, long pants or shorts and leggings. Whether long pants or shorts are worn, all team members must be uniformed alike.

**NOTE:** Tournament directors may, on an individual basis, permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons, inclement weather, etc.

Players shall wear uniforms properly and as designed by the manufacturer.

**A.** Caps are optional, however when worn they must be all alike and worn with the Bill forward. Caps, visors and headbands may be mixed. If worn, a headband must be one piece, and a single solid color. Plastic visors and bandannas are prohibited

**B.** Any exposed undergarment becomes part of the uniform and must be solid color. All exposed undershirts must be the same color. All exposed undershorts (sliders) must be the same color.

**C.** Non duplicating numbers will be required at all national and World Series qualifying tournaments. 0 and 00, 1 and 01 are examples of different numbers. The numbers must be minimum of three inches in size and clearly visible.

**D.** Coaches must be neatly attired. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.

**Sec 9. GLOVES/MITTS**

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

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

**B.** The glove/mitt may be any combination of colors except the color of the game ball or optic. Glove lacing may be any color other than that of the ball. The manufacturer's logos are not considered a glove color. A gray, white or optic colored circle on the outside or inside of the glove/mitt that gives the appearance of a ball is illegal. A glove/mitt that is judged to be distracting by the Umpire is illegal.

**C.** The glove/mitt worn by all fielders except the catcher shall conform to the following maximum specifications:

**1.** Height measured from the bottom edge or heel straight up across the center of the palm to a line even with the highest point of the glove/mitt: 14 inches

2. Width of palm measured from the bottom edge of the webbing farthest from the thumb in a horizontal line to the outside of the little finger edge of the glove/mitt: 8 inches
3. Webbing measured across the top end or along any line parallel to the top: 5 3/4 inches.

**Sec. 10. THE OFFICIAL BAT** shall be round in cross section, straight in length and measure not more than 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat, shall have a knob at the end of its handle, and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. Its weight shall not exceed 31-ounces, including tape or grip addition to the bat. The bat shall have a grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter's swing. The grip shall be not less than 10 inches long for 32"-34" long bats and not less than 8" long for smaller bats, nor extend to touch the taper or barrel of the bat. All key graphics, including USSSA and BPF markings, must be permanent and cannot be applied as decals or by any other method that would allow the key graphics to be easily removed or added to the bat.

**A. Material.** THE BAT may be made of hard wood of one piece, or laminated from sections of hard wood bonded together with adhesive in such a way that the grain directions of all the pieces are essentially parallel to the length of the bat. THE BAT may also be made of aluminum or other metals, fiberglass, graphite or composite materials.

**B. Construction.** The bat may be made in pieces from different materials but must have a closed barrel end, a taper, a handle and a taper. The bat may be modular with interchangeable parts, subject to additional safety and tampering requirements as set forth in the standard USSSA Bat Licensing Agreement. The knob portion must be welded or mechanically attached to the bat. Only USSSA approved bats, USSSA approved weighted bats or USSSA approved bat weight attachments, may be used by the on deck batter while loosening up on the field.

**C. Official Softball.** Authorized bat manufacturers shall mark their products with the words "Official Softball". For wood bats only, authorized bat manufacturers may mark their products with the word "Softball".

**D. Other Criteria for Legal USSSA Bats**.

1. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF test as applied under the standard USSSA Bat License Agreement. Only bats made by those bat manufacturers listed on the USSSA website as USSSA Licensed Softball Bat Manufacturers and that have the new 2020 USSSA Fastpitch Only Certification Mark OR the previous 2014 USSSA Certification Mark (pictured below) on the taper of the bat will be legal in USSSA sanctioned play. Wood bats, however, that are made by USSSA Licensed Softball Bat Manufacturer will be legal in USSSA sanctioned play without any 1.20 BPF mark being required

**2014 USSSA Certification Mark**

**2020 USSSA Certification Mark**

Any bat on the USSSA Withdrawn And/Or Non-Compliant List shall be an illegal bat.

**2.** Any addition to the handle or knob area of a bat is altering the bat if and only if it adds any length to the bat or adds more than half an ounce of weight to the bat. Tournament Directors at the request of USSSA National Office may, however, allow for up to an inch increase in length and up to an ounce increase in weight for an addition to the knob area that is placed on bats in a tournament for the purpose of gathering swing/batted ball data (such as bat speed) for USSSA National Office, provided that the Tournament Director insures that the addition is securely added to the knob and will not create any significant safety concern.

**E. Altered Bat Director Inspection and Suspension.** A USSSA Director may at any time ask to inspect a bat that has been brought into the location of a USSSA sanctioned event or any other USSSA facility. The owner and/or user may either:

**1.** Withhold the bat from inspection and accept an immediate two year (automatic life for second time offenders under EI and/or E) suspension from USSSA sanctioned activities with no right to appeal; or,

**2.** Allow the Director to inspect the bat and reach a conclusion as to whether or not the bat might be altered.

**EI. Altered Bat Determination by Altered Bat Committee Chairman or Manufacturer.** If, after making the inspection of a potential altered bat, the Director in their discretion decides that the bat might be an altered bat, the suspected offending owner and/or user and may either:

**1.** Withhold the bat from further examination by the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman or Manufacturer of the bat and accept an immediate two year (up to life for second time offenders under sections E and/or EI) suspension from USSSA sanctioned activities with no right to appeal; or

**2.** Allow the Director to send the bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman and/or Manufacturer of the bat for a determination as to whether or not the bat is altered. If the Manufacturer or the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman determines that the bat has been altered, the Altered Bat Committee Chairman in consultation with the Director who inspected the bat at the USSSA facility may suspend a first time offender for up to five (5) years from USSSA play. For a second time offender under E and/or EI, any such suspension will be for life.

F. **Ownership and Knowledge of Bat Being Altered.** The responsibility for knowing whether a bat is altered is that of the users and the owner of the bat. If an individual uses an altered bat in USSSA sanctioned play or is the owner of an altered bat that is brought into a USSSA facility, the suspensions under this Rule 2, Section 10 will be imposed without regard to what the individual actually knew about the altered bat. An individual must know that their bat is not an altered bat, if they bring it into a USSSA facility or used it in a USSSA sanctioned activity. If not, the individual can be suspended from USSSA activities for using or owning an altered bat. The fact that the individual did not know that the bat was altered is not a factor in imposing the suspension. The only question is whether the bat is altered or whether the owner/user has refused to let the bat be examined to determine if it is altered. After the Director, Altered Bat Committee and Manufacturer examination of a bat to determine if it is altered have all been completed, or upon the decision of the owner/user to not allow further inspection of the bat under E or EI, above, the bat shall be returned to the owner. If no one claims to be the owner, USSSA shall retain the bat. Once the bat has been returned to the owner, no appeal can be made with respect to whether the bat is altered or not.

G. **Investigation Cooperation.** Any coach, manager, player or other person who fails to cooperate in the investigation by USSSA of a potential or actual altered bat shall be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct suspension. A manager or coach of a team that has more than one of their team's bats determined to be altered (or not allowed to be inspected upon request for an altered bat inspection under E and/or EI, above) shall be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct suspension.

H. **Awards and Coach Suspensions** If an owner/user chooses to submit a suspected altered bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee or the Manufacturer no awards will be given to the team until the bat is determined not to be altered. If the bat is found to be altered, no awards or berth will be given and the team will be placed last in the standings and the listed manager and coaches may be suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct.

I. **Participation in, Profits from, or Encouraging the Altering of USSSA Marked Bats.** Anyone who participates in, profits from, or encourages the altering of USSSA marked bats shall be suspended indefinitely from all USSSA activities, until the offending party has satisfied all requests of the Altered Bat Committee with respect to their altered bat activities including but not limited to publicly swearing under penalties of perjury to never again participate in, profit from, or encourage the altering of USSSA marked bats. Violation of such an oath shall result in permanent suspension from all USSSA activities.

J. **Compression Testing**. Failure of a USSSA approved compression testing device test shall result in the offending bat being removed from play for the duration of the tournament or league game, not longer without the

permission of the owner/user—such as in the case of an allowed USSSA altered bat determination under section EI. Multiple failures of such USSSA compression testing may in the discretion of USSSA be viewed as unsportsmanlike conduct of the owner/user, coaches, manager and team.

**K. Custom Bats.** No approved manufacturer may make a custom USSSA bat for a player or a team. All USSSA marked bats made by a USSSA approved manufacturer must be available to the public for purchase. Individualized graphics (such as a team name, different color, player name or number only changes for a team or player), however, do not constitute custom bats for purposes of this section K.

**L. Worn/Abused/Damaged/Foreign Substance Bats Not Allowed in USSSA Sanctioned Play.**

**1.** No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if it is damaged in any way. Damaged bats include those with damage to the knob or end cap, those which have loose knobs or end caps, and those with cracks or dents in the bat material. The bat 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 rattles and burrs. For example, if the end cap is in any way loose or appears damaged, the bat should be removed from play for being a damaged bat. If an end plug has come out or the knob has come off, the only way that such bat is legal in USSSA play, is if the knob or end cap is replaced by the manufacturer. Replacement by anyone else results in an altered bat with potential suspension for the owner/user of the bat.

**2.** No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if any of the graphics of the bat have worn off. For example, even if the only graphics that have worn off are not Key Graphic Information and are only items such as the patent no., a manufacturer logo, or the approval mark of another association, the bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

**3.** No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if the paint has been worn through and the actual bat material is showing. For example, if at the end of the barrel next to the taper where there are no graphics the bat paint is worn off and the underlying bat material is exposed, that bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

**4.** No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if there is a foreign substance on the barrel or taper of a baseball or softball bat. Foreign substances included among other substances, pine tar, stick-em type products and even dirt or mud, but only if the substance adds to the thickness of the barrel or covers Key Graphic Information such as the USSSA 1.20 BPF mark, the serial number of the bat, the model or manufacturer name, official softball, etc.. Players are responsible for their equipment and must clean such substances off of their bats so that the substance does not add to the thickness of the bat or obscure any Key Graphics Information about the bat. For example, while

bats will surely get dirt on them under normal use and may have pine tar added to the grip, if the dirt or pine tar obscures Key Graphic Information or adds to the thickness of the bat, such bats cannot be used in USSSA play until the dirt or pine tar has been removed to the extent necessary to make all such Key Graphic Information readable and the bat not have increased thickness. If Key Graphic Information about a bat cannot be read, the bat should not be used in USSSA play.

**5.** If any removed bat under these section L rules is brought back into play at any USSSA sanctioned event at any time, the owner and user of such bat may be suspended for up to one year for unsporting behavior. And if the foreign substance or the wear/abuse/damage is apparent enough that the batter should have been aware of it, the batter may be so suspended for bringing such a bat into the batter's box without having been warned in advance. Players are responsible for their equipment and must not use equipment that is even potentially illegal for use in USSSA sanctioned play.

**6.** In addition to the player being suspended for unsporting behavior, coaches of youth teams may also be so suspended when their players attempt to bat with such bats. Also, coaches of adult teams which have multiple offenses under this rule may also be so suspended for failing to have their team follow USSSA equipment rules. Please be reminded that unsporting behavior can result in a game or tournament suspension in the discretion of the Umpire or tournament director and up to a year suspension in the discretion of the state director.

**M. Youth Player Altered Bats**. The parents or legal guardians of a youth player suspended under section E and/or EI shall be suspended for life from all USSSA sanctioned activities. As such, even after their suspension has ended under E and/or EI, the player can not participate in USSSA sanctioned activities until the player is 18 years old. In addition to any other penalties under this Rule 2, Section 10, any coach or manager of a youth team that has more than one suspension imposed under sections E and/or EI. will be suspended from all USSSA activities for life.

**Sec 11. BAT WARMERS**

Bat Warmers approved by USSSA are permitted.

**Sec 12. WARM-UP BAT**

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

Only USSSA approved bats, USSSA approved weighted bats, or USSSA approved bat weight attachments may be used in loosening up. Nothing such as a donut or fan may be used when loosening up.

## RULE 3. DEFINITIONS

**ABSENT PLAYER.** The absent player is the position that is created in the batting order when a player is withdrawn and no substitutes are available to replace her. The absent player is also the ninth, unfilled position in the batting order when a team begins the game with only eight players. A team who has an absent player is playing short-handed.

**ALTERED BALL** is one which has had its physical structure changed in any way, including (but not limited to) balls that have been frozen, micro-waved, heated, melted, cooled, recovered, restictched, surface modified to be rougher or softer, etc.

**ALTERED BAT** is a bat that has had its physical structure changed, including, but not limited to:

1. The bat has had the surface of the barrel or the taper changed in any way such as by addition of graphics, painting, repainting, removal of bat material or paint by any means including but not limited to sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means.
2. The bat has had the plug or the knob removed/replaced or changed in any way.
3. The bat has had anything removed or added or inserted to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle or knob. Choke-up devices are not permitted. Other examples of altering a bat would be changing or replacing manufacturers' markings or replacing the handle of a bat with a new handle.. Replacing the grip, adding tape or adding a build up to the handle is not considered altering a bat. **NOTE:** Except when conforming to Rule 2 (Equipment).
4. The bat has been subjected to pressure in a manner that exceeds that of striking the bat at game speed swing speed against a USSSA approved ball traveling at game speeds. Such pressure would include, but is not limited to, compressing the bat, rolling the bat, vicing the bat or hitting the bat against an object such as a tree or pole. The bat has in any other way had its on field performance improved by physically changing the bat (other than by hitting the bat at game condition swing speeds against a USSSA approved ball traveling at game condition speeds).

**BALL.** The ball is one of the playing implements. The term is also used to designate a pitch, which is not touched by the bat and is not a strike.

**BASE LINE**. A base line is an imaginary direct line between the bases.

**BASE ON BALLS.** If a batter receives four balls, the batter is awarded a base on balls (often referred to as a "walk") and shall go immediately to first base before time-out can be called.

The defense may not notify the Umpire nor cause illegal pitch(es) to intentionally walk a batter. A team may intentionally walk a batter; however, they must throw four pitches. They cannot simply declare to put the batter on base nor can the pitcher commit repeated illegal pitches.

**BASE PATH.** A base path is a direct line between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag a runner.

**BAT, ILLEGAL**. An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements of Rule 2-10 (The Official Bat).

**BAT, NON-APPROVED.** A non-approved bat is a bat that does not bear the current USSSA 1.20 BPF "thumbprint" certification mark, or a bat that is listed on the USSSA Withdrawn/Non-Compliant Bat List. **EXCEPTION:** Wood bats per Rule 2-10-D.

**BATTED BALL**. A batted ball is any ball that comes in contact with the bat. It need not be intentional.

- **A.** A FLY BALL is a batted ball that rises to an appreciable height above the ground.
- **B.** A LINE DRIVE is a batted ball which travels parallel or nearly so with the ground through most of its flight.
- **C.** A GROUND BALL is one that is neither a fly nor a line drive.

**BATTER**. The offensive player whose turn it is to bat. The batter has completed their time at bat when they are put out or become a batter-runner.

**BATTER-RUNNER**. The batter-runner is a player who has finished their time at bat and has left the batter's box (both feet touching completely outside the box) but has not yet been put out or reached first base.

**BATTER'S BOX**. The batter's box is the area including the lines in which the batter is positioned while at bat.

**BATTING ORDER**. The batting order is the official listing of offensive players by first and last name, in the order in which they are to bat. Uniform number and defensive position shall be listed on the lineup sheet.

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

**BUNT**. A bunt is a legally batted ball, which occurs when the batter does not swing to hit the ball, but holds the bat in the path of the ball to tap it slowly to the infield

**BUNT, ATTEMPTED**. An attempted bunt ("offer") is any movement of the bat toward the ball when the ball is over or near the plate area. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempt to bunt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be pulled back away from the ball. If an attempted bunt results in a foul ball, it is treated as any other foul ball, if the batter has two strikes and this happens, the batter is out.

**BUNT, DRAG**. A drag bunt is a bunt where the batter attempts to bunt the ball by running forward in the batter box, carrying the bat with her. The movement of the bat is in conjunction with the batter's forward movement.

**CATCH**. A catch is the act of a fielder getting secure possession in a hand or glove of a live ball in flight and firmly holding it.

- **A.** In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of it and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.
  - **1.** If a player drops the ball after reaching into the glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.
  - **2.** It is considered a catch if a fielder catches the ball before leaving live-ball area by stepping or falling into a bench, dugout, stand, bleacher or over any boundary or barrier, such as a fence, rope, chalk line, or a pre-game determined imaginary boundary line of the field of play. Falling into does not include merely running against such object.
  - **3.** A fielder who is out of play may come back to live ball territory and make a valid play.
  - **4.** A collapsible fence is considered in play.
- **B.** A Catch shall not be credited when
  - **1.** The fielder traps the ball.
  - **2.** A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or properly worn glove. A cap, protector, mask, pocket or other part of the uniform may not be used to catch the ball. A ball prevented from hitting the ground by a player's equipment (providing it is in its proper place) or body shall not be ruled caught until the ball is securely held in the player's hand(s) or glove/mitt.
  - **3.** The fielder uses any equipment or part of their uniform that is displaced from its proper position to play on a batted ball.
  - **4.** A fielder is out of play while:
    - **a.** One foot is entirely touching out of play. **NOTE:** an out of play line is in play.
    - **b.** Any other part of the body is touching out of play.
    - **c.** In the air after being out of play.
  - **5.** The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground beyond the original plane of the home-run fence when they contact the ball.
  - **6.** The ball strikes anything or anyone other than another defensive player while it is in flight even though it is then caught by a defensive player.
  - **7.** Immediately after a catch, the fielder collides with another player, Umpire or fence, or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.

