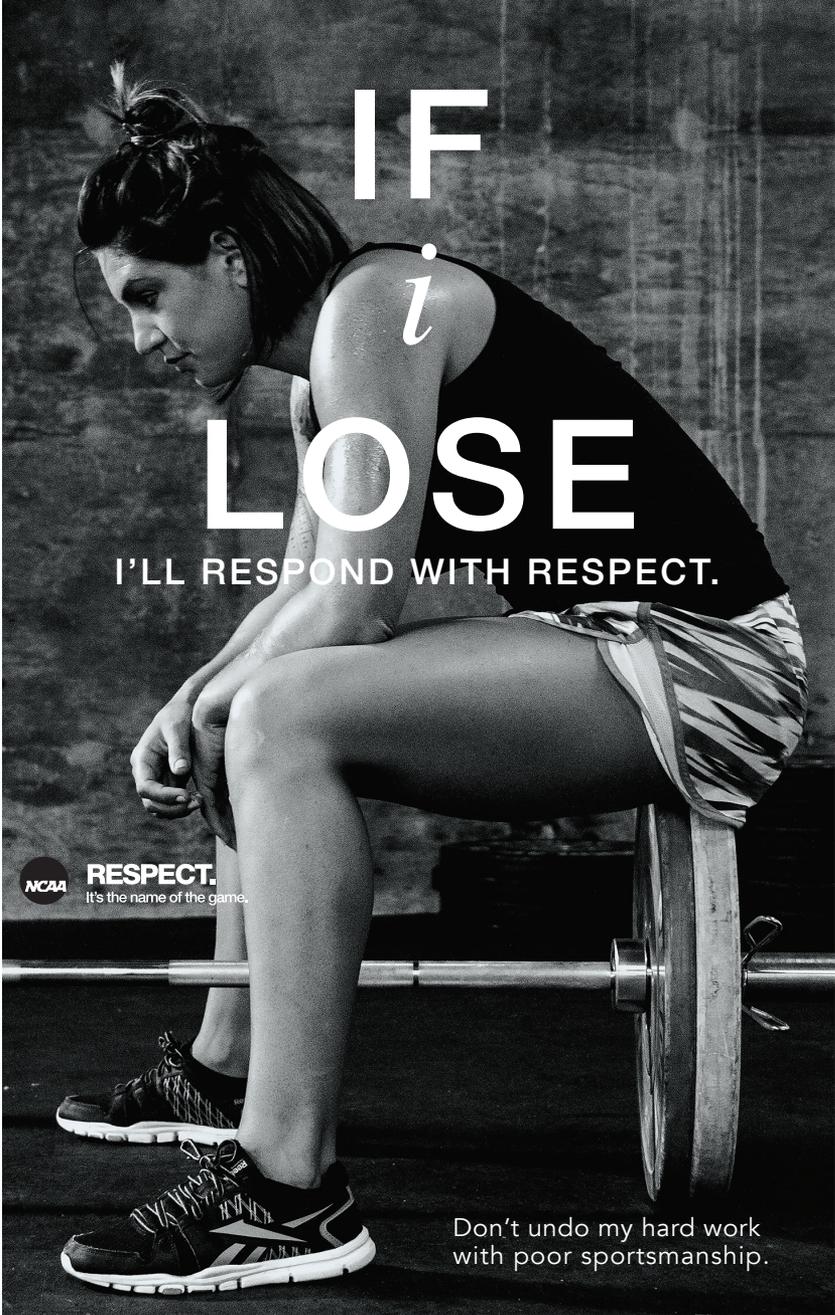




SOFTBALL

2024 and 2025 Rules Book



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2024 and 2025 NCAA SOFTBALL RULES

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



[ISSN 1089-0106]
THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
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NCAA.ORG
OCTOBER 2023

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REPRINTED: 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003,
2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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NCAA Softball Rules Committee

The chart below lists the members of the committee who voted on and approved the rules included in this edition of the book. This information is being included for historical purposes.

Name	Institution	Term Expiration
Tracie Adix-Zins	DePaul University	8-31-25
Janelle Breneman	The University of North Carolina at Greensboro	8-31-23
Shena Hollar, chair	Lenoir-Rhyne University	8-31-23
Bridget Martin	McNeese State University	8-31-24
Tina Phillips	University of Pittsburgh, Bradford	8-31-26
Trisha Senyo	Whittier College	8-31-25
Vickie Van Kleeck*	Secretary-Rules Editor	8-31-27
Kate Whalen	Regis University (Colorado)	8-31-24
Mike White	University of Texas at Austin	8-31-23

*Non-voting member



For a complete and current listing of the NCAA Softball Rules Committee, please go to www.ncaa.org/playingrules.