**CATCHER'S BOX**. The catcher's box is area in which the catcher must remain from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. The catcher's body and equipment are considered within the box unless touching the ground outside the box.

**COACH'S BOX**. The coach's box is the area to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted prior to release of the pitch.

**CONFERENCE, CHARGED**. A charged conference takes place when a coach or bench personnel requests time-out to meet with offensive or defensive personnel.

**CONFERENCE, PRE-GAME**. A pre-game conference is a meeting involving the Umpires and the coaches near home plate. Team captains may also attend.

**CONFINES OF THE PLAYING FIELD.** The confines of the playing field includes the field of play, the designated dugout/bench area, and any enclosed or clearly marked area that is designated as a warmup area that is adjacent to the field and within the view of the umpire(s).

**CROW HOP**. A crow hop is the act in which the pitcher's pivot foot leaves the pitcher's plate and replants prior to delivery of the pitch.

**DEAD BALL**. It is a dead ball when the ball is not in play. The ball is not considered in play again until the pitcher is in possession of the ball and is stationed within the 16-foot circle and the Plate Umpire calls "Play Ball."

**DEAD-BALL AREA**. The dead-ball area is beyond any real boundary, such as a fence, rope, chalk line, any stands, bleachers, dugouts, players' bench or designated media area; or any imaginary boundary line as determined in the pregame conference. If a ball becomes lodged in a fence or backstop, it is considered to be in dead-ball area.

**DESIGNATED PLAYER (DP).** The Primary Role of the DP is to play offense (bats/runs) for the FLEX. The DP may play defense at any position.

**DUGOUT**. An out-of-play area reserved for rostered players, coaches, and official representatives of the team only.

**EJECTED**. A player or coach removed from the game by the Umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct. A flagrant act will require the coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. Any ejected player or coach discovered participating in the game would constitute a forfeit.

**FAIR BALL**. A fair ball is a batted ball which:

- **A.** Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or home and third base;
- **B.** Is on or over fair territory including any part of first and third base when bounding to the outfield.
- **C.** Touches first, second or third bases.
- **D.** While on or over fair territory touches the person of any Umpire or player or their clothing or equipment except the batter in the batter's box.

**E.** While over fair territory passes out of the playing field in flight.
**F.** First falls or is touched on or over fair territory beyond first or third base.
**G.** While over fair territory, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.

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

**FAIR TERRITORY**. Fair territory is that part of the playing field within, and including, the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards.

**FIELDER**. A fielder is any player of the team in the field.

**FLEX**. The Primary Role of the FLEX is to play defense only which can be at any defensive position. The FLEX player is placed in the FLEX position, a non-batting position listed last in the lineup. The FLEX may remain in the FLEX position for the entire game, or may assume the DP's position in the batting order and play offense (bat/run).

**FORCE PLAY**. A force play is a play on the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner who loses the right to the base occupied and is forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner.
For a given runner, a force play ends as soon as batter-runner reaches first base or any other runner reaches the next base or a following runner is put out. When a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base they last occupied, the force play is reinstated.

**FORFEIT**. A forfeited game is one awarded to the opponent of the offending team. The score shall be recorded in accordance with Rule 4-7-B.

**FOUL BALL**. A foul ball is a batted ball which:

**A.** Settles or is touched on or over foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base.
**B.** Bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory.
**C.** First falls on foul territory beyond first or third base.
**D.** While on or over foul territory touches the person of an Umpire, a player or any object foreign to the natural ground or contacts the batter in the batter's box.
**E.** Is in foul territory when a base runner in foul territory interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.
**F.** Touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand(s) a second time while the batter is still within the batter's box.

**FOUL TERRITORY**. Foul territory is that part of the playing field outside the foul lines and perpendicularly upwards.

**FOUL TIP**. A foul tip is a batted ball, which goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's mitt or hand and is legally caught by the catcher. The ball remains live. **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.

**GAME.**

- **A.** A **regulation game** is seven innings (term at bat) unless extra inning(s) are necessary because of a tie score, or unless shortened because the home team does not require its half of the seventh inning or only a fraction of it, or because of weather or darkness.
- **B.** A **called game** is one that is ended by order of the Umpire.
- **C.** A **suspended game** is a game to be completed at a later time.

**ILLEGAL PLAYER**. A player who takes a position in the lineup, either on offense or defense, who does not have a legal right to the position.

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

Examples of an ineligible player but not limited to are:

1. Playing under an assumed name.
2. Players not on the team roster.
3. Violating divisional age requirements.

**IN FLIGHT**. A batted or thrown ball is in flight until it has touched the ground or some object on fair or foul ground, or it has touched a person other than a fielder.

**INFIELD**. The infield is that portion of the field in fair territory that is normally skinned and covered by infielders.

**INFIELD FLY.** An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (rule does not preclude outfielders from being allowed to make the catch); and provided the hit is made before two are out and at a time when first and second base or all bases are occupied.

**INFIELDER**. An infielder is a fielder who defends the skinned area of the field around first, second, third or shortstop areas. They usually are the first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, pitcher and catcher.

**INITIAL PLAY**. A fielder is considered to be making an initial play on a fair batted ball, a ball which could become fair or a foul fly ball when the fielder has a reasonable chance to gain control of a ground ball that no other fielder (except the pitcher) has touched or a reasonable chance to catch the ball in flight after it touches another fielder. The fielder is still considered to be making an initial play if the fielder fails to gain control of the batted ground ball and is within a step and a reach (in any direction) of the spot of the initial play.

**INNING**

**A.** An **inning** is that portion of the game, which includes a time at bat for each team.

**B.** A **half inning** is the interval during which one team is on offense (batting) and the other is on defense (fielding). A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning, the winning run is scored. In either case, if there is a delayed out declared by the Umpire for a base running infraction, a possible fourth out may be recognized for the inning, depending on the circumstances.

A new half inning begins immediately after the end of the previous half inning.

**C.** An **extra inning** is one, which extends the game beyond regulation play in an attempt to break a tie score.

**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 be playable.

**A.** **Offensive interference** is interference (physical or verbal) by the team at bat, or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline; or when a coach physically assists a runner during playing action.

**B.** **Umpire interference** is when the Umpire, inadvertently moves so as to hinder a catcher's attempt to throw or when a fair, untouched ball touches an Umpire before the closest infielder has a reasonable opportunity to field the ball.

**C.** **Spectator interference** is any action by a spectator, which impedes the progress of the game.

**LEAP**. A leap is when both feet are airborne

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

**A.** It is **catcher obstruction** when a catcher hinders or prevents a batter from swinging at a pitch.

**B.** A **fake tag** is an act by a defensive player that simulates an attempt to tag a runner. Faking a tag is considered obstruction.

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

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

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

**OUTFIELDER**. An outfielder is a fielder who defends the outfield.

**PASSED BALL**. A passed ball is a pitch which the catcher fails to stop or control with ordinary effort and which enables a runner to advance.

**PIVOT FOOT**. The pitcher's pivot foot is that foot which is in contact with the ground, as opposed to the non-pivot foot, which the pitcher uses to step toward home plate.

**PLAY BALL**. Play ball is the term used by the Plate Umpire to indicate that play shall start and shall not be declared until all defensive players are in fair territory except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box, and all runners are properly on base.

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

**RESTRICTED TO THE BENCH**. A player or coach who has been confined to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game. It is generally as a result of an infraction of a playing rule (not an unsportsmanlike act or conduct).

**RUNNER**. A runner is an offensive player who has reached first base and has not yet been put out.

**SACRIFICE**. A sacrifice is a bunt which enables any runner to advance, or a fly ball which enables a runner to score; but, in either case, results in the batter-runner being put out before reaching first base or would have resulted in the batter-runner being put out if the hit had been fielded without error and provided two were not out when the ball was hit. A sacrifice is not listed as a "time-at-bat."

**SHORT-HANDED.** Short-handed refers to a team's status when batting:

- **A.** fewer batters than listed on the original lineup card presented at the pregame conference, or
- **B.** less than 9 batters.

**SLAP HIT**. A slap hit occurs when the batter gives the appearance of bunting, using a modified swing or slap at the ball as it approaches home plate. If an attempt to "SLAP" is a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball including an attempt by the batter with two strikes.

**SLIDE**. A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, the runner shall be within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot when the slide is completed.
A slide is illegal if:

- **A.** The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder.
- **B.** The runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position.
- **C.** The runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder.
- **D.** The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg.
- **E.** The runner tries to injure the fielder.

**OVER SLIDE**. An over slide is the act of an offensive player when, as a runner, over slides a base the player is attempting to reach. It is usually caused when the player's momentum causes the player to lose contact with the base leaving the player in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over slide first base without being in jeopardy.

**STARTING PLAYER**. A starting player is one of the first nine, ten, eleven or twelve (if using the optional DP/FLEX and/or APs) listed on the lineup card that is approved by the Plate Umpire. If a team uses Roster Batting, all players listed are considered starting players.

**STRIKE ZONE**. The strike zone is that space over home plate, which is between the batter's forward armpit and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. Any part of the ball passing through the strike zone in flight shall be considered a strike; the Umpire shall determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance

**STRIKEOUT**. A strikeout is the result of the pitcher getting a third strike charged to a batter. In Fastpitch, this usually results in the batter being out. Anytime first base is unoccupied, or there are two outs, and the third strike is not caught before the ball touches the ground, the batter-runner is entitled to advance. *See exception in 10 & Under and Younger Section*.

**SUBSTITUTE**. Any member of a team's roster who is not listed as a starting player; any player who re-enters the game; the DP when the DP plays defense for the FLEX; or the FLEX when the FLEX plays offense for the DP.

**TAG OUT**. A tag out is the putting out of a runner (including the batter-runner), who is not touching a base, by touching the runner with a live ball or with the glove or hand when the live ball is securely held therein by a fielder. The ball is not considered as having been held securely if it is juggled or dropped after the touching unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand of the fielder.

**THROW**. A throw is the act of voluntarily losing possession through having the ball leave the hand for a purpose other than a pitch. It may result in the ball being bounced, handed, rolled, tossed or thrown.

**THROW OUT**. A throw out is a putout caused by a throw to first base to retire a batter-runner, or to any other base to which a runner is forced or is required to retouch

**TIME**. "Time" is the command of the Umpire to suspend play. The ball becomes dead when it is given.

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

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

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

## RULE 4. THE GAME

**Sec 1. FITNESS of GROUNDS**

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

**Sec 2. RUN SCORES**

**A.** A runner scores one run each time the runner legally touches first, second, third bases and home plate or a runner starting at second in a tiebreaker inning touches third and home.

**B.** On a game-ending out-of- the park home run, ground-rule double, or awarded bases for overthrows into dead ball territory or detached player equipment, all runs shall score as if the game were to continue. In these cases, the winning margin may be more than one run. **EXCEPTION:** it is not possible for the winning margin to exceed the RUN RULE limits imposed in Rule 4-4.

**C.** Runs scored would not count:

**1.** When the third out is a force out.

**2.** When the third out is a batted ball in flight that is caught or prevented from being caught by interference.

**3.** If a base running infraction were the third out, runs scored by the following runner(s) would not count

**4.** When a runner crosses home plate after a preceding runner is declared the third out for a base running infraction.

**5.** With two outs, if the base missed were the first to which the batter or runner was forced to advance, no runs would score.

**Sec 3. TIME LIMITS**

Tournament Directors and League Officials may establish time limits such that a game will consist of seven (7) innings or the amount of time specified, whichever comes first. No new inning will begin once the time limit has expired. Any inning which has been started prior to the time limit expiring will be completed.
The time begins when the pre-game conference ends and the home team is allowed to take the field. A new inning begins as soon as the third out is recorded in the previous inning.
If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.
In the Youth Program, the recommended time limit is 1 hour and 30 minute.

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

completed innings or 3 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead, 8 runs lead after 5 completed innings or 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

**Sec 5. TIEBREAKER**

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

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

If the wrong player is placed on second base, the correct runner should be inserted immediately even if a pitch has been thrown, or the runner has advanced a base. All play made while the incorrect runner was on base stands. It is the responsibility of the Umpire and scorekeeper to notify the teams involved as to which player starts the half inning at second base.

**Sec 6. REGULATION GAME**

**A.** A game ends when the team behind in score has completed its turn at bat in the seventh inning, in any extra inning, or the time limit has expired. If the home team scores a go ahead run in the bottom of the seventh inning, in any extra inning or the time limit has expired the game is terminated at that point. **NOTE:** See Rule 4-2-B for runs scoring on dead-ball awards in "walk-off" situations.

**B.** If a game is suspended and later resumed, it will be continued from the point of suspension, with the lineup and batting order of each team exactly the same as at the point of suspension.

**C.** If a game ends because of weather conditions and the Tournament Director feels that the possibility of resuming the game is not likely, it is then a regulation game provided:

**1.** Three full innings have been played; or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in two or two and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in their three-inning turn.

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

**Sec 7. FORFEITED GAME**

**A.** A game shall be forfeited to the offended team by the Tournament Director when a team:

**1.** Is late in appearing or in beginning play after the Umpire calls "Play Ball."

2. Refuses to continue play after the game has started.
3. Delays more than one minute in resuming play after the Umpire calls "Play ball" or in obeying the Umpire's order to remove a player for violation of the rules.
4. Persists in tactics designed to delay or shorten the game.
5. Willfully and persistently violates any one of the rules after being warned by the Umpire.
6. Can not provide the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game.

**B.** Score of a forfeited game is 7 to 0 unless the game is forfeited after the number of innings required for a regulation game and the offending team is behind, then the score remains as recorded. If the offending team is leading, the score shall be 7 to 0. All individual and team averages shall be included in the official records, except that no pitcher shall be credited with a victory or charged with a loss in such a game if it is not a regulation game.

**Sec 8. CHARGED CONFERENCE**

**A. Defense -** Each team when on defense, may be granted not more than three charged conferences without penalty during a seven-inning game to permit coaches or their representatives from the bench to confer with a defensive player or players. In any extra inning game, each team shall be permitted one charged conference without penalty each inning while on defense. The number of charged conferences is not cumulative. A coach, player, substitute or an attendant may make a request for time for a conference. This defensive team charged conference is effective when the ball first becomes live at the start of each half inning.

**PENALTY:** After three charged conferences in a seven inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one in each extra inning, the pitcher shall be removed as a pitcher for the duration of the game.

**B. Offense:** Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of that team's personnel to confer with the base runners, the batter, the ondeck batter or other offensive team personnel. The Umpire shall deny any subsequent offensive team request for charged conferences. This offensive team charged conference rule is effective when the ball first becomes live in each half inning.

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. **NOTE:** If either team is charged with a conference, base runners are no longer restricted to the vicinity of their bases.

**C.** Not charged

1. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference.

2. A conference is not charged when the pitcher is removed as a pitcher.
3. If a dugout representative confers with any player during a charged conference of the other team and is ready to play ball when the other team is ready.

**D. Pre-Game Conference -** The pre-game conference shall be conducted by the plate Umpire. At least one adult coach from each team must attend. The pre-game meeting should begin approximately five minutes prior to the game and before the home team takes the field. There shall be no ball hit or thrown in live ball territory during this meeting. The purpose of the pre-game conference is to

1. Exchange and check each team's lineup cards.
2. Discusses ground rules.
3. Identify the head coach
4. Have coaches verify that their players are legally and properly equipped.

## RULE 5. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

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

**A.** A team must have the required number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game.

**B.** The team's lineup card shall include first name, last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and should include each eligible substitute. First and last name of eligible player takes precedence over jersey number if there is a discrepancy on the lineup card. All listed starters must be present in the team area. Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the Plate Umpire during the pregame conference.

**C.** Eligible roster members may be added as substitutes at any time.

**D.** (Non-ELITE SELECT divisions): ROSTER BATTING OPTION
Teams may utilize additional APs to bat their entire roster (i.e., ALL players present; no DP/FLEX allowed) subject to the restrictions of Rules 5.2 and 5.3.
Under Roster Batting, player(s) arriving late shall be placed in the lineup in the following priority:

1. to fill any Absent Player (automatic out) position
2. if no Absent Player position exists, then the late arrival will be placed last in the batting order (i.e. - a team batting 13 will add the late arrival in the 14th batting position)

Roster Batting must be declared at the pregame conference, and all players physically present must be listed in the batting order. If a player is physically present but is unable to play because of injury or illness, that player shall be ineligible for the entire game if the team elects Roster Batting.

**Sec 2.** **SHORT-HANDED RULE:** Playing short-handed is an exception to Rule 5-1 above. A team shall be allowed to play with one batting position unfilled, provided they have a minimum of 8 batters present. The vacant batting position will be designated as the absent player. Whenever the absent player is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared. A team may play short-handed under the following circumstances:

**A.** A team may continue a game with one fewer batter than is listed in the starting batting order, whenever a player leaves the game (for any reason) and no substitutes are available. If a team falls below 8 batters, a forfeit shall be declared.