Contact information for the secretary-rules editor, national coordinator of umpires and equipment consultant is available on Page 8.

Major Rules Changes for 2024 and 2025

*Each changed or altered segment is identified in the rules by a **shaded** background.*

Bases — First Base (Rule 2.7). Allows the use of a double base at first base.

Fences (Rule 2.15.1). By January 1, 2027, requires sideline and home run fences constructed of a hard material to be padded. Approved Summer 2022.

Fences (Rule 2.15.2.1 and Dimension Table). For all new construction, requires the fence distance to be 200 feet in left and right fields.

Visible Action Clock (Rules 2.34, 6.7, 10.18 and 11.2.1). Allows a visible action clock(s) to assist in enforcing all timing rules equitably.

Ball Specifications (Rule 3.2.1). Standardizes ball specifications to a compression of 275-375 pounds. Approved Summer 2021 and effective January 1, 2024.

Bats — Knob (Rule 3.3.1.7.2). Eliminates the requirement that bats have ¼-inch knob protrusion.

Assistant Coach (Rules 4.1, 6.5.6, 6.6.6 and 13.3.5). Prohibits assistant coaches who are not in a coach's box or serving as the acting head coach from communicating with an umpire(s).

Electronic Equipment (Rules 5.9.8 and 5.9.9). Allows an exclusively one-way electronic communication device to be used by the defense to relay the pitch or play call from the dugout to the field.

Video Review (Rule 5.9.10 and Appendix G). Revises video review.

Postgame Review of Suspensions (Rules 5.9.11.3 and 13.13.5). Allows a postgame review of only those ejections that include a suspension.

Obstruction (Rule 9.5.1.2 and 9.5.2). Revises obstruction.

Step/Stride (Rule 10.1.2.1 and 10.5.4). Allows pitchers to disengage from the playing surface during the delivery.

Time Allowed Between Pitches (Rules 10.18 and 11.2.1). Changes the time between pitches from 25 seconds to 20 seconds.

Warmup Pitches (Rule 10.19.2). Allows the pitcher one throw to any base during the allowed warmup time.

Significant Editorial Changes

Note: These are additions/clarifications that have been part of case book interpretations or custom but have not appeared in the rules book. There have been many minor editorial changes to clean up language and eliminate wordiness.

Rule.....	Change
1.12.2.....	Clarification
3.3.1.4.....	Clarification
3.3.2.....	Clarification
4.5.....	Clarification
6.10.4.....	Clarification
8.1.1.1 and 8.1.1.2 EFFECT.....	Interpretation
11.6.1 Note.....	Clarification
11.6.2.....	Correction
11.12.1.....	Correction

Codes of Conduct

Sportsmanship is a core value of the NCAA. The NCAA Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct has identified respect and integrity as two critical elements of sportsmanship and launched an awareness and action campaign at the NCAA Convention in January 2009. Athletics administrators may download materials and view best practices at:

<https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/2/10/fairness-and-integrity>



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

Coaches/Players

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

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current NCAA softball rules.
- b. Coaches must be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire and are to ensure their players are legally equipped and properly attired for competition. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.
- c. Confine discussion with the game officials to the interpretation of the rules.
- d. Coaches and players are to comply wholeheartedly with the spirit and intent of the rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible.
- e. Coaches and players are to respect the dignity and integrity of the game, opponents, officials, spectators and the institutions they represent.
- f. Coaches are to prohibit team personnel from using profanity, obscenities, or making personal, vulgar, or malicious remarks toward opponents, officials and spectators.
- g. Coaches and players are to refrain from making disparaging public comments on officiating to the media.
- h. Coaches and players are to refrain from any personal actions that might be considered unsportsmanlike acts toward opponents, officials or spectators.
- i. Coaches are to seek help from the on-site administrator or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly students and spectators.

Umpires

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

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

The Rules

The NCAA Softball Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport and establishing specifications for its equipment. It establishes guidelines, specifications and maximum/minimum performance restrictions it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede in order to maintain that integrity and to ensure a player's performance is more a product of their individual skill than of their equipment. Only equipment that meets the specifications written in the NCAA Softball Rules may be used in intercollegiate competition.

Rules violations requiring the filing of the NCAA Softball Incident Report refer to the report that must be submitted electronically through the NCAA softball playing rules website at www.ncaa.org/playing-rules/softball-rules-game or NCAA Softball Umpiring Home Plate (SUP) website at <https://www.refquest.com/governing-body/ncaa/softball>. Protests must be filed using the Protest Form and postgame suspension reviews must be filed using the Postgame Suspension Review Form, which also are located at the above websites.