**1.** If the absent player is the batter or a runner, she shall be declared out. **EXCEPTION:** if the absent player was injured while a batter-runner or runner, the absent player may be replaced by the last completed at bat (LCAB) as defined in Rule 8-3-B, to fulfill her baserunning responsibility. However, this exception does not apply to any future at-bat.

**2.** An absent player may not return to the lineup. **EXCEPTION:** a player who left under the Blood Rule may re-enter, subject to Rule 5-6.

**B.** A team may begin the game short-handed. The absent player must be listed in the ninth (9th) batting position. Under no circumstances shall a team be allowed to have less than eight (8) players in the batting order.

**C.** The team may not play short-handed if an eligible substitute arrives. Upon arrival, she must be inserted in the absent player's position in the batting order.

(Non-ELITE SELECT divisions):
A team may drop more than 1 batting position (i.e., may have multiple absent players), provided the lineup is maintained with at least 8 batters physically present. All other restrictions above apply.
If a team has multiple absent players and an eligible substitute arrives, she must enter the game immediately in the first available absent player position due up in the batting order.

**Sec 3.** **ADDITIONAL PLAYER -** up to two Additional Players (APs) can be used to increase the batting order to 10 or 11 batters.
(Non-ELITE SELECT divisions) Teams may use additional APs to bat their entire roster, subject to the restrictions of Rules 5-2 and 5-3.
The AP(s) will be placed in the batting order in the positions to be occupied. The AP(s) can also be used on defense (only 9 defensive players in the field), but must keep the same position in the batting order. The AP(s), if used, must be selected prior to the start of the game, and their name(s) must be included on the lineup card presented to the Umpire. Failure to declare the use of the

AP(s) prior to the game precludes the use of the AP(s) in that game. If a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner is used for an AP, that player becomes the new AP. The original AP(s) may re-enter like any other player under the re-entry rule. If an AP is used, the position must be used the entire game.

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

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

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

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

**D.** The DP may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute or the FLEX player.
If the DP is replaced on offense by the FLEX player, the DP will leave the game. This reduces the number of players in the lineup by one. However the number of batters does not change.
If replaced by a substitute, both the DP position and FLEX position remain in the lineup.

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

**F.** The DP may play defense at any position.
The DP may play defense for a player other than the FLEX player. That player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game.
The DP may play defense for the FLEX player and the FLEX player is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players by eliminating the FLEX position in the lineup.

**G.** The FLEX player may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute and the FLEX position remains in the lineup. If the FLEX player is not playing defense, the non-batting FLEX position is eliminated and the FLEX player is out of the game. **EXCEPTION:** The FLEX may play offense-only (i.e., offense, but not defense) IF both these conditions are met:

**1.** The FLEX is properly inserted into the batting order in the DP's batting position, AND

**2.** The lineup is sufficient size (at least 1 AP) to field 9 players on defense without the FLEX's participation.

The FLEX can be re-established if the FLEX player re-enters or is substituted for.

**H.** The FLEX player may re-enter the game one time provided they return to the non-batting position or to the DP's position in the lineup.

1. If returning to the FLEX position, the FLEX player will play defense only for any player.
2. If returning to the DP position, the FLEX player will play offense and can play defense in any position. The FLEX position is suspended.

**I.** If the FLEX player re-enters or a substitute enters as the FLEX player and the DP was playing defense in the FLEX player's spot,
1. The DP can return to batting only, play defense for another player and the FLEX position is re-established or
2. The DP can leave the game if the FLEX plays offense for the DP.

**J.** Placing the FLEX player into one of the batting positions for someone other than the DP's position is considered an illegal player penalized per Rule 5-7.

**Sec 5.** **SUBSTITUTE** - A player who replaces a player that is in the game (offense or defense) is a substitute. Teams are required to immediately report all substitutions to the Plate Umpire. Upon notification by either team, the Umpire shall announce the legal substitute and make the appropriate lineup card changes. An unreported legal substitute brought to the Umpire's attention will result in a penalty, all prior play shall stand.
**PENALTY**: For unreported substitution,
First offense: A team warning is issued.
Second offense: The head coach is ejected for remainder of the game only.

The DP may go in and out of the game for any player (including the FLEX), at any defensive position, any time and any number of times without it counting as a substitution for anyone except the FLEX. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate Umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

The FLEX may go in and out of the DP's position in the batting order any time and any number of times. This action counts as a substitution for the DP. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate Umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

A player may be removed as a pitcher and returned as a pitcher once per inning, provided the return as a pitcher does not violate either the pitching, substitution, or charged conference rule.

**Sec 6.** **RE-ENTRY**: Any player may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever in the line-up. A violation results in a illegal substitution which is penalized per Rule 5-7-A. A substitute who is withdrawn may re-enter once.

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

**A.** Starter and/or substitute who re-enters in an incorrect batting position.

**B.** Starter and/or substitute who re-enters a second time.

**C.** Using a player to pitch who was removed from the pitching position because of Rule 4-8-A PENALTY.

**D.** Placing the FLEX player in one of the first 11 positions in the batting order for someone other than the DP.

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

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

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

**B.** If the illegal player is a baserunner and is still on base, the illegal player is called out.

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

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

**Sec 8. INELIGIBLE PLAYER** The penalty for using an ineligible player is a forfeit of a game in progress. For use of an ineligible player in a game previously completed, see Rule 13-5.

**Sec 9. INJURED PLAYER**

**A.** During a live ball situation, when a player becomes injured such that, in the Umpire's judgment, immediate attention is required, the Umpire shall call "DEAD BALL" and allow or seek first aid.
**EFFECT**: Award any bases that would have been reached in the Umpire's judgment.

**B.** A player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play that day until obtaining written medical clearance from a licensed medical doctor to return to play in accordance with the USSSA concussion policy (See page 78).

**Sec 10. BLOOD RULE**

A Player/Substitute, Manager, Coach, Trainer, Batboy or other Team member or Umpire who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until the bleeding is stopped and the wound covered.in accordance with USSSA's Communicable Disease Procedures Protocol (See page 77).

**A.** If treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game. The amount of time is determined by the Umpire's judgment.

**B.** If excessive time is involved, the re-entry rule would apply to players.

**C.** If there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform or if a bandage becomes blood soaked, in the judgment of the Umpire, the uniform/ bandage must be changed before the individual may participate.

## RULE 6. PITCHING

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

**A.** Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
The hands must be apart.
The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without possession of the ball, and the pitcher may not simulate pitching with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.

**B.** Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, with the hands separated.

**C.** While in this position, the pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.

**D.** After completing "C" above, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
**NOTE:** Before the pitch starts, the pitcher may remove them self from the pitching position by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet (either foot may be removed first) or by requesting time.

**E. The Pitch**:

**1.** The pitch begins and cannot be discontinued when the hands are separated once they have been placed together.

**2.** Any step back with the non-pivot foot must begin before the start of the pitch (6.1.E.1). Once the pitch has started (the hands separate), the pitcher shall take not more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery.
**EXCEPTION:** When removing self from the pitcher's position (6.1.D NOTE)
**NOTE:** "Toward" is interpreted as within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

**3.** The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate or be airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground. The pitcher may leap from the pitcher's plate, land with the non-pivot foot and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter. The pivot foot may follow through with the pitcher's continuous motion.

**NOTE 1**: It is not a step if the pitcher slides their pivot foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.
**NOTE 2:** The pitcher's push off to drag or leap must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate. Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.
**NOTE 3:** All movement of the pitching arm must be continuous as the pitcher steps, pushes or leaps from the pitcher's plate.

**F. A LEGAL DELIVERY** - shall be a pitched ball that is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

1. The release of the ball and the follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forward past the vertical line of the body.
2. The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.
3. The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or between the legs.
4. The pitch is completed with a step toward the batter.

**G. THE PITCHER MAY USE ANY WINDUP DESIRED PROVIDED**:

1. No motion to pitch is made without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
2. The pitcher does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in pitching position, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
3. The pitcher does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
4. The pitcher does not make more than one and one half revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the pitching arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip.
5. The pitcher does not continue to wind up after taking the forward step or after the ball is released.
   **NOTE:** Continuation of the windup is considered any action that, after the ball is released, causes the arm to continue to rotate past the shoulder.

**H.** The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thigh that the Umpire judges to be distracting. If a pitcher wears a batting helmet while on defense, the outer covering and shield shall be a non-glare surface.

**I.** Foreign Substance on the ball/Items on pitcher. The pitcher shall not at any time be allowed to use any moisture or foreign substance on the ball, the pitching hand or fingers nor do anything to deface the ball. A pitcher who licks their fingers must wipe the fingers off before bringing them in contact with the ball.

1. Under the supervision and control of the Umpire, the pitcher may use following items to dry the hand which is in contact with the ball: dirt (but not chalk), powdered resin, or an approved drying agent. When using these items, the pitcher is not required to wipe the hand prior to contacting the ball; when using any other substance, the pitcher must wipe the pitching hand prior to contacting the ball. No tacky or sticky substances can be used as a substitute for a powdered drying agent.
   No other player or team personnel shall apply moisture or a foreign substance to the ball nor do anything to deface the ball.
2. The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.

**EFFECT** Sec 1. A – I – Illegal Pitch

**J.** The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, bounce, etc, the ball while in the pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it.
**PENALTY:** The ball is dead at the end of playing action. The batter is awarded a ball which may be declined by the offensive coach. FIRST OFFENSE is a team warning. SECOND OFFENSE and any subsequent violation the offender is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game and their current head coach shall be ejected.

**K.** Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch or the Umpire says "play", the pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch.
**PENALTY**: Dead ball; a ball on the batter

**L.** At the beginning of an inning or when a pitcher relieves another pitcher, one minute may be used to deliver not more than five practice pitches (or throws) to the catcher, or some other teammate. For excessive warm-up pitches (or throws), a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. **EXCEPTION:** This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities.
A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half-inning shall not be allowed warm-up pitches.

**M.** If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the back swing or forward motion, a ball is called on the batter. In either case, the ball remains in play and runners may advance at their own risk.

**Sec 2. CATCHER and DEFENSIVE POSITIONING**

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

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

**EXCEPTION**: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter.

**C.** A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.
**EFFECT**: The offending player shall be ejected from the game.

**Sec 3 ILLEGAL PITCH**

An illegal pitch is a pitch that violates the pitching rule or is an effect for a rules violation. When an illegal pitch occurs, it shall be called immediately by the plate or base umpire.

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 nearby players to hear. Simultaneously, the Umpire gives the delayed dead-ball signal and waits to suspend play until the play has been completed. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

**A.** Effect: The pitch is declared a ball.

**B.** If the batter reaches first base safely and all other runners advance at least one base, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled. No option is given.

**C.** 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 has the option of taking the result of the play or accepting the effect for an illegal pitch.

**D.** If a batter is hit by an illegal pitch not swung at, the batter is awarded first base, and other base runners advance one base, only if forced.

**E.** If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and other base runners advance one base, only if forced.

**F.** The Umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to the coach if requested.

**Sec 4. NO PITCH** shall be declared when:

**A.** The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

**B.** A runner is called out for leaving a base too soon.

**C.** The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter is in position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch.

**D.** The pitcher pitches before a runner has retouched their base after being legitimately off that base.

**E.** A player, manager or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch. The Umpire shall penalize according to Rule 11-2-S governing Sporting Behavior..
**EFFECT**- A-E: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

# RULE 7. BATTING

**Sec 1.** **ON-DECK BATTER**.

**A.** The on-deck batter may take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest the offensive team bench. No player is permitted to warm up in the other team's on-deck circle.

**B.** The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two. Any detachable piece placed on the bat must be approved.

**C.** The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:

**1.** When the on-deck batter becomes the batter.

**2.** To direct runners advancing from third to home plate.

**D.** The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's opportunity to make an out.

**1.** If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.

**2.** If it is with the fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.

**NOTE:** When the interference is with a thrown ball, the ball is dead and the runner closest to home is declared out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of interference.

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

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

**Sec 4.** **BATTING POSITION**.

**A.** Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely in the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.

**B.** After the ball is in play, the batter may not step out of the batter's box to stop play unless time has been granted by the Umpire.
**EFFECT**: All action will continue and the pitch will be called.

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

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

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

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

**Sec 8.** **A batter shall not delay the game** by failing to promptly take their position in the batter's box within 10 seconds of the pitcher having the ball in the pitching circle, or by stepping out of the box when the pitcher is on the pitcher's plate.
**PENALTY**: If a pitcher is committed to delivering the pitch, the batter leaves the box at the risk of having a strike called while being out of position. For failure of the batter to be ready within 10 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the Umpire shall call a strike. If it is the third strike, the Umpire shall call time and declare the batter out.
**NOTE 1**: After entering the batter's box, the batter leaves it at the risk of being charged with delay. The batter may request time-out if the batter desires to step out for a valid reason and, if granted, the 10 seconds count will begin anew when the ball is declared live. The Umpire is authorized to refuse to grant time-out if the batter repeatedly causes delay or if their leaving the batter's box appears to be an attempt to worry the pitcher or to gain some other advantage.
**NOTE 2**: If the pitcher stops or hesitates in their delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box or holding up their hand to request time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. However, if the batter steps out of the box or holds up their hand to request time and the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a strike and the ball remains live. If a pitch is not delivered, a rule has been violated by both the batter and the pitcher. The Umpire shall call time, declare, "no-pitch" and begin play again. If the Umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the Umpire shall penalize according to Rule 11-2-S governing Sporting Behavior..

**Sec 9.** **A batter shall not hit the ball fair or foul** while either foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or while touching the plate.
**PENALTY**: The ball becomes dead immediately. The batter is out.

**Sec 10.** **A batter shall not disconcert the pitcher** by stepping out of the box on one side of home plate to the box on the other side while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.
**PENALTY**: The ball becomes dead immediately. The batter is out.

**Sec 11.** A batter shall not intentionally move to get hit by the pitch.
**PENALTY**: The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike), unless the pitch was a third strike or ball four.

**Sec 12.** **A batter shall not interfere** with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate, by stepping out of the batter's box, by making any other movement which hinders action at home or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when there is a throw to home and there is time for the batter to move away.
**PENALTY**: Dead ball; the batter is out.

**Sec 13.** If the bat breaks and is hit by the ball or hits a runner or a fielder, no interference will be called. If a whole bat is thrown and interferes with a defensive player attempting a play, interference shall be called.
**PENALTY**: The batter is out and runners return. If, in the Umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two may be declared out (the batter throwing the bat and the runner closest to home).

**Sec 14.** A batter shall be called out when:

**A.** The batter enters the box with an illegal bat, or has completed their turn at bat using that bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
**EFFECT**: The ball is dead immediately. On a batted ball, any runners not put out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. Base runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch, or passed ball stand. The bat shall be removed from the team's possession. When the illegal bat is an altered or non-approved bat, the batter and head coach are also ejected. For all other illegal bats: First Offense, Team Warning; Subsequent Offense, Player Restricted to the Dugout and the Coach is Ejected.
**NOTE**: There is no violation if a bat is damaged or shatters during an at-bat due to bat-ball contact which occurs after the batter enters the box. However, the damaged bat shall be removed from the team's possession upon discovery.

**B.** A third strike is caught before the ball touches the ground.

**C.** A bunt on a third strike is foul.

**D.** A third strike (in flight) is not caught, provided a runner occupies first base at the time of the pitch and there are less than two outs.
**NOTE**: If there are two outs or if no runner occupies first base, the batter is not out unless the third strike is caught. The batter is entitled to try to reach first base before being tagged out or thrown out.

**E.** If a team is playing short per Rule 5-2 and the absent player's turn to bat is reached.

**F.** After hitting or bunting a ball, the bat hits the ball a second time while the ball is on or over fair territory, or is on or over foul territory and, in the Umpire's judgment, had a chance to become a fair ball, the ball is dead, no runner(s) advance and the batter is out.
**EXCEPTION**: If the bat and ball accidentally come in contact with each other a second time while the batter is holding the bat in the batter's box, it is a foul ball.
**NOTE**: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the Umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is live and in play.

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

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

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

**PENALTY**: In A, C and F-I, the ball is dead and the batter is declared out. Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
**EXCEPTION:** In A, base runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch, or passed ball stand.

## RULE 8. BASE RUNNING

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

**Sec 2.** **The LOOK-BACK RULE** is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball (e.g. has the ball in their hand, glove, under arm or chin, between their legs) within the 16-foot circle.
Any runner(s) in motion may continue without stopping or may stop once. Any runner who is stopped or stops their motion must immediately move directly back to the last base touched or attempt to advance to the next base. Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, they may not move off that base.
A batter-runner who overruns first and does not without delay attempt to advance to second is committed to return to first and stop.
The runner, off base, may not stand motionless.
There does not need to be any motion or recognition by the pitcher.
Failure of the runner to respond as indicated shall cause the Umpire to signal the runner out. The ball shall be declared dead.
If the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the 16-foot circle, the pitcher makes an attempt on any of the runners or a fake throw is made, this rule does not apply.
Being in the 16-foot circle is defined as both feet within or partially within the line. The feet may touch the line and extend outside the line. When the pitcher

is in the pitcher's circle and a runner(s) is off the base, the pitcher is considered to be playing on the runner(s) when the throwing arm is raised or any forward movement of the body is made toward the runner. Movement of the head is not considered an attempted play.
**EFFECT**: The ball becomes dead immediately. The runner is out.

**Sec 3. COURTESY RUNNER**

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

**B.** Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are not entitled to serve as a courtesy runner (i.e., the courtesy runner must be an unused substitute).

(Non-ELITE SELECT divisions): if, and only if, no eligible substitute is available, then, and only then, the Last Completed at Bat (LCAB) may serve as a courtesy runner, subject to all other applicable restrictions (cannot run for both positions in the same inning, etc).

**NOTE:** If an eligible substitute is physically present but is unable to courtesy run because of injury or illness, that player shall be ineligible for the entire game if the team utilizes the LCAB courtesy runner option.

The LCAB courtesy runner is determined at the time the courtesy runner is requested, skipping batters

**1.** currently on base,
**2.** who are the pitcher or catcher of record, or
**3.** who have already courtesy run for the other position in the same inning.

v In the first inning, if no eligible substitutes are available to courtesy run, the LCAB courtesy runner shall be the person furthest away in the batting order (i.e., the LCAB courtesy runner for the lead off batter is the last batter listed in the lineup).
**PENALTY**: If an ineligible or incorrect courtesy runner is utilized and is discovered while still on base, the courtesy runner shall be called out and a team warning issued. On the second offense, the head coach is ejected for the remainder of the game only. The ineligible or incorrect courtesy runner is liable for discovery once they physically replace the pitcher/catcher on the occupied base, and the ball becomes live.

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

**D.** A player may not run as a courtesy runner and be used as a substitute for another player in that half inning.
**EXCEPTION**: If there is an injury and there is no substitute available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute and take the place of

the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base, the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in their place.

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

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

**G.** In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed as the pitcher and catcher; both must face at least the first batter on defense (one pitch). Thereafter, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense. The pitcher or catcher must reach base legally by any means other than substitution in order to be eligible for a courtesy runner.
**EXCEPTION:** When an injury or disqualification occurs in the top of the first inning to the pitcher/catcher identified on the lineup card and she is unable to face the first batter in the bottom of the first inning, the player who ran for her is retroactively her substitute (unless the substitute was an LCAB courtesy runner), no longer a courtesy runner. All substitution rules apply, but the pitcher/catcher has left the game and may not return to the original pitching/catching position.

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

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

**A.** Hitting a fair ball.
**NOTE**: Batter becomes a runner when entitled to run.

**B.** Charged with a third strike.
**NOTE**: if a third strike is caught before the ball touches the ground, the batter is out an instant after becoming a runner.
*See exception in Rule 15-8-4-B for 8U and Younger Divisions*.

**C.** A fourth ball is called by the Umpire.

**D.** A pitched ball, legal or illegal, hits the batter's person or clothing.
**EFFECT**: The ball is dead immediately.
**EXCEPTIONS**:

**1.** If the batter swings or the ball enters the strike zone, or the batter prevents the ball from entering the strike zone, a strike is called, and if it is the third strike, the batter is out.

**2.** If the batter intentionally moves to get hit by the pitch, it is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch.

**NOTE**:

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

**2.** It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.

**3.** The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.

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

**E.** The catcher or any infielder obstructs her. Obstruction on the batter is a delayed dead ball. The coach or captain of the team at bat, after being informed by the Plate Umpire of the obstruction, shall indicate to the Umpire whether they elect to accept the result of the play or to accept the penalty of awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced. Such election shall be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal) or before the infielders leave the diamond. Obstruction of the batter (before the batter has become a batter-runner) is ignored if the batter-runner reaches first and all other runners advance at least one base.
**NOTE 1:** Any runner attempting to advance (i.e., steal or squeeze) on a catcher's or any infielder's obstruction of the batter shall be awarded the base the runner is attempting. If a runner is not attempting to advance on the catcher's obstruction, the runner shall not be entitled to the next base, unless forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.
**NOTE 2:** If obstruction is enforced, all other runners on the play will return to the base occupied at time of the pitch unless forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.
**NOTE 3:** If the obstruction penalty is not enforced, all other runners advance at their own risk.

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

**A.** A fourth ball is called.

**B.** Hit by a pitched ball as provided in Rule 8-4-D.

**C.** The catcher or any infielder obstructs him.

**D.** A fair ball, other than an infield fly, becomes dead and provided a preceding runner or retired runner does not interfere in such a way as to prevent an obvious double play.

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

**E.** Hit by a thrown ball while legally advancing which incapacitates the batter-runner prior to reaching first base unless interference is ruled.

**Sec 6.** Touching bases in legal order

**A.** An advancing runner shall touch first, second, third and then home plate in order.

**B.** A returning runner shall retouch the bases in reverse order. When an uncaught foul ball causes the ball to become dead, the runner need not touch intervening bases.

**C.** Any runner who misses a base while advancing may not return to touch the missed base if a following runner has scored.
**NOTE**: Any runner who misses the first base to which they are advancing and who is later called out shall be considered as having advanced one base.

**D.** When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched the base for purposes of awarded bases.

**E.** When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base out of position.

**F.** A runner shall not run bases in reverse order either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.
**EFFECT**: The ball is dead and the runner is out.

**G.** Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.
**EFFECT**: The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.

**H.** Failure of a PRECEDING runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball, and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a SUCCEEDING runner who touches bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no SUCCEEDING runner may score a run.

**I.** No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left too soon after a following runner has scored or once the runner leaves the field of play.

**J.** Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.

**K.** Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.

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

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

**B.** On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.

**C.** On a thrown ball that hits an Umpire.

**D.** If a batted ball (fair or foul other than a foul tip) is caught, the initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch.

**E.** If a fair ball strikes an Umpire or a runner after having passed an infielder other than the pitcher, and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or when a fair batted ball has been touched by an infielder, including the pitcher, and the runner did not intentionally interfere with the batted ball or the fielder attempting to field the batted ball.

**EFFECT-** Section 7: The ball is in play.

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

**A.** with the ball in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base.

**B.** after overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.

**C.** after dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.

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

**Sec 10**. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over slides may immediately return without liability of being put out, provided they do not feint or attempt to advance to second.
**NOTE 1:** When a walk or uncaught third strike occurs in which the batter is entitled to run, it is treated the same as a batted ball. The batter-runner may continue past first base and is entitled to run toward second base as long as they do not stop at first base, if the pitcher has possession of the ball in the 16-foot circle. If the runner stops after rounding first base, the runner must comply with the Look Back Rule (Rule 8-2).
**NOTE 2:** A player who is awarded first base on a base on balls may continue on down the first base line after touching first base and immediately return without liability of being put out, if there is no feint or attempt to advance to second. They may also round first base and go directly to second base without stopping. If the runner does stop, the runner must comply with the Look Back Rule (Rule 8-2).

**Sec 11.** **A runner acquires the right** to the proper unoccupied base if the runner touches it before being put out. The runner is then entitled to this base until being put out, or until legally touching the next base while it is unoccupied or until a following runner is forced to advance to the base occupied.

**Sec 12.** **Each runner shall touch their base** after the ball becomes dead. All awarded bases must be touched in their proper order. The runner returns to the base they had reached or passed when the ball became dead. In the event of interference, a runner returns to the base they had legally reached at the time of the interference. If the interference does not cause the batter to be out and any other runner cannot return to the base last legally occupied at the time of the interference, they are advanced to the next base.
**EXCEPTION**: The runner returns to the base occupied at the time of the pitch if their advance was during an uncaught foul.

**Sec 13.** **When a runner is obstructed** while advancing or returning to a base, by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting an initial play on a batted ball, it shall be a delayed dead-ball. Obstruction shall not be enforced when the batter flies out for the third out, or when the batter-runner is obstructed between two bases when she flies out.
**EFFECT**: If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base that would have been reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is declared and the Umpire shall award the obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached, in the Umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.

**A.** If the obstructed runner advances beyond the base the runner would have reached, in the Umpire's judgment, the delayed dead ball is terminated and the runner advances with liability to be put out.

**B.** If any preceding runner is forced to advance by the awarding of a base or bases to an obstructed runner, the Umpire shall award this preceding runner the necessary base or bases.

**C.** The penalty for faking a tag is obstruction.

**D.** An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where the runner was obstructed except as follows:

**1.** The obstructed runner obtains the base they would have been awarded had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play on a different runner. The obstructed runner is no longer protected if they leave the base.

**2.** The obstructed runner commits an act of interference or malicious contact

**3.** The obstructed runner passes another runner.

**4.** A proper appeal is made for leaving a base too soon or for missing a base. However, if obstruction occurred while the runner was returning to touch the base, she is protected if, in the umpire's judgment, the obstruction prevented her return prior to the appeal.

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

**Sec 14. AWARDED BASES**

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

**A.** Four bases (home base):

**1.** If a fair-batted ball goes over a fence between the foul poles without touching the ground.

**2.** If a fair-batted ball hits a foul pole above the fence.

**3.** If a fair-batted ball is prevented from going over the fence by a spectator.

**4.** If a fair-batted ball is prevented from going over the fence by an illegal glove/mitt.

**5.** If a fair-batted ball is prevented from going over the fence by detached player equipment, which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

**B.** Three bases:

**1.** If a fair-batted ball (other than in item a) is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, held or kicked by a fielder, provided the ball when touched:

**a.** Is on or over fair ground.

**b.** Is a fair ball, while on or over foul ground.

**c.** Is over foul ground in a situation that it might become a fair ball.

**C.** Two bases:

**1.** If a fair-batted ball becomes dead because of bouncing over or, when passing through a fence, becomes blocked.

**2.** If a live thrown ball, including a pitch, is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or detached player equipment which is thrown, held, tossed or kicked by a fielder.

**3.** If a live thrown ball (not by a pitcher from the pitcher's plate as in item D) goes into a stand for spectators, or a players' bench, or over or through or lodges in a fence.

**4.** If the fielder, in the judgment of the Umpire, intentionally touches loose equipment left on or near the field by the defensive team.

**5.** If the fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead-ball territory.

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

**D.** One base:

**1.** If a pitch by the pitcher from the pitching position on the pitcher's plate goes into a dead-ball area, becomes blocked (unless blocked by the offensive team), or lodges in an Umpire's equipment.

**2.** If a fielder loses possession of the ball on a tag play and the ball enters dead-ball area.

**3.** If forced from the base occupied by a following runner who must advance because a batter receives a fourth ball, is hit by a pitched ball or hits a fair ball which becomes dead.

**4.** If a runner is attempting to steal or the runner is forced from the base occupied by a batter-runner or runner who must advance because the catcher or any fielder obstructed a batter (such as stepping on or across home plate, pushing the batter to reach the pitch, or touching the bat). Instances may occur when the infraction may be ignored or when the batter may be awarded first base.

**5.** If the fielder unintentionally carries a live ball into dead-ball territory.

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

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

**E.** The Umpire shall impose such penalties and/or make any awards as in the Umpire's judgment will nullify the following acts:

**1.** Spectator interference. When there is spectator interference with any thrown or batted ball, the ball shall be dead at the moment of interference.

**EXCEPTION**: It is not spectator interference if a spectator physically hinders a fielder who is reaching into a dead ball area to make a play on a batted or thrown ball.

**2.** Blocked ball caused by the defense.

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

**A.** The pitch:
- **1.** If any pitch (batted or unbatted) is followed by a dead ball before the pitcher is in the 16-foot circle for the next pitch and before there is any throw by the fielding team.
- **2.** For a runner required to tag up after a caught fly ball.

**B.** The infraction:
- **1.** For use of detached player equipment or ball touches an illegal glove.
- **2.** For fielder losing possession of the ball.
- **3.** Obstruction.

**C.** The time the ball last left the hand of the thrower (in any situation other than A or B).

**Sec 16.** A runner must return to their base when.

**A.** a batted ball is foul.

**B.** an illegally batted ball is declared by the Umpire.

**C.** a batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. Each other runner shall return to the last base which, in the Umpire's judgment, was legally touched by the runner at the time of the interference.

**D.** any part of the batter's person or clothing is touched by a pitched ball that is swung at and missed.

**E.** a batter is hit by a pitched ball, unless forced.

**F.** when an intentionally dropped ball is ruled
**EFFECT**- Section 16 A-F: The ball is dead and each runner must return to their base without liability to be put out, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner.

**G.** when the Plate Umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick off play.
**EFFECT**: Delayed dead ball. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live. If the runner is not out, all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. It is not Umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the Umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher. The ball is live.

**Sec 17.** The batter-runner is out:

**A.** When interfering with the catcher's attempt to field the ball after a third strike.

**B.** When a batted ball in flight is caught by a fielder, or such catch is prevented by a spectator reaching into the field enclosure.

**C.** When a fair fly, fair line drive or a fair bunted ball in flight is intentionally dropped by an infielder with at least first base occupied and less than two outs; the ball is dead and the runners shall return to their respective bases.
**NOTE**: In this situation, the batter is not out if the infielder permits a fair fly ball, line drive or a fair bunted ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield-fly rule applies.

**D.** If, after a third strike or a fair hit, any fielder, while holding the ball, tags out the batter-runner before the batter-runner touches first base; or if any fielder, while holding the ball securely in a hand, touches first base or touches first base with the ball before the batter-runner touches first base.

**E.** When they run outside the three-foot running lane (last half of the distance from home plate to first base) while the ball is being fielded or thrown to first base.
**EXCEPTION**: This infraction is ignored if it is to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field the batted ball or if the act does not interfere with a fielder or a throw.

**F.** When they contact the ball a second time in fair or foul territory, if, in the Umpire's judgment, the ball had a chance to become fair.

**G.** When they move backward toward home plate to avoid or delay being tagged out. The ball is dead and base runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the infraction.

**H.** When they hit a fair fly and the infield fly rule is declared.
**EFFECT** - The ball is live, the batter is out if the batted ball is fair.
If the ball is caught, each runner may tag up and advance with the liability to be put out once the batted ball is touched the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is not caught, the ball is live, the batter-runner is out which removes all force plays, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out without needing to retouch their base(s).
**NOTE:** When an infield fly is not initially called, the batter-runner may be declared out if brought to the umpire's attention before the next pitch.
*See exception in Rule 15-8-17-H (8U and Younger Fastpitch Divisions)*.

**I.** When any coach or member of the offensive team other than runners interferes with a fielder making an initial play.

**J.** When, after becoming a batter-runner, they do not attempt to reach first base before all infielders leave the diamond, the half-inning ends, or they give up by entering the bench or dugout area.
**EFFECT:** Ball remains Live

**K.** When they are an illegal player and are discovered.

**Sec 18.** Any runner is out when the runner:

**A.** Runs more than three feet away from the base path to avoid being tagged, or to hinder a fielder while the runner is advancing or returning to a base.
**EXCEPTION**: This is not an infraction if a fielder, attempting to make an initial play on a batted ball, is in the runner's proper path and if the runner runs behind the fielder to avoid interfering.
**NOTE**: When a play is being made on a runner or batter-runner, the runner establishes their base path as directly between the runner's position and the base toward which the runner is moving.

**B.** slides illegally and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her.
**PENALTY**: The runner is out and the ball is dead immediately and interference is called.

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

**C.** does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her.
**PENALTY**: The runner is out and the ball remains live unless interference is called.
**NOTE**: Jumping, hurdling, and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder only if the fielder is lying on the ground.

**D.** Performs Malicious contact (always supersedes obstruction).

**E.** does not attempt to avoid the fielder on a force play. **NOTE:** a legal slide is considered an attempt to avoid.

**F.** Interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, or intentionally with a fielder or thrown ball.

**G.** Hinders a fielder's initial play on a batted ball.

**H.** Interferes with a fielder attempting to field a fly ball over foul territory.
**EFFECT:** The ball is dead and the runner is out. The batter is assessed a foul ball in this situation.

**I.** Is prevented from being put out by an illegal act by anyone connected with the team.
**NOTE 1:** If, in the judgment of the Umpire, this interference is an attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner shall also be called out.
**NOTE 2:** If a retired runner interferes and, in the judgment of the Umpire, another runner could have been put out, the Umpire shall declare the runner closest to home out.
**NOTE 3:** If the batter-runner interferes, the Umpire shall call the batter-runner and the runner who has advanced the nearest to home base out.
**NOTE 4:** If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the runner contacts one or both, the Umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball and that fielder only is entitled to protection.
**NOTE 5:** If a batted ball is misplayed but the fielder in still making an initial play and the runner contacts the fielder, this is interference. If the misplayed ball bounds away so that it is no longer within a step and a reach (in any direction) and contact then occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this is obstruction.

**J.** Is tagged out.
**EXCEPTIONS**: If a batter-runner safely touches first base and then over slides or overruns it, the batter-runner may immediately return to first base without liability of being tagged out, provided there was no feint or attempt to advance to second. Also, if any base comes loose from its fastening when any runner contacts it, such runner cannot be tagged out because the base slides away from the runner.
**NOTE**: The ball is not securely held if it is dropped or juggled after the runner is touched, unless the ball was deliberately knocked from the fielder's hand by the runner.