The NCAA Softball Case Book should be used as a supplemental resource when reading and understanding these rules. The case book is on the playing rules website and contains situations and interpretations to be used in conjunction with this rules book.

The NCAA Softball Rules Committee has designated several administrative playing rules that can be set aside or modified during either the championship or nonchampionship season. All other conduct rules may not be altered and NCAA member institutions are required to conduct their intercollegiate contests according to the current NCAA Softball Rules in conjunction with the applicable NCAA bylaws.

Championship Segment

The administrative rules that may be altered by mutual consent of the competing institutions are:

- Rule 5.6 Pregame protocol;
- Rule 6.13.4 Time between games of a doubleheader; or
- Rules 6.16 and 6.18 Whether or not to use the tiebreaker or halted game rules.

Nonchampionship Segment

The intent of these rule exceptions for the nonchampionship season is to provide a quality, educational experience for student-athletes and yet provide structure and competitive equity by abiding by all except the following rules:

Rule 6.14 Eight-Run Rule may be set aside in order to allow for at least seven innings of play.

Rules 8.3.3, 8.5 and 8.6 which restrict substitutions and limit reentry rights. In the nonchampionship season, free substitution and batting out of order shall be allowed, and changes need not be reported through umpires.

In addition to abiding by all the other playing rules published in the current edition of the NCAA Softball Rules, participating coaches may agree to the following additions:

- 1) Participate in experimental rules created by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee, and set aside any playing rules that would then be in conflict;
- 2) Begin half innings with one or more runners on base;
- 3) Agree to replay a poorly executed play not more than once per team per inning; and/or
- 4) Play a maximum of 10 innings per game.

In all cases, if participating coaches wish to use one or more exceptions or additions listed above, they must be agreed upon and communicated to the umpire crew not later than the pregame meeting.

Note: Institutional scrimmages are not subject to these rules of competition as long as they are limited to participation by appropriate institutional personnel and no outside competitors participate other than those allowed under the alumni exception of the bylaws. Practices with outside competition are also exempt from playing rules, but must only display skills of the sport rather than competition between participants.

The secretary-rules editor is the sole interpreter of the NCAA softball playing rules. Those seeking requests for documentation of disability (see Appendix I) or religious accommodations, rule exceptions, interpretations or clarifications of the softball rules may contact:



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RULE 1

Definitions

1.1 Base on Balls

An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during their time at bat, receives any combination of four pitches or awards that are declared balls.

1.2 Base Runner

An offensive player who was on base at the time of a pitch and is advancing to, touching or returning to a base.

1.3 Batted Ball

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

1.4 Batter

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

1.5 Batter-Runner

The offensive player who started in the batter's box, has completed their turn at bat and has left it in an attempt to reach base safely. The player remains the batter-runner until continuous actions end with the batter-runner safe or put out.

1.6 Blocked Ball

A live batted, pitched or thrown ball that contacts nongame personnel, game personnel in unauthorized areas, loose equipment or an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area, or dead-ball territory. Blocked ball also refers to a ball that remains on the playing field but has become lodged, wedged or stuck in something other than a fielder's glove.

1.7 Flagrant

An act that involves excessive force with an opponent or egregious unsporting behavior.

1.8 Fly Ball

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

1.9 Ground Ball

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

1.10 Ground Rule

An allowable amendment of the playing rules to accommodate a particular circumstance (usually a field condition). Ground rules cannot conflict with or supersede a playing rule. (See also Rule 5.8.3.)

1.11 In Flight

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

1.12 Inning

1.12.1 That portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three putouts for each team.

1.12.2 Half inning. Each team's respective time at bat or in the field. The interval during which one team is on offense and the other is on defense. The top of the first half inning, and the game, begins when a pitch is thrown (legally or illegally). Thereafter, a half inning begins when the umpire calls, "Play ball." A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the bottom of the last inning, the winning run is scored.

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

1.13 Interference

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

1.14 Line Drive

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

1.15 No Pitch

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

1.16 Out

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

1.17 Overthrow

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

1.18 Play

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

1.18.2 A play can also refer to an action by a pitcher to elicit a reaction from the runner(s) as it pertains to the look-back rule. (See Rule 12.16.)

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

1.19 Runner

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

1.20 Rundown

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

1.21 Safe

A declaration and/or signal by the umpire indicating that a runner is not out or has successfully taken possession of a base. A safe signal may also be given by an umpire to acknowledge having seen a potential catch or rule violation but determining no catch or violation occurred.