**K.** Does not retouch a base left before a caught fly ball is touched or touch a missed base if properly appealed.
It is not necessary for a runner to retouch the base after a foul tip.

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

**M.** Violates the Look Back Rule

**N.** Fails to reach the next base before a fielder either tags the runner out, or holds the ball while touching such base, after the runner has been forced from the base occupied because the batter became a runner.
**EXCEPTION**: No runner may be forced out if a runner who follows in the batting order is first put out, including a batter-runner who is out for an infield fly.

**O.** Is contacted by a fair-batted ball before it touches or passes an infielder, or after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the Umpire judges that another fielder has a play.
**EFFECT:** The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. All base runners return to the base occupied at the time of the infraction, unless forced.
**EXCEPTION**: If a runner is touching a base when hit by a batted fair ball, the runner is not out unless they intentionally interfere with the ball or an infielder making a play. The ball is dead or live depending on whether the closest fielder is in front of the base (live) or behind the base (dead).
**NOTE 1**: When the infield-fly rule is in effect, if a runner is hit by an infield fly when not touching a base, both the runner and the batter are out.
**NOTE 2**: When a runner is hit with a fair batted ball after it is touched or has passed an infielder, except the pitcher, and the Umpire judges that another fielder had no opportunity to make a play, the runner is not out and the ball remains live.

**P.** Is detected passing an unobstructed preceding runner before such runner is out (including awarded bases).

**Q.** Is detected running bases in reverse to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

**R.** After at least touching first base, the runner leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning their effort to touch the next base.

**S.** Is detected taking a position for a running start behind and not in contact with a base.

**T.** Is properly appealed when a runner is on or beyond a succeeding base when the ball is declared dead after having left a base too soon on a caught fly ball; or having failed to touch a preceding base; or continuing and touching a succeeding base after the ball become dead.
**NOTE**: A runner shall not be declared out if the fielder deliberately

throws or carries the ball into dead-ball territory to prevent that runner, who has touched or advanced beyond a succeeding base, from returning to a missed base or a base left too soon.

**U.** The runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to the infield and properly appealed. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out.

**V.** Intentionally contacts a fair ball that an infielder has missed.

**W.** They are an illegal player and are discovered while still on base.

**X.** Prior to a pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter, the runner was discovered having used an illegal, altered or non-approved bat.
**EXCEPTION:** If the bat is a damaged bat (not altered or non-approved), the damage is presumed to have occurred when the ball was hit and the runner is not liable; however, the damaged bat is removed.
**EFFECT:** Any runner not put out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. Any runners put out prior to discovery shall remain out. First offense: Team Warning; Subsequent Offense; Player Restricted to Dugout; Coach Ejected. For Altered and Non-Approved Bats, the Player and Coach are ejected on the first offense.

**The runner is also out because of actions of other team members such as:**

**Y.** A runner on base leaves the game without an eligible substitute available.
**EXCEPTION:** Injured runner departing per Rule 5-2-A-1.

**Z.** When anyone other than another runner physically assists them during playing action.

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

**AB.** When the offensive team causes a blocked ball.
**EFFECT**: The runner closest to home is out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but all runners shall return to the last base touched when the ball became dead.

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

**Sec 19. Double First Base**

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

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

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

**1.** If the batter-runner touches only the white portion when there is a play being made at first base, it is treated the same as missing the

base. The batter-runner is out providing the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white or colored portion, no appeal can be made.

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

**EXCEPTIONS**: The defense and batter runner can use either portion when:

1. The ball is thrown from the foul side of first base line.
2. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.
3. On any fair batted ball or errant throw that pulls the defense to foul territory.

**C.** If there is a force play by an infielder on the batter-runner, who touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white, interference is ruled.
**PENALTY**: The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and all other runners are returned to the base last occupied at the time of interference.

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

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

1. The runner returning to first base.
2. The runner tagging up on a fly ball.
3. The fielder making a play on a returning runner.

## RULE 9. APPEALS

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

**Sec 1.** **Types of appeals**:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sec 4.** The appeals must be made:

**A.** before the next legal or illegal pitch;

**B.** at the end of an inning, before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates their normal fielding position; or

**C.** on the last play of the game, before the Umpires leave the field of play.

**Sec 5.** Advancing Runners

**A.** Runners may advance during a live-ball appeal play.

**B.** No runner may advance on a dead ball appeal.

**C.** No runner is out if they step off base during a dead ball appeal.

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

**A.** She has advanced, touched and remains a base beyond the base missed or left too soon and the ball becomes dead.

**B.** She has left the field of play; or

**C.** a following runner has scored.

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

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

**Sec 9.** **Fourth-Out Appeal**. An appeal may be made after the third out as long as it is made properly. (i.e. one out with runner on first and third. The batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each runner leaves their base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defensive team then makes an appeal at third base before the infielders leave the infield. The runner on third would then be declared out also, and the run would not count.)

**Sec 10.** **Batting Out Of Order**

A batter shall be called out on appeal when they fail to bat in their proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in their place.

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

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

**1.** The proper batter is declared out.

2. The improper batter is taken off base. If the batter is out on the play, the out does not stand because the out for batting out of order supersedes an out by the improper batter on a play.
3. Any outs made on the play on other runners stand. Any runner not put out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
4. No runs may score on the play.
5. The next batter is the player who follows in the batting order the player who was declared out for not batting in the proper order.

**NOTE**: If a runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch or passed ball while the improper batter is at bat, such advance is legal.

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

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

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

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

## RULE 10. DEAD BALL - SUSPENSION OF PLAY

**Sec 1.** The ball becomes dead immediately when:

**A.** A pitch touches a batter or the batter's clothing.
**NOTE:** the ball becomes dead even though the batter strikes at it.

**B.** The ball is illegally batted or comes in contact with the bat a second time. except if the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory as in Rule 7-14-F NOTE.

**C.** The batter is discovered with an illegal bat.

**D.** Any batted ball, while on or over foul ground.
1. Touches any object other than the ground or any person other than a fielder.
2. Goes directly from the bat to the catcher's protector, mask or person without first touching the catcher's glove or hand.
3. Becomes an uncaught foul.

**E.** There is interference by a batter, a runner or a retired runner.

**F.** A fair ball, which is on or over fair ground.
1. Touches a runner or an Umpire before touching any fielder and before passing any fielder other than the pitcher.

**2.** Touches a runner after passing through or by an infielder and another fielder could have made a play on the ball.
**3.** Touches a spectator.
**4.** Goes over, through or wedges in the field fence.

**G.** A pitch or any other thrown ball
**1.** Is touched by a spectator.
**2.** Is touched by nonparticipating team personnel.
**3.** Goes into a stand or player's bench (even if it rebounds to the field).
**4.** Goes over or through or wedges in the field fence.
**5.** Lodges in an Umpire's or catcher's equipment or touches loose equipment.

**H.** The Umpire handles a live ball, calls "Time" for inspecting the ball, or for any other reason.

**I.** A fielder, after catching a fair or foul ball (fly or line drive), leaves the field of play by stepping with both feet or by falling into a designated dead-ball area (i.e., bench, dugout, stand/bleacher, etc.).
**NOTE:** if a chalk line is used to designate an "out-of-play" area, the line is considered in play. If a fielder is touching the line, they are in the field of play and may make a catch. When the fielder completely unintentionally leaves live-ball area and then re-establishes himself within live-ball territory (one foot touching out of play line), a catch would be allowed. If the fielder unintentionally leaves a live-ball area with both feet after making a catch, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded one base from the time of the pitch. Two bases shall be awarded each runner if a fielder intentionally leaves live-ball area with both feet.

**J.** Any personnel connected with the offensive team requests "Time" or uses any other command or commits an act for the purpose of trying to cause the opposing pitcher to commit an illegal pitch.

**K.** An infielder intentionally drops a fair fly.
**EXCEPTION**: Infield Fly Rule.

**L.** A runner interferes with a fielder attempting to catch a foul fly.

**M.** The batter-runner moves backward toward home plate to avoid or delay being tagged out.

**N.** A batted, thrown or pitched ball touches in an occupied designated media area (a ball that passes through a dead-ball area in flight is not considered dead).

**O.** An illegal pitch occurs, but no pitch is delivered to the batter.

**P.** The Umpire calls Time Out for an Injured Player per Rule 5-9-A.

**Sec 2.** It is a delayed dead ball when:

**A.** An illegal pitch is delivered.

**B.** A catcher or any fielder obstructs a batter or obstructs the ball through use of detached play equipment.

**C.** The Umpire interferes with catcher who is attempting to throw.
**EFFECT:** If the runner is not out, they are returned to the last base attained before the interference occurred.

**D.** A coach physically assists a runner.
**E.** A ball touches an illegal glove/mitt.
**F.** Any one who is required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removes the helmet while the ball is live.

**Sec 3**. The ball becomes dead when time is taken to make an award when a catcher or any fielder illegally obstructs a runner.

**Sec 4.** **After a dead-ball situation,** the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher within the 16-foot circle and the Umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball".

**Sec 5.** **"Time" shall be called** by the Umpire and play suspended:
**A.** When the Umpire and/ or Tournament Director considers the weather or ground conditions unfit for play.
**NOTE:** After 30 minutes, the Umpire and/ or Tournament Director may declare the game ended or suspended.
**B.** When a player, bench personnel or spectator is ordered from the field of play, or player is ordered to secure protective equipment.
**C.** When a player or coach is granted time for a substitution, conference with the pitcher, or for similar cause.
**D.** When play is suspended for any other cause, including an award of a base after an infraction, inspection of the ball, or the ending of a half-inning.

**Sec 6.** When the ball becomes dead:
**A.** No action by the defense during that time can cause a player to be put out, except a proper dead-ball appeal.
**B.** A runner may not advance, nor return to a base that was not touched or that the runner was not in contact with on a caught fly ball during a live ball if the runner had advanced to or beyond a succeeding base.
**C.** Any runner may advance when awarded a base or bases for an act, which occurred before the ball became dead. All awarded bases must be touched.

## TABLE 1 - DEAD BALL TABLE

| BALL IS DEAD IMMEDIATELY: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activity** | | **References** | **Awards or Penalties** | **References** |
| 1 | Pitch touches batter | 10.1.A | Batter awarded first base unless exception applies | 7.11; 8.4.D |
| 2 | Illegally batted ball | 10.1.B | Batter is out. Runners return | 7.14.A; 7.14.G-I |
| 3 | Ball hit twice in fair and sometimes foul territory | 10.1.B | Batter is out. Runners return | 7.14.F |
| 4 | Uncaught foul | 10.1.D.3 | Runners return to bases occupied at time of pitch | 8.16.A |
| 5 | Spectator interference | 10.1.F.3; 10.1.G.I | Umpire judgment in awarding bases or outs to nullify effects of interference | 8.15.A.1 |
| 6 | Interference by runner | 10.1.E | Interferer is out. Other runners return | 8.18.E-H |
| 7 | Interference by retired runner | 10.1.E | Runner closest to home is out. Other runners return | 8.18.I NOTE 2 |

| Activity | | References | Awards or Penalties | References |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Interference by runner (foul fly) | 10.1.L | Interferer is out. Other runners return. Foul ball on the batter | 8.18.H |
| 9 | Interference by coach or others connected with the team (thrown ball) | 10.1.G.2 | Runner closest to home is out; if no play is apparent, no one is out, but runners return | 8.18.Z |
| 10 | Interference by coach or other nonplayers connected with the team (batted ball) | 10.1.D.1 | If interference prevented possible double play, the batter and runner closest to home are declared out | 8.18.AA |
| 11 | Fair ball over fence in flight or prevented by spectator or player's detached equipment | 10.1.F.4 | Award all runners home plate | 8.14.A |
| 12 | Fair ball touches a spectator | 10.1.F.3 | Award all runners appropriate number of bases in umpire's judgment | 8.14.E.1 |
| 13 | Fair ball bounces over, through or lodges in fence | 10.1.F.4 | Award all runners two bases | 8.14.C.1 |
| 14 | Fair ball touches runner before it touches a fielder, or after it passes any fielder other than the pitcher and another fielder has a play | 10.1.F.1; 10.1.F.2 | Hit runner is out. Batter is awarded first base. Others return to base occupied at time of interference unless runner intentionally interferes with ball or fielder. | 8.5.D; 8.18.O |
| 15 | Fair ball touches umpire before it touches an infielder or passes any infielder (except the pitcher) | 10.1.F.1 | Runners return to bases occupied at time of interference unless forced by batter-runner. Batter-runner is awarded first base. | 8.5.D |
| 16 | A thrown ball, not a pitch, which becomes a blocked ball | 10.1.G | Award all runners two bases from point of release | 8.14.C.3: 8.15.C |
| 17 | A pitched ball becomes blocked | 10.1.G | Award all runners one base from time of pitch | 8.14.D.1; 8.15.A.1 |
| 18 | Umpire handles live ball or calls time to inspect the ball or for other reasons, including 10.5 | 10.1.H | Runners return to bases they had reached or passed when ball becomes dead | 10.5 |
| 19 | Fair or foul ball is caught by fielder, who then leaves the field of play with both feet | 10.1.I | Award all runners one base from time the ball became dead except when caught ball is third out | 10.1.I NOTE; 8.14.D.5 |
| 20 | A live ball is intentionally carried, kicked, pushed or thrown into dead-ball territory | 10.1.I | Award all runners two bases from the time the ball became dead | 8.14.C.5 |
| 21 | Offensive team personnel calls "Time" or uses any other command or commits an act for the purpose of trying to cause the pitcher to violate the pitching rule | 10.1.J | No runners advance; team warning or offender restriction for first offense. Subsequent offenders ejected. | 11.2.S |

| Activity | | References | Awards or Penalties | References |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Infielder intentionally drops fair fly, fair line drive or fair bunt in flight with at least first base occupied and less than two outs | 10.1.K | Batter-runner is out; runners return to their base. | 8.17.C |
| 23 | Illegal pitch not released, or released to a base | 10.1.O | No runners advance; batter remains at bat and is awarded a ball | 6.3 |
| 24 | Intentional base on balls | N/A | Pitches must be thrown | 2.BASE ON BALLS |
| 25 | Base runner leaves base before pitcher releases pitch | 6.4.B | No pitch is declared and runner is out | 8.18.L |
| 26 | Quick return pitch before batter has taken position or is off balance | 6.4.C | No pitch is declared; all subsequent action canceled | 6.4.C |
| 27 | Fielder loses possession and ball enters dead area | 8.14.D.2 | All runners awarded one base past last base touched at time ball enters dead ball territory | 8.14.D.2 |
| 28 | Batted ball hitting runner while touching base | 10.1.F | Ball is either live or dead depending on position of the closest fielder | 8.18.O EXCEPTION |
| 29 | Illegal slide | 10.1.E | Runner is out. Other runners return to last base touched prior to interference | 8.18.B |
| 30 | Malicious interference | 10.1.E | Runner is out and ejected. Other runners return to last base touched prior to interference | 8.18.D |
| 31 | Batter-runner steps backward towards home plate | 10.1.M | Batter-runner is out. Runners return to bases occupied at time of infraction | 8.17.G |
| 32 | Ball hits loose offensive equipment on field of play | 10.1.G.5 | Runner closest to home is out; if no play is obvious, no runner is out, but runners return | 8.18.AB |
| 33 | Ball hits loose defensive equipment on field of play | 10.1.G.5 | All runners advance two bases | 8.14.C.2 |
| 34 | Interference by batter when attempted putout is by the catcher | 10.1.E | Ball dead immediately. Batter is out. Runners return to last base touched at time of interference | 7.12 |
| 35 | Batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters team area | 8.17.J | Batter-runner is out. Runners return to bases occupied at time of infraction | 8.17.J |
| **BALL IS DELAYED DEAD:** | | | | |
| **Activity** | | **References** | **Awards or Penalties** | **References** |
| 1 | Illegal pitch released | 10.2.A | Pitch is ruled a ball if the ball is not hit or batter becomes a runnner. Otherwise, if ball is hit and all runners do not advance one base safely, the team at bat has the choice of accepting the play or the penalty | 6.3 |
| 2 | Obstruction of batter by catcher or fielder | 10.2.B | If batter and runners do not advance at least one base, award batter first base and advance all other runners if forced or result of play | 8.4.E |

| Activity | | References | Awards or Penalties | References |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Intentionally touching batted ball with detached player equipment over fair territory | 10.2.B | Award batter-runner and runners three bases if not made | 8.14.B.1 |
| 4 | Intentionally touching thrown ball (including a pitch) with detached player equipment | 10.2.B | Award runners two bases if not made | 8.14.C.2 |
| 5 | Interference by umpire with catcher throwing a non-batted ball | 10.2.C | If runner is not put out, runners return | 8.16.G |
| 6 | Obstruction | 2.OBSTRUCTION; 10.3 | If obstructed runner and all other runners hindered by the obstruction do not reach bases they otherwise would have reached, award runner(s) such bases | 8.13 |
| 7 | Contact with any ball by illegal glove or mitt | 10.2.E | Award all runners (including batter-runner) three or two bases (if not made) on a batted or thrown ball, respectively | 8.14.B.1; 8.14.C.2 |
| 8 | Deliberately removing batting helmet in live-ball territory while the ball is live | 10.2.F | Team warning. For a subsequent violation, the offender is restricted and head coach is ejected | 11.2.C |
| 9 | Coach physically assisting a runner during playing action | 10.2.D | Assisted runner is declared out | 8.18.Z |

## RULE 11. SPORTING BEHAVIOR

**Sec 1.** All players and coaches will be expected to behave in a sporting manner at all times. Any player, coach or parent / fan whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive will at a minimum be warned and may be removed from the playing field or stands at the discretion of the Tournament Officials or the Umpires. Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated under **any circumstances.** This includes a team forfeiting or being removed from the tournament if necessary.

**Sec 2.** A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

- **A.** Fake a tag without the ball.
- **B.** Carelessly throw a bat.
- **C.** Fail to wear or deliberate removal of equipment when it is required to be worn.
- **D.** Wear metal cleats or metal toe plates where prohibited.
- **E.** Wear jewelry or any exposed ornament which in the umpire's judgment is dangerous while participating in the game.
- **F.** Hit the ball to teammates on defense after the game has started.
- **G.** Use electronic communication, television monitoring or replay equipment during the course of the game. Electronic scorebooks may be used to record the current game.

**H.** Use tobacco products in any form.

**I.** Be in possession of any object in the coach's box other than scorekeeping materials/devices, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only.

**J.** Be outside the designated dugout/bench or bullpen areas unless they are a batter, runner, on-deck batter, in the coach's box or one of the nine players on defense.

**NOTE:** A single on-deck batter shall remain in their team's on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up.

**K.** Enter the batter's box with an illegal bat.

**PENALTY A-K:** FIRST OFFENSE is a team warning. SECOND OFFENSE and any subsequent violation the offender is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game and their current head coach shall be ejected. In K, if the illegal bat is altered or non-approved, the player and head coach are immediately ejected.

**NOTE**: a reminder at home plate by the Umpire does not constitute a warning for either team.

**L.** Using words or actions to incite spectators to demonstrations.

**M.** Using intimidating tactics, or baiting or taunting.

**NOTE**: The USSSA disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under circumstances including race, religion, gender or national origin.

**N.** Behaving in any manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play.

**O.** Be located in the area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions.

**P.** Charge an Umpire.

**Q.** Use amplifiers or bullhorns for coaching purpose during the course of the game.

**R.** Argue ball and strike calls or other Umpire judgment calls.

**S.** Call "time", employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act for the purpose of causing an illegal pitch.

**T.** Commit any other unsporting act.

**PENALTY L-T:** If it is the FIRST OFFENSE and is judged to be of a minor nature, an offending player may be warned or an offending coach may be restricted to the bench. If not minor or a subsequent offense, the Umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in the game being forfeited. Any coach restricted to the bench shall be ejected for further misconduct. A restricted coach may leave the bench/dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured.

**U.** Curse or use profanity

**V.** Deliberately throw a bat, helmet or any other piece of equipment.

**W.** Initiate malicious contact.

**X.** Engage in a fight.

**NOTE:** Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to softball. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.

**Y.** Leaving their positions or bench area when a fight has broken out. Coaches who enter the field to restrain combatants from their team shall not be considered to have violated this rule.

**Z.** A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not bring the rule book (hard copy or electronic) onto the playing field while the game is in progress to discuss/dispute the umpire(s) ruling and/or decision.

**PENALTY U-Z:** The Umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in the game being forfeited. A player ejected for malicious contact is declared out unless they have already scored.

## RULE 12. COACH/MANAGER OR PLAYER EJECTION

**Sec 1.** A coach/manager who is ejected shall leave the vicinity (out of sight and out of sound) of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from any further contact (direct or indirect) with the team during the remainder of the game. The ejected coach/manager must sit out the remainder of that game and the following game which must be actually played (i.e. - a non-played forfeit game will not satisfy the sit out requirement). They are barred from coaching in the tournament until that team has completed their next game.

**Sec 2.** A player ejected must sit out the remainder of that game. The player is eligible to play in the team's next game. Any youth player who is restricted to the bench or ejected shall remain in the dugout/bench area under adult supervision.

**Sec 3.** Anyone ejected will be asked to leave the park at the discretion of the Umpire and Tournament Director.

## RULE 13. PROTEST

**Sec 1.** Umpires will work to settle all problems on the field. Protests from the offended team will be allowed for rule interpretations and Player eligibility only.

**Sec 2.** The Tournament Director may at their discretion charge a protest fee of $100. Protests of player eligibility shall be charged per player.

**Sec 3.** The Plate Umpire shall suspend all action and notify the Tournament Officials of any protest. Tournament officials and the UIC will rule on all protests and their decision will be final.

**Sec 4**. Rule interpretation protests must be declared to the Plate Umpire before the next pitch following the dispute. No rule interpretation protest will be allowed

once the Umpires have left the field at the end of the game. In tournament play, all rule interpretations protests must be settled, before any play can be resumed.

**Sec 5**. Player eligibility protests made during the game must be declared to the Plate Umpire.
Player eligibility protests made after the game must be declared to the tournament director.
During pool play, protests on player eligibility must be made before pool play has concluded and bracket seedings have been established.
During bracket play, protests on player eligibility must be made before either team has begun their next game.
If a player eligibility protest cannot be resolved at the time of the protest, the game shall be completed.

**A.** If the eligibility protest is upheld before the game is completed: the offending team loses the game, is ejected from the tournament, is placed last in the standings and forfeits all awards, sponsor travel money and berths that would have been awarded at that tournament.

**B.** If the eligibility protest is upheld after the game is completed but during the tournament: the game shall stand as played. However the offending team is ejected from the tournament, and assumes the same penalties as above.

**C.** If the eligibility protest is upheld after the tournament is completed, the team shall be placed last in the tournament standings and the standings shall be adjusted accordingly.

## RULE 14. UMPIRES

**Sec 1.** All tournaments and leagues played under the jurisdiction and administration of the USSSA Fastpitch program shall utilize only Umpires who are currently registered with the association. Umpires shall have USSSA registration card available at all games worked.

**Sec 2.** The Umpire should not be connected in any way with either team.

**Sec 3.** The Umpire should be sure of the date, time and location of the game and should arrive at the field 30 minutes before the game time, prepared to work.

**Sec 4.** The official Umpire uniform standard for sanctioned play includes approved and licensed products, which allow for freedom of movement. The official uniform shall consist of:

**A.** USSSA Licensed mesh pullover shirt. If a shirt is worn under the Umpire shirt**,** it shall be plain, short sleeve, and white, black or match the pullover shirt's primary color**.** Long sleeve shirts may be worn, but must match the pullover shirt color.

**B.** USSSA Licensed Umpire cap. This will include the USSSA embroidery on the cap and the official licensed label inside.
**C.** Long heather gray or charcoal slacks with black socks. Shin guards may not be exposed.
**D.** Gray or black ball bag. Only the Plate Umpire shall wear a ball bag.
**E.** Black belt.
**F.** Black polished shoes and black shoelaces; solid black socks.
**G.** Licensed windbreaker jacket may be worn as outside apparel.
**NOTE:** If two or more Umpires are used per game, they must be dressed alike.
**H.** The Umpire behind the plate must wear a mask.

**Sec 5.** **Game officials** include the Plate Umpire and may include one, two or three Base Umpires. Any Umpire has the authority to order a player, coach, or team attendant to do or refrain from doing anything, which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce prescribed penalties. The National Fastpitch Program Committee strongly recommends there be at least two Umpires.

**Sec 6.** **Umpire jurisdiction** begins upon the arrival of one Umpire within the confines of the field and ends when the Umpires leave the playing field at the conclusion of the game.

**Sec 7.** If there is only **one Umpire,** that Umpire has complete jurisdiction in administering the rules and shall take a position behind the catcher. The only exception will be the 8 & Under Machine Pitch, where the Umpire feeds the pitching machine.

**Sec 8.** **Any Umpire's decision**, which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or ball, or whether a runner is safe, or out, is final. If there is a reasonable doubt about some decision being in conflict with the rules, the coach or captain may ask that the correct ruling be made. The Umpire making the decision may ask another Umpire for information before making a final decision. The use of videotape by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decision is prohibited. No Umpire shall criticize or interfere with another Umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it.
**NOTE:** The Plate Umpire sometimes asks for aid from the Base Umpire when there is a question as to whether a batter's half-swing is to be called a strike. As an aid in deciding, the Umpire shall note whether the swing carried the barrel portion of the bat in front of the batter's body and in the direction of the infield, but the final decision is based on whether the batter actually struck at the ball.

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

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

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

**Sec 12**. The **Plate Umpire** shall stand behind the catcher. The Plate Umpire shall make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the Base Umpire. The duties of the Plate Umpire shall include the following:

**A.** Inspect condition of the field

**B.** Conduct Pre-Game Conference. Ask both coaches if their teams are legally and properly equipped, receive lineup cards from both teams, announce special ground rules and formulate such if the two teams cannot agree, designate the dugout/bench area, and, if necessary, designate the official scorekeeper.

**C.** Ensure that each player takes their glove and other loose equipment to the bench at the end of their team's time in the field.

**D.** Call "Play Ball" and give a beckoning hand signal to start the game or to resume play, and call "Time" whenever the ball becomes dead.

**E.** Call and count balls and strikes,

**F.** Signal fair hits, and call out "foul ball" while signaling each foul hit,

**G.** Make all decisions on the batter.

**H.** When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the Plate Umpire immediately announces it for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the base line the Umpire shall declare, "Infield fly, if fair."

**I.** Eject a player or send a coach from the field of play if it becomes necessary.

**J.** Announce each substitute.

**K.** Call the game if conditions become unfit for play.

**L.** Penalize for rule infractions, such as illegal pitch, interference, delay, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsporting behavior or defacement of the ball by the pitcher.

**M.** Have the authority to make decisions on any situation not specifically covered in the rules.

**N.** Forfeit the game for prescribed infraction by spectators, player or attendants.

**O.** When a game is played under the auspices of an organization which permits protests to be filed, the Plate Umpire shall report the protest to the organization along with all related conditions at the time of the protested play, provided the protest is brought to the attention of an Umpire by the offended team at the time of the play and before the next pitch after such play.

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

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

positions; or before the Umpire leaves the field, if the play in question was the last play of the game.

**P.** Keep a record of substitutions, courtesy runners, defensive team charged conferences, ejections/restrictions and team warnings for each team.

**Q.** Penalize for jewelry violation.

**R.** Rectify any situation in which an Umpire's decision that was delayed or reversed has placed either team in jeopardy.

**S.** Correct a scorekeeping error if brought to attention before the Umpires leave the field when the game is over.

**Sec 13**. The **Base Umpire(s)** shall assist the Plate Umpire in administering the rules. The Base Umpire shall make all decisions on the bases except those reserved for the Plate Umpire as defined above. The Base Umpire shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the Plate Umpire in calling time, illegal pitches, defacement or discoloration of ball by any player, when a fly ball is caught, or in disqualifying any player for unsporting behavior or an infraction as prescribed by the rules. In some instances, the Base Umpire will rule on the ball being fair or foul.

When there is only one Base Umpire that Umpire typically, but not solely, makes all decisions at first and second base. The Base Umpire will also make some decisions at third base. If a play takes the Base Umpire beyond the infield, the Plate Umpire will make all calls on the bases.

## TABLE 2 - EJECTIONS and RESTRICTIONS

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

| EVENT | RULE | OFFENDING PLAYER | OFFENDING COACH | COACH of OFFENDER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Malicious contact | 11.2.W | OUT & EJECT | EJECT | N/A |
| Illegal player | 5.7 | EJECT | N/A | EJECT |
| Profanity or Cursing | 11.2.U | EJECT | EJECT | N/A |
| Deliberately Throw Equipment | 11.2.V | | | |
| Engage in Fight | 11.2.X | | | |
| Leave Position/Bench to join in a fight | 11.2 Y | | | |
| Bring Rule Book on Field | 11.2.Z | | | |
| Leave detached equipment in field of play | 2.7 | 1) WARN<br>2) "may" EJECT | 1) WARN<br>2) "may" EJECT | |
| Incite spectator demonstration | 11.2.L | 1) WARN if minor<br>2) EJECT | 1)RESTRICT if minor<br>2) EJECT | N/A |
| Use intimidating tactics, bait, or taunt | 11.2.M | | | |
| Behavior not in spirit of fair play | 11.2.N | | | |
| Enter area behind catcher | 11.2.O | | | |
| Charge an Umpire | 11.2.P | | | |
| Use bullhorns or amplifiers | 11.2.Q | | | |
| Argue balls/strikes/judgment calls | 11.2.R | | | |
| Action to cause an illegal pitch | 6.4.E<br>7.8.Note 2<br>11.2.S | | | |
| Other unsporting behavior | 11.2.T | | | |
| Not Entitled courtesy runner | 8.3.B | 1) OUT & WARN<br>2) OUT | N/A | 1) Team Warning<br>2) EJECT |
| Placing FLEX in batting position other than the DP's | 5.7 | EJECT | N/A | EJECT |

| EVENT | RULE | OFFENDING PLAYER | OFFENDING COACH | COACH of OFFENDER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fake Tag | 11.2.A | | | |
| Carelessly Thrown Bat | 11.2.B | | | |
| Deliberately Remove a Helmet/Failure to | 2.1 | | | |
| Wear a Helmet | 11.2.C | | | |
| Wear metal cleats where prohibited | 11.2.D | | | |
| Wear jewelry or exposed ornament dangerous in | 11.2.E | 1) WARN | N/A | 1) Team Warning |
| Umpire Judgement | | 2)RESTRICT | | 2) EJECT |
| Hit ball to teammates on defense | 11.2.F | | | |
| Using replay equipment | 11.2.G | | | |
| Use of tobacco | 11.2.H | | | |
| Possess anything but a scorebook in coaches box | 11.2.I | | | |
| Team personnel out of bench area | 11.2 J | | | |
| Enter batters box with an illegal bat that is altered or non-approved bat | 7.14A | OUT/EJECT | N/A | EJECT |
| Enter batters box with an illegal bat that is damaged and discovered prior to bat-ball contact (SEE NOTE 3) | 7.14A | 1) OUT & WARN<br>2) OUT & RESTRICT | N/A | 1) Team Warning<br>2) EJECT |
| Unreported substitution | 5.5 | In game legal | N/A | 1) Team Warning |
| Unreported courtesy runner | 8.3 | | | 2) EJECT (*) |

**NOTE 1:** A player ejected for malicious contact is declared out unless they have already scored.

**NOTE 2:** All coach ejections except noted by * result in the coach being barred from participation for the remainder of the game in progress PLUS the coach is barred from participation until their NEXT game is completed.

**NOTE 3:** There is no violation if a bat is damaged or shatters during an at-bat due to bat-ball contact which occurs after the batter enters the box. However, the damaged bat shall be removed from the team's possession upon discovery.

## RULE 15. 10 & UNDER AND YOUNGER RULE EXCEPTIONS

**Rule 15 is for FASTPITCH play; for rules governing Coach and Machine Pitch, See Rule 17 (Pages 69-71)**

**1.1** The pitching distance shall be 35 feet.

**2.3** The 11-inch softball shall be used.

**8.1** (8 & Under and Younger). **Stealing**: A runner may steal as explained below:

- **a.** A runner on 1st or 2nd can advance/steal only one base per pitch even in the event of an overthrow in live ball territory. If they advance more than one base, they are liable to be put out. At end of the play, if the runner is safe and has advanced more than one base, the umpire will return the runner to the correct base.
- **b.** A runner cannot steal home. If they advance home they are liable to be put out. At end of play if the runner is safe and has advanced the umpire will return the runner to the correct base.
- **c.** A batter runner, who has received a base on balls, cannot attempt to steal second base.
- **d.** Awarded bases will apply to all runners. This includes an overthrow into dead ball territory.

**e.** Runners can only score on:
- **i.** A batted ball
- **ii.** A base on balls or hit batter with bases loaded
- **iii.** An awarded base when the ball goes out of play to include a pitch that goes out of play

**8.4.B** (8 & Under and Younger) The batter is out on a third strike. If a batter strikes out and the ball is not caught, the batter is out and cannot advance to first base. The ball remains live.

**8.17.H** (8 & Under and Younger) The infield fly rule will not be used.

## RULE 16. MEN'S RULE EXCEPTIONS

**4.4.** **The RUN RULE** will be 15 runs after 3 innings, 12 runs after 4 inning, 7 runs after 5 innings.

**4.5** The **TIEBREAKER** Procedure will not be used.

**5.1.** **PLAYERS** A team shall consist of at least nine players, whose positions shall be designated as; (1) Pitcher, (2) Catcher, (3) First Baseman, (4) Second Baseman, (5) Third Baseman, (6) Short Stop, (7) Left Fielder, (8) Center Fielder, (9) Right Fielder. In addition, a designated hitter (DH) or one additional player (AP) may be used but not both.