1.22 Strikeout

A putout that is credited to the catcher as a result of the batter being charged with three strikes in a single at-bat.

1.23 "Time"

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

1.24 Timing Play

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

1.25 Turn at Bat

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

1.26 Without Liability to be Put Out

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

RULE 2

Field of Play

The following information regarding the playing facility and field specifications applies to all competition regulated by the NCAA Softball Rules.

2.1 Layout

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

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

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

2.2 Artificial Turf

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

2.3 Backstop

2.3.1 A backstop is the required barrier behind home plate that usually stops the ball from going out of play.

2.3.2 It should be a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum distance of 30 feet from home plate (not including the padding). (See diagram at end of rule.)

2.3.3 It is recommended that the backstop be vertical and not extend over the playing field.

2.3.4 For institutional and municipal fields, when the backstop is wood, concrete or brick, it shall be padded from dugout to dugout beginning not higher than 1 foot off the ground and extending to the top of the wood, cement or brick or 6 feet from the ground, whichever is shorter.

EFFECT—See Rule 5.5.1.

2.4 Base Distance

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

2.5 Baseline

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

2.6 Base Path

The imaginary direct line, and three feet to either side of the line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag. The base path is the established path on the infield traveled by a runner who is attempting to advance to the next base.

2.7 Bases—First, Second and Third

First, second and third bases are three of the four points that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run. They shall be made of high-density foam covered by a suitable white rubberized or vinyl material securely fastened to the ground by an anchoring system. Each bag shall be 15 inches square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 1½ to 3½ inches. Bases may have tapered edges. A release-type base may be used. **The double first base may be used by mutual agreement of both coaches.**

Note: Only a sticker or label with an NCAA branding, an NCAA team or conference logo, name or abbreviation may be used. It may be located only on the middle third of the rise of the base. At no time is the branding sticker allowed on top of the base.

2.8 Batter's Boxes

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

2.9 Bullpen

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

be set up so that pitchers will be throwing in the same direction in practice as when they throw in the game.

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

2.10 Catcher's Box

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

2.11 Coaches' Boxes

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

2.12 Dead-Ball Territory

That area beyond any real playing field boundary (such as a fence, backstop, rope, chalk line, bleachers, dugouts or any imaginary boundary line, as determined in the pregame conference), where a live ball becomes dead.

2.13 Dugout (Bench)

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

2.13.2 It is recommended that dugouts are enclosed at each end and at the rear. For institutional and municipal fields, it is required that the field side of the dugout be protected by netting or fencing not less than 6 feet from the floor of the dugout except for the designated entrances and exits to the field.

EFFECT—(2.13.1 and 2.13.2)—See Rule 5.5.1.

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

2.14 Fair Territory

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

2.15 Fences

- 2.15.1 It is highly recommended that the playing field be enclosed completely by sideline fences and a permanent home run fence in a smooth arc of not more than 235 feet from home plate. By January 1, 2027, sideline and home run fences constructed of a hard material (e.g., wood, concrete or brick) are required to be padded. Padding must begin not higher than 1 foot off the ground and extend to the top of the wood, concrete or brick or 6 feet from the ground, whichever is shorter.
- 2.15.2 Institutional fields with a 6-foot or taller fence shall be a minimum of 190 feet in left and right fields and 220 feet in center field. Institutional fields with a 4-foot fence shall be a minimum of 210 feet in left and right fields and 230 feet in center field. It is highly recommended municipal fields meet these same requirements.
- 2.15.2.1 For all new construction, it is required that the fence be 6 feet or higher and be a minimum of 200 feet in left and right fields and 220 feet in center field.
- 2.15.3 If a temporary home run fence is used, it must be secured so as not to collapse on and displace the foul pole. For an unfenced field, an out-of-bounds line shall be used to define dead-ball areas.
- 2.15.4 If the foul pole is located behind the home run fence, the white foul line must be extended upward on the fence to connect the ground to the top of the foul pole.

2.16 Foul Pole

- 2.16.1 The foul pole shall be a single-colored pole, either white or fluorescent orange, that extends vertically upward from the foul line at the point it intersects the home run fence to delineate fair and foul balls. The pole and/or the line connecting the ground to the top of the pole shall be visible from home plate.
- 2.16.2 The pole shall extend a minimum of 10, or the recommended height of at least 40, feet from the ground and shall be immediately adjacent to or attached to the outside of the home run fence.
- 2.16.3 It is recommended that screening be attached to the fair side of the pole to enhance the visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the pole. The screening width should be at least 6 inches and should extend from 6 inches above the top of the fence to the top of the pole. Attachments (e.g., screening, flags, pennants) are prohibited on the foul side of the pole.