**6.1**.A Only one foot is required on the pitcher's plate as per rule.

**6.1**.E.2 The pitcher may step backwards as per rule.

**6.1**.E.2 The forward step is NOT required to be within the 24 inch length of the pitcher's plate

**6**.1.E.3 The pitcher may leap. If both feet are in the air, the toes of the pivot foot are required to point down.

## RULE 17. COACH PITCH and MACHINE PITCH RULES

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

1. **Ball**: 11-inch USSSA approved ball, optic yellow in color with a maximum compression of 375# and a COR rating of 46.25 +/- 0.75 will be used.
2. **Innings**: A regulation game shall be seven (7) innings for World Series play.
3. **Time Limits**: World Series and 7 inning games shall have a 75 minute limit. Games can end in a tie during pool play. Bracket games that are tied at the end of regulation or upon completion of an inning with time expired shall go to the International Tie-Breaker method.
4. **Runs per Inning**: A maximum of 6 runs can be scored each inning by each team.
5. **Run Rule**: As per Rule 4 Section 4, the run rule will be 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, and 8 runs after 5 innings. If time has expired and either team is behind and cannot catch up or go ahead, the game shall be over immediately.
6. **Offensive Lineup**: The batting lineup may be any number from eight (8) to all players present. An automatic out will be taken if only eight (8) batters. When

batting more than eight (8), if any position in the batting order is left open due to injury, illness, or ejection it will be an automatic out if a sub is not available.

7. **Courtesy Runner:** A Courtesy Runner is permitted for the catcher only, subject to all applicable sections of Rule 8.3.

8. **Defensive Positions**: The defensive team must have a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of ten (10) defensive players in the field, but no more than six (6), including the catcher, can be positioned inside the infield baselines.
   **NOTE:** The use of a DP/Flex is not allowed. All players listed on the lineup card will hit.
   **Coach pitch only**: The player pitcher must have at least one foot in the pitcher's circle when the batter's coach is pitching. No other defensive players may be positioned inside the pitcher's circle at the same time. The outfield is defined as the turf area on a regulation sized youth field or at least 10 feet beyond the baselines for other playing surfaces.
   **Machine Pitch only**: At the start of the pitch, one player shall be in the pitcher's position on either side of the pitching machine with one foot on the side line of the 6 foot diameter circle. The pitcher cannot leave their position until the ball comes out of the machine.

9. **Batting**: The batter will receive five pitches or three swinging strikes, whichever occurs first. Each pitch will count as one of the five even if the batter does not swing. If the fifth pitch is hit (not bunted) foul the batter will remain at bat as long as they continue to foul off pitches.
   **a.** The batter is out on a third strike whether caught or uncaught.
   **b.** There shall be no Base on Balls (walk) awarded.
   **c.** Hitters hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1st base.
   **d.** Bunting is NOT allowed. **PENALTY:** The ball is dead, and the batter is out if the ball is contacted. All other runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
10. **The infield fly rule** is not in effect. The ball remains "live" with all runners in jeopardy of being put out or advancing.

11. A runner may not leave a base until the pitch:
    **a.** (Travel ball) leaves the pitcher's hand/pitching machine.
    **b.** (Rec/All-Stars) reaches home plate.
    **PENALTY:** The ball is dead, a "no pitch" is declared, and the runner is declared out.
    A runner who leaves a base on a pitch is at liability to be put out, even on a non-batted ball. On a non-batted ball, the runner must immediately return to her original base. If the defense chooses not make a play on a runner (who fails to return to her original base), the Umpire may call "Time" and order her return to expedite pace of play.

12. Time will be called when:
    a. (Travel ball) a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner.
    b. (Rec/All-Stars) a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner, OR the ball is returned to the player-pitcher with at least one foot on (or inside of) the line of the pitcher's circle.

    If a runner is more than half way to the next base when time is called, the runner will be awarded the next base. If they are not half way to the next base when time is called they will be returned to the previous base safely.
    The defensive team may have a maximum of 3 defensive conferences per game.

13. **Additional Coaches:** In addition to base coaches, only a coach in the pitcher's circle is allowed on the field of play.
    The coach pitcher must deliver the pitch with one foot in contact with the pitching plate.
    The pitching coach/machine pitch coach may only coach the batter prior to the pitch. He/she may not coach the batter-runner at ANY time.
    **PENALTY:** The batter is charged with a PITCH
    **Machine Pitch only**: after a batter hits the ball, the pitching coach shall make an attempt to duck or crouch behind the pitching machine and should stay inside the circle away from the play.
    **Coach pitch only**: The pitching coach must make an effort to avoid interfering with the play.
    If in the umpire's judgment, a coach interferes unintentionally with the batted ball and/or defensive play, the ball will be declared dead and the pitch replayed. If in the umpire's judgment, a coach interferes intentionally, the lead runner is out and the play replayed. If there are no runners, the batter is out.

**Machine Pitch only rules:**

14. A batted ball that hits the pitching machine shall be ruled a dead ball and the batter is awarded 1st base.

15. No defensive player may reach into or enter the pitcher's circle. If a player reaches into or enters the pitcher's circle a dead ball will be called and the batter is awarded 1st base.

16. Pitching Machine - the pitching machine shall be set as follows:
    a. Distance for center of the machine shall be thirty five (35) feet. Speed for the machine shall be set between 37-40 for 7/8U.
    b. Prior to each game, the umpire will have each coach feed at least one pitch and obtain a consensus that the machine is set correctly. The umpire may adjust the machine only at the top of the inning if he/she believes it is needed unless the machine has been hit and is not set correctly.
    c. A coach can't adjust the pitching machine without umpire approval. First offense will be a warning. The second offense will be automatic removal from the pitching coach position.

# RULE 18. T BALL RULES

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

1. **Ball:** 11-inch ball will be used.

2. **Distances:**
   - **a.** The pitching rubber shall be set at thirty-five (35) feet for T-Ball.
   - **b.** A Restraining Arc is thirty-five (35) feet from the point of home plate.
   - **c.** The catcher's arc is ten (10) feet from the point of home plate.
   - **d.** The base length is sixty (60) feet.

3. **Innings:** A regulation game shall be five (5) innings.
   The Tiebreaker Procedure will be used in the 6th inning or in any inning that begins after time has expired.

4. **Time Limits:** There will be a 55 minute time limit.

5. **Runs per Inning:** A maximum of 6 runs can be scored each inning for each team

6. **Run Rule:** If either team is behind and cannot catch up or go ahead, the game shall be over immediately. Effectively that is 13 runs after 3 innings, 7 runs after 4 innings.

7. **Offensive Lineup:** The batting lineup may be any number from nine up. If a player is removed for any reason other than ejection, the spot in the batting order will be skipped with no out recorded.

8. **Defensive Positions:** The defensive team must have a minimum of eight (8) and may have a maximum of ten (10) players in the field.
   - **a.** Defensive players must remain behind the pitcher's plate line extended until the batter has hit the ball.
   - **b.** One player shall be in the pitcher's position on the pitching mound with at least one foot within 8 feet of the pitcher's plate at the start of each play. The pitcher cannot leave its position until the ball is hit off the "T".
   - **c.** The Pitcher must wear a helmet with face mask or game face protective gear.
   - **d.** Six fielders including the catcher must be in the infield. The rest must be in the outfield. The outfield is defined as at least 10 feet outside of the base lines in fair territory.
   - **e.** Catchers must wear protective gear as prescribed in Rule 2.2.
   - **f.** Defensive players are encouraged to wear helmet with face mask or game face protective gear.

9. The "T" will be provided by the ball park or Tournament. No outside "T" will be allowed.

10. Offensive. The batter will be allowed three (3) swings. If the batter misses the ball it will be counted as a swing. If the ball goes foul, or the ball does not go

over the 10' Tee Arc, this will be considered a swing. If the batter fouls a third strike, the batter will be called out.

**a.** Bunting is NOT allowed. .

**b.** The batter will be allowed only one practice swing prior to each swing in the batter's box. Any excess practice swings will be a called strike.

**c.** All offensive players must wear NOCSAE Batter/batting helmets with face mask & chin straps while on the playing field.

**11.** There is no infield fly rule.

**12.** A runner may not leave a base until the ball is hit off the "T". Penalty for leaving early; runner will be called out...

**13.** On a hit ball there is no limit on bases allowed.

**14.** Stealing: A runner may not steal. A runner may not leave a base until the ball is hit off the "T". Penalty for leaving early; runner will be called out.

**15.** Time will be called when a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner or the ball is returned to the player pitcher with at least foot inside the pitcher's circle.
If a runner is more than half way to the next base when time is called, the runner will be awarded the next base.

**a.** There is no look-back rule.

**b.** This rule does not preclude the Umpire from calling or granting time in situations such as when a runner has slid into a base, requests time, no other runners are advancing, or there is an injured player.

**16.** Additional Coaches: In addition to base coaches, other coaches are allowed on the field of play.

**a.** The "Tee-Coach" may provide assistance to the batter prior to the Umpire placing the ball on the "T". Thereafter the coach must not assist the batter/runners vocally or with hand gestures. The "Tee Coach" will then be responsible for removing the tee and bat from the baseline. Failure to remove the tee from home plate or interfering with the play at home will result in the runner coming home being called out.

**b.** One coach will be allowed to stand in the on-deck circle while on defense. No other defensive coaches will be allowed on the field.

## RULE 19. ARENA INDOOR FASTPITCH, SIX ON SIX RULES

Arena team registration will be separate from regular Fastpitch team registration.
The registration fee will be set by National Fastpitch Committee.
Arena Fastpitch will be a state level program only.

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

**1.** **Ball:** to be determined by site.

2. **Distance:**
   Pitching: Shall conform to rulebook
   Bases: 60 feet

3. **Innings:** A regulation game shall be seven (7) innings.
   Time Limits: There will be a 75 minute time limit.

4. **Runs per Inning:** A maximum of 5 runs can be scored each inning for each team.

5. **Run Rule:** The Run Rule shall be 12 runs after 3 innings; 10 runs after 4 innings; 8 runs after 5 innings

6. **Lineup:** The batting lineup will be six (6) players, Pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, third base and shortstop.

7. **Defensive Positions:** There will be no outfielders. Infielders must play their normal positions and not in the outfield.

8. Outfield hits will be determined at each site. Banners can be used to designate a certain hit or you can use any ball hit to outfield in air is an out and if a liner or ground ball goes to the outfield it will be a single or whatever the site determines. Cones can also be used to regulate the distance of a hit.

# TABLE 3 - USSSA/USA
# SELECT RULES DIFFERENCES

| TOPIC | USSSA | USA ELITE SELECT |
|---|---|---|
| **LINEUPS** | Allows 2 options: TRADITIONAL lineup (9, 10 or 11 batters with (or without) DP/ FLEX for a max of 12 players, OR<br><br>ROSTER BATTING (all players physically present) | Only allows 1 option: TRADITONAL lineup (9, 10 or 11 batters with (or without) DP/FLEX for a max of 12 players<br><br>ROSTER BATTING is not allowed |
| **SHORTHANDED RULE** | May drop multiple batters for any reason by taking an ABSENT PLAYER out each time the Absent Player(s) fails to bat | May drop ONLY ONE BATTER for any reason by taking an Absent Player out each time the Absent Player fails to bat |
| **COURTESY RUNNER RULE** | Allows a Backup option: Must use a substitute who has not been in the game (if there is one), however<br><br>IF (AND ONLY IF) no unused sub is available, THEN (AND ONLY THEN) the Last Completed at Bat (LCAB) may be used<br><br>There is ALWAYS A CR OPTION in USSSA | Has no Backup option: Must use a substitute who has not been in the game<br><br>There is NO LCAB Courtesy Runner option |

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# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES

While risk of one athlete infecting another with HIV/AIDS during competition is close to non-existent there is a remote risk that other blood borne infectious diseases can be transmitted. For example Hepatitis B can be present in blood as well as in other body fluids. Procedures for reducing the potential for transmission of these infectious agents should not be limited to the following:

1. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered, and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the athlete may participate.

2. Routine use of gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.

3. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated (in contact) with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.

4. Clean all blood contaminated surfaces and equipment with a solution made from proper dilution of household bleach (CDC recommends 1-100) or other disinfectants before competition resumes.

5. Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices.

6. Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags or other ventilation devices should be available for use.

7. Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition is resolved.

8. Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.

9. Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling bloody dressings, mouth guards, and other articles containing body fluids.

# USSSA POLICY RE: FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL CONCUSSION LAWS

USSSA, as a sanctioning body of athletic events, shares the concerns being raised on a national and local level regarding concussions and concussion symptoms in participants, coaches/managers and umpires/referees in USSSA sanctioned activities. USSSA encourages its directors, umpires, coaches, referees, teams, team managers, and all adults involved in youth activities and participants to learn all they can about concussions in athletics and requires each of them and each of the USSSA directors to follow all federal, state and local laws (including concussion training and reaction laws) with regard to athletic competition sanctioned by USSSA. In addition, USSSA hereby adds the following to the rule books of each USSSA sport which does not defer to another organization for its rule book.

Upon becoming aware that a participant or coach/manager of any team has received a suspected concussion (or has been struck in the head area with any significant force), the Team Manager will not allow that person to participate in any USSSA sanctioned event and if occurring during a USSSA sanctioned event, shall have that person removed from the playing field of any USSSA sanctioned event. Upon becoming aware that a participant, coach/manager or umpire/referee has received a suspected concussion (or has been struck in the head area with any significant force), an umpire/referee or director will have that person removed from the playing field of any USSSA sanctioned event. Without a written medical clearance from a licensed medical doctor to return to play, such persons will not be allowed to return to the USSSA playing field in a USSSA sanctioned event. For participants and coaches/managers, the medical written medical consent must be presented to the Team Manager/Director and retained permanently by the Team Manager/USSSA State Director. For umpires/referees, the medical written consent must be presented to the Tournament Director/UIC and Complex Director and retained permanently by the USSSA State Director. Any Team Manager, who allows a coach/manager or participant back on a USSSA sanctioned event playing field without first obtaining the required written consent, may be suspended by the State Director for up to one year and upon request of the State Director, may be suspended for a longer duration by the USSSA disbarment committee. State Directors allowing an umpire/referee back on the field of play without the necessary consent will be subject to being disciplined as determined by the USSSA Board of Directors.

In the event of severe head trauma in a USSSA sanctioned activity, the injured person will not be moved and an ambulance will be called, unless otherwise directed by a qualified medical professional. The parent or guardian of the injured person, however, will not be bound by this protocol and may choose a different approach consistent with their legal rights as the parent or guardian.

# AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

All of the Rules contained herein shall be subject to requests for reasonable modification for purposes of complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or other applicable law. Unless otherwise required by law, for the purpose of Rule 20, a "disability" is defined as a physical or mental impairment limiting one or more major life activities.

Reasonable modifications will be provided to disabled participants who satisfy all of the essential skills, abilities, and eligibility requirements for participation in the activity either in spite of a disability or with reasonable accommodation for a disability.

Reasonable modifications do not include the following:

1. Any modification which would change the fundamental nature of the activity;
2. Any modification which would result in an excessive financial or administrative burden to the governing body, the local association or the league;
3. Any modification which would provide the participant with an unfair competitive advantage; or
4. Any modification which would pose a significant risk to the health or safety of the participant making the request for the modification, or to the health or safety of other participants.

Any participant who, because of a disability, would like a reasonable modification to the Rules in order to participate should advise the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament or state director, and/or event organizer of the following:

1. The requested modification; and
2. How the modification will address the specific disability.

It is highly recommended that any request for reasonable modification be made at least two weeks in advance of the game, event or tournament to allow a reasonable inquiry to be made. Such an inquiry will include consideration of the participant's specific circumstances and the purpose of the rule, policy or practice at issue. Although attempts will be made to evaluate requests with less notice, it cannot be guaranteed that without two-weeks' notice a reasonable modification can be provided.

# USSSA NATIONAL BY-LAWS
# FASTPITCH SOFTBALL PROGRAM

## ARTICLE 1. NAME AND OBJECTIVE

**Sec.1.** **Name.** The program shall be known as USSSA Fastpitch Softball.

**Sec.2.** **Object.** The object of USSSA Fastpitch Softball is to organize and promote youth and adult fastpitch to perpetuate the interest and love of the game. To organize and provide an opportunity for teams to compete in league and tournament competition that leads to state and world championships in their respective age and class groups.

## ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

**Sec.1.** **Team membership:** Men's, Women's, 18/16/15/14/13/12/11/10/9/8/7/6 & Under class "USA ES", "A", "B", "C" and Rec/All-Star team's fees shall be set annually by the USSSA Fastpitch National Committee.

**Sec.2.** The fastpitch season and team registration will run from a date immediately following the second full weekend in August (to be specifically determined annually) until a corresponding August date the following year. Tournaments and leagues played after the season end date, (excluding current year's World Series) will qualify teams for the following season's State and World Series Tournaments. All teams playing between the season start date and December 31, (excluding current year's World Series) must play by the following the USSSA playing year's eligibility classifications.

**Sec. 3.** **Umpire Membership.** Fees will be set annually by the Board of Directors.

**Sec. 4.** **League participation.** Most USSSA Fastpitch sanctioned leagues will qualify teams for state and / or World Series tournament play.

**Sec. 5.** **Tournament participation.** Most USSSA Fastpitch tournaments held prior to championship events will qualify teams for State, World Series and/or National tournament play. All teams are encouraged but not required to play in their State Tournament in order to advance to the World Series and/or National play. The full qualification procedures for National and World Series events can be found at: https://www.usssa.com/fastpitch/fastpitch-qualifying-procedures/.

For information and qualification requirements for USA Elite Select national events, please refer to http://usaeliteselect.com

**Sec.6.** **Division of play.** USSSA may offer multiple classifications for National and World Series play in all age divisions. Each state will adopt an acceptable method to classify teams that aligns with established national standards for classifications. These standards shall be reviewed and set by the National Fastpitch Committee. Multiple criteria and data will factor into the process of deciding a team's class. Teams will be classified by their State Director. Directors shall refrain from discussing a team's classification with other teams.

## ARTICLE III. TEAM ELIGIBILITY

**Sec.1.** No team shall be allowed to compete in USSSA sanctioned leagues or tournaments without paying their National Team registration fees to the association. Tournament and league directors must ensure that all participating teams are properly registered in the USSSA online system prior to the beginning of an event.

**Sec.2.** A, B, C and Rec / All-Star teams must be composed of not more than twenty eligible players. USA Elite Select rosters are not limited. Coaches or managers in the adult divisions must be included on the roster in order to be eligible to play.

**Sec.3.** The cut-off date for adding players to the roster shall be determined by the State Director.

**Sec.4.** Team sponsor travel expense monies may be awarded at all USSSA tournaments. A team winning a tournament and advancing to a higher tournament may be allowed expense money in accordance with advance rules governing the tournament, which rules shall be promulgated by the National Headquarters of the association and are consistent with the constitution of the USSSA. Such expense monies shall be presented to the team and not the individual players and must be used by the team to offset team expenses. The same rule shall apply to any such rule governing league winners advancing to tournaments

**Sec.5.** A State Director has the authority to reclassify any team during the current season except when a team has been reclassified by the USSSA Fastpitch National Committee.

## ARTICLE IV. INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

**Sec.1.** A player is eligible to compete in the USSSA Fastpitch program as long as they abide by the fastpitch by-laws and playing rules, when listed as a member of an eligible team.

**Sec.2.** A player shall not compete in any sanctioned tournament of the association with more than one team during the same tournament.

**Sec.3.** A tournament director may not manage, coach, participate as a player, or Umpire in any tournament in which they serve as tournament director

**Sec.4.** There is no specific requirement or deadline for a state director to freeze or lock a roster, however once a roster is frozen teams are allowed to add up to three players.

All players added to a frozen roster must meet the following requirements:

1. Players cannot be on another frozen team's roster.
2. All roster additions must be approved by the State Fastpitch Director via the online approval process.

**Sec.5.** A player that is released from a qualified team's roster cannot return to that team during the current season, unless approved by the State Director via the online approval process. A player may be released from only one qualified team's roster during the current season.

**Sec.6.** **Guest Players.** A player already rostered on a USSSA team may be a "Guest Player" for another USSSA registered team. The manager of the team seeking the guest player must use the online guest player system at www.usssa.com and abide by its policies and rules. A State Director can choose to allow or not allow guest players for the State Tournament. Guest players are allowed in World Series and National Events with a limit of 3 guests allowed per team.

**Sec.7.** A player that is in violation the Association's fastpitch by-laws or playing rules and regulations shall be considered an ineligible player.

**Sec.8.** Any time during a game or after, if the tournament director discovers an ineligible player they have the authority to apply penalties as described in the USSSA fastpitch rulebook.

**Sec.9.** All players participating in USSSA Fastpitch youth tournaments shall have proof of age in the possession of their team manager at all times. Proof of age must be verified by a government issued document that identifies the player by name, gender and birth date. Failure to produce a copy of such document upon demand by a tournament official or producing documents determined to be fraudulent will result in the player being deemed ineligible. The penalties for use of an ineligible player are the offending team losing the game, being placed last in the standings and forfeiting all awards, sponsors travel money and tournament berths that would have been awarded at the tournament.

**Sec.10.** **Suspension Enforcement.** It shall be the responsibility of the tournament director and/or event leadership team to enforce suspensions within events for coach ejections in accordance with Rule 12, Sec.1.

**Sec.11.** **Egregious Acts.** A coach and/or player may be suspended for additional games if the offending act is viewed as egregious and the additional suspension is approved by the State Director. Egregious unsporting conduct, fighting and gross malicious contact are examples of such acts and may warrant additional suspension at the discretion of the State Director.

**Sec.12.** **Suspension Transfer to Future Events.** If a suspended coach or player does not meet the obligation of the suspension in the current event, it is the responsibility of the tournament director to communicate the unserved suspension to the State Director who shall ensure that the penalty is enforced at the next USSSA event that the participant is scheduled to take part in.

## ARTICLE V. STATE AND INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

**Sec.1.** The State or Area Director shall oversee all tournaments within their defined area to assure that proper administration is being applied at all times.

**Sec.2.** Amounts to be charged as entry fees for such tournaments shall be left up to the discretion of the State or Area Director.

**Sec.3.** The number of trophies and awards and amount of travel monies to be awarded will be left up to the discretion of the State or Area Director

**Sec.4.** Tournaments that offer separate, unequal brackets may not be placed as equal following the event. For example, a 16-team tournament where teams are seeded out of pool play into separate 8 team brackets may have only 1 tournament champion. The winner of the "silver" bracket shall be the 9th place team.

**Sec.5.** Each state will use a "Direct Berth" system whereby the number of berths to World Series from qualifying tournaments shall be determined by the following based on the number of participating teams in the tournament:

| | |
|---|---|
| 4-6 Teams | 1 Berth |
| 7-12 Teams | 2 Berths |
| 13-18 Teams | 3 Berths |
| 19-24 Teams | 4 Berths |
| 25+ Teams | 5 Berths |

A State Director may expand on the above by adopting an at-large berth process to be used in conjunction with the "Direct Berth" system. League participation may also be included in such a system at the discretion of the State Director.

**Sec.6.** For a tournament to be considered as sanctioned by the Association, all applicable fees and registrations must be promptly paid to the Association and the event must be administered through the national online system with all results entered and placings set following the event.

**Sec.7.** Only USSSA Fastpitch approved softballs can be used in any USSSA event. Such approval will be made by the USSSA Board of Directors.

**Sec.8.** State tournaments shall be scheduled to provide each team at least two games of participation. This can be changed at the site of the tournament by the tournament director after the event has begun and it is determined that it would not be feasible to attempt to continue under the initial format due to weather or other unforeseen conditions. A substitute plan will be decided upon at the tournament site.

**Sec.9.** Tournament refund policies are determined by the State Director subject to approval of the National Fastpitch Committee.

## ARTICLE VI. USSSA WORLD SERIES TOURNAMENTS

**Sec.1.** World Series Tournament entry fees will be established by the USSSA Board of Directors.

**Sec.2.** World Series Tournament Format

**A.** The USSSA Fastpitch program will use "pool play" format in its World Series tournaments. Teams will be placed in pools where they will play a minimum of two games. A double elimination format will be used in the championship bracket following pool play. The exact format of the tournament, number of pools, number of teams in each pool will be set by the tournament director and approved by the USSSA Fastpitch National Committee.

**B.** In all pool play games, the winner of a coin toss prior to the start of a game will be the home team. In bracket play, the home team will be determined as follows:

BRACKET GAMES PRIOR TO CHAMPIONSHIP - higher seed from pool play shall be the home team

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME - undefeated (i.e., "winner's bracket") team shall be the home team

IF NECESSARY GAME - coin toss winner shall be the home team

**NOTES:**

**1.** In bracket play, if both teams are equally seeded, then a coin toss will be used and the winner of that coin toss shall be the home team.

**2.** If a tournament must be reverted to single elimination format so that both teams in the championship game are undefeated, home team will be awarded to the higher seed from pool play (if one exists)

**C.** Teams will be seeded into pool play based on their national points at the time of pool play bracketing.

**D.** Teams will be seeded into the double elimination bracket using the following criteria from pool play results. Note this process continues and does not start over if a tie is broken when three or more teams are tied.

**1.** Winning percentage.
**2.** Number of wins.
**3.** Number of losses.
**4.** Winning percentage of tied teams versus each other.
**5.** Average runs allowed.
**6.** Average run differential with a max/min of +/- 8 per game.
**7.** USSSA points.
**8.** Date team entered the USSSA database.

**E.** The following tiebreaker system will be used at all World Series tournaments to determine an order of finish in the event a tournament cannot be completed. Note that all games in the tournament should be

used when average runs scored or allowed are being computed. This includes both pool and bracket play.

1. All teams still in the Winners' Bracket are ordered first, using the following:
   - **a)** Winning percentage including pool and bracket play
   - **b)** Least average runs allowed per game played
   - **c)** Highest average run differential per game played (8 run limit)
   - **d)** Coin toss
2. Next, teams in the same spot in the Losers' Bracket are ordered by the following:
   - **a)** Head-to-head (this is used first when only two teams are in the same spot)
   - **b)** The team which advanced farthest in the Winners' Bracket before losing
   - **c)** Least average runs allowed per game played
   - **d)** Highest average run differential per game played (8 run limit)
   - **e)** Coin toss
3. If only two teams remain in the tournament and each has one loss in bracket play, then those teams will be declared co-champions.

**Sec.3.** World Series tournament play shall be under the jurisdiction of the USSSA National Director of Fastpitch and the Fastpitch National Committee. The Association's National Director of Fastpitch shall appoint a duly qualified person to serve as tournament director. The tournament director shall supervise the event and be responsible for ensuring that the tournament is run according to all the rules, procedures and terms of the written contract and is in accordance with all rules and regulations of the association. The tournament director in carrying out his or her duties shall report directly to the Association's National Director of Fastpitch.

**Sec.4.** World Series tournaments with twelve or more entries may not be canceled for lack of participation. World Series tournaments that draw less than twelve teams must notify all teams that they have the option of withdrawing from the tournament with their full entry fee refunded. World Series tournaments requesting cancellation must do so by notifying the National Director of Fastpitch within 24 hours after the published cut-off date.

**Sec.5.** **Tournament participation.** Most USSSA Fastpitch tournaments held prior to championship events will qualify teams for State, World Series and/or National tournament play. Teams are encouraged but not required to play in their State Tournament in order to advance to the World Series and/or National play. For information and qualification requirements for USA Elite Select national events, please refer to http://usaeliteselect.com

**Sec.6.** All teams entering a World Series tournament must be approved their State Director. If a state does not have a State Director, then such approval can be given by the USSSA National Fastpitch Committee Representative.

**Sec.7.** When a team has qualified to compete in a World Series tournament but for some legitimate reason cannot compete, the State or Area Director may select the next team in line to take their place or may select a substitute plan to award the berth.

**Sec.8.** No change to a team's roster will be allowed after the team has begun play in its first game during a tournament. All team rosters must be posted on the USSSA Fastpitch website and approved by the State Director.

**Sec.9.** A deadline for accepting entries in the World Series tournament shall be set by the tournament director and approved by the USSSA National Committee.

**Sec.10.** It shall be mandatory that the following awards are presented at all World Series tournaments:

- **A.** 8-12 Teams Top 3 awarded
- **B.** 13-32 Teams Top 4 awarded
- **C.** 33+ Teams Top 6 awarded
- **D.** Individual awards to each member and manager based on A, B & C above.
- **E.** Suitable award to outstanding defensive player.
- **F.** Suitable award to outstanding offensive player.
- **G.** Suitable award to tournament most valuable player.
- **H.** Suitable award for team sportsmanship.
- **I.** Suitable award for outstanding pitcher
- **J.** All awards where applicable must bear the name USSSA Fastpitch or the USSSA Fastpitch logo and must identify the specific event.
- **K.** All awards for "Open", "A" or "B" World Series must be ordered from the national office as part of the National Fastpitch World Series package.

**Sec.11.** Any team in a World Series that forfeits their next game may be subject to further penalties up to and including expulsion from the tournament. If expelled, the team will be placed last in standings and will not be eligible for any awards, sponsor travel expense allocations, national ranking points or berths that were intended to be given in that particular tournament. The scheduled opponent will be credited with a victory and be advanced immediately on the tournament bracket.

**Sec.12.** Players and coaches participating in a World Series cannot be charged any additional fees to gain admission to said playing site. Teams will be limited to a total of three coach's passes.

**Sec.13.** At all World Series Umpires will be paid a minimum fee per game which will be set by the USSSA National Fastpitch Committee.

**Sec.14.** World Series Tournament Umpire Qualifications

- **A.** Umpires must be registered by June 1 and in good standing with USSSA.
- **B.** Umpires must be recommended by their Regional Fastpitch U.I.C. and State Fastpitch Director where they are registered. Recommended

Umpires are selected by the Tournament U.I.C. It is recommended that the Umpires selected include Umpires from within the division where the tournament is being held. Umpires may be selected outside the division.

**C.** Umpires should have worked fastpitch for a minimum of two (2) years and be knowledgeable of all USSSA fastpitch rules. It is strongly recommended that they attend all USSSA Umpire clinics when available.

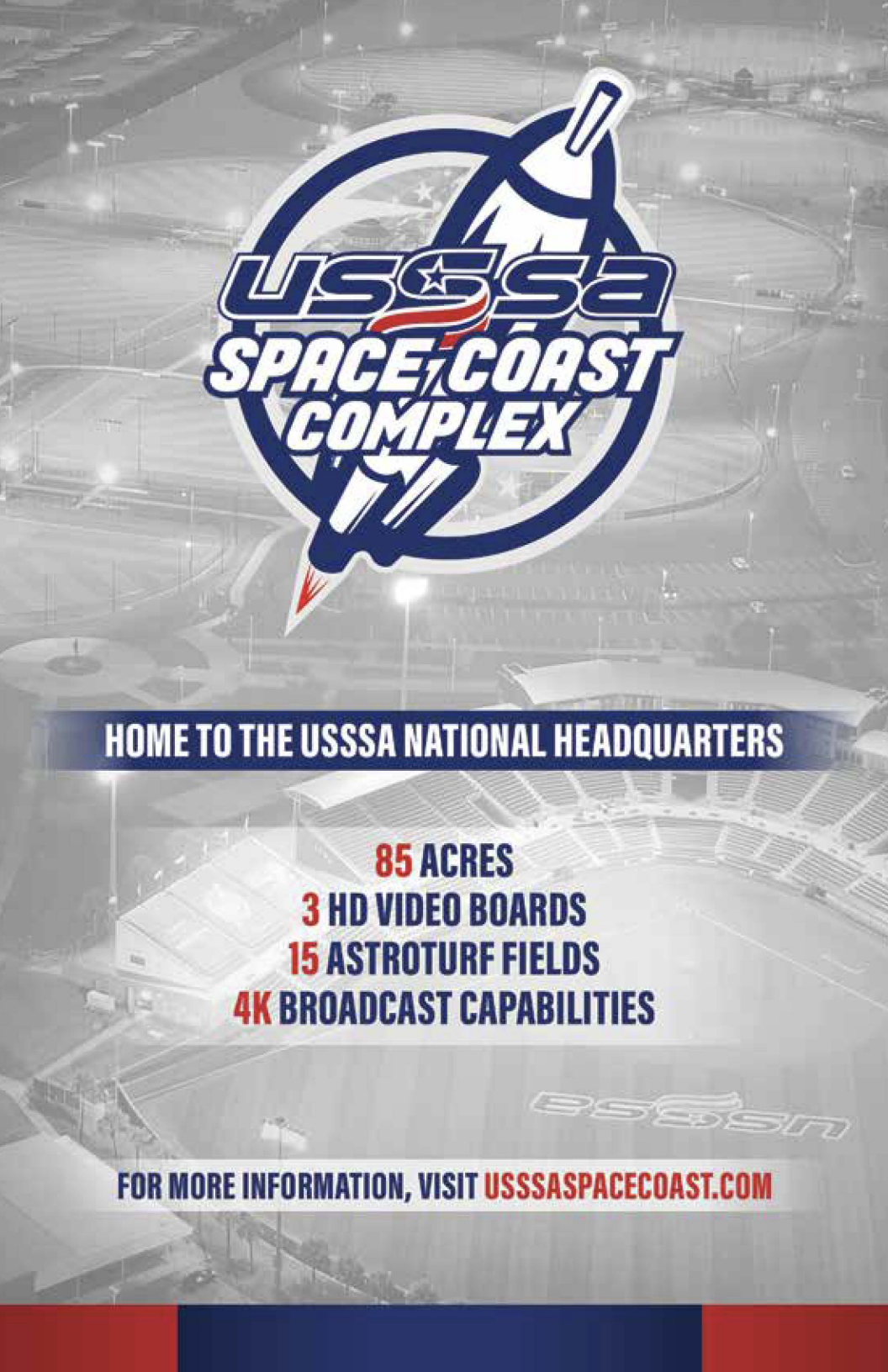
**D.** All Umpires must be dressed in the official licensed USSSA Umpire's uniform as prescribed in the Rule on Regulations for Umpires. The World Series Umpire in Chief will determine uniform requirements for the specific tournament. The World Series Umpire uniform shall be limited to:

**1.** USSSA licensed mesh pullover shirt. The colors for World Series shall be red or black.

**2.** USSSA licensed Umpire cap. The World Series cap shall be all black with red USSSA letters embroidered.

**3.** Black ball bag.

## NOTES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