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

2.17 Foul Territory

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

2.18 Home Plate

- 2.18.1 Home plate must be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber. The sides shall be 8½ inches long, and the edge facing the pitcher shall be 17 inches wide and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long. (See diagram at end of rule.)

- 2.18.2 Home plate shall be set in fair territory with the two 12-inch edges coinciding with the foul lines extending from home plate to first base and to third base and with the 17-inch edge facing the pitcher.
- 2.18.3 The top edges of home plate shall be beveled, and the plate shall be fixed in the ground, level with the ground surface.

2.19 Infield

The infield is the portion of the field in fair territory that includes the wedge-shaped area surrounding the diamond formed by the baselines. The infield shall be level, but to allow for natural surface drainage, it is recommended that the entire playing area be graded 0.5% from the edge of the pitcher's plate to the infield/outfield rim and 1% to the sideline boundaries of the field.

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

The skinned area should be determined by measuring a 60-foot arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate. (See diagram at end of rule.)

2.20 Lines (Markings)

- 2.20.1 Lines (foul lines, running lane, on-deck circles, pitcher's circle and lane, dead-ball areas, and coaching, batter's and catcher's boxes) denote spaces to which players or coaches are restricted. The outermost edge of each line is the restricting boundary and shall meet the dimensions defined in the rules.

To be considered "within" the space, the player or coach must not have any part of the foot that is in contact with the ground extend beyond the outermost edge of the line.

To be considered "in" the space or "on the line," the foot of the player or coach may extend beyond the outermost edge of the line as long as at least part of the foot remains in contact with the line or with the ground inside the space. In either case, a player or coach may not have an entire foot or entire portion of the foot that is in contact with the ground be completely outside the line that defines the space.

The outside edge of the first- and third-base lines and their extensions should correspond with the outside edges of first and third bases, and the outside edge of the pitcher's lane should correspond with the outside edge of the pitcher's plate and batter's boxes.

All lines on the playing field shall be marked before each game and in white using paint or chalk. All lines must be 2 to 4 inches wide.

- 2.20.2 Lines shall be redrawn at the discretion of the umpire. Every attempt should be made to avoid significantly delaying the game; however, if the lines can be redrawn between innings, the umpire may direct the grounds crew to do so.
- 2.20.3 Team representatives, personnel and players shall not intentionally remove, or cover with infield material, any required lines on the field nor intentionally cover the pitcher's plate or home plate.

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

defense violates the rule. In addition, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending team. Subsequent violation by the same team shall result in an ejection of the offender. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Note: A batter may not be intentionally walked by violating Rule 2.20.3.

2.21 Live-Ball Territory

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

2.22 Nonregulation Field

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

Note: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the lines, or pitching or base distances, are incorrect, the error shall be corrected immediately, with no penalty, and the game shall continue from that point. If the pitching or base distances cannot be corrected or the game moved to a regulation field, "No Game" shall be declared. (See Rule 6.19.)

2.22.2 When playing on a nonregulation field (e.g., a dome or multiuse facility) due to weather conditions, the field should have minimum fence distances as noted in Rule 2.15. If the actual fence distances are shorter and a fair batted fly ball clears this distance, the batter shall be awarded a ground-rule double, not a home run, and each base runner advanced two bases.

2.23 On-Deck Circle

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

2.24 Outfield

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

2.25 Pitcher's Circle

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

2.26 Pitcher's Lane

The pitcher's lane is the area to which the pitcher is restricted when delivering the pitch. (See diagram and Dimension Table at end of rule.)

2.27 Pitcher's Plate

The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber or other suitable white material, 24 inches long and 6 inches wide, from which the pitcher must begin the pitch. (See diagram at end of rule.) It shall be fixed in

the ground, and the top of the plate shall be level with the ground surface. The nearer edge of the pitcher's plate shall be 43 feet from the back point of home plate. (See diagram at end of rule.)

2.28 Runner's Lane

The runner's lane is the area that is the last half of the distance between home plate and first base where a batter-runner must run to avoid interfering with a fielder's attempt to receive a thrown ball. It is bounded by a 30-foot line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3 feet from the first base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and the back edge of first base. (See diagram at end of rule.) If the infield is skinned, it is recommended the runner's lane be skinned.

2.29 Scoreboard

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

2.30 Sideline Territory

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

2.31 Tarp

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

2.32 Team Area

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

2.33 Video, Audio, Matrix Boards

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

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

2.34 Visible Action Clock

A visible action clock may be used to assist in enforcing all timing rules. (See Rules 6.7, 10.18 and 11.2.1.)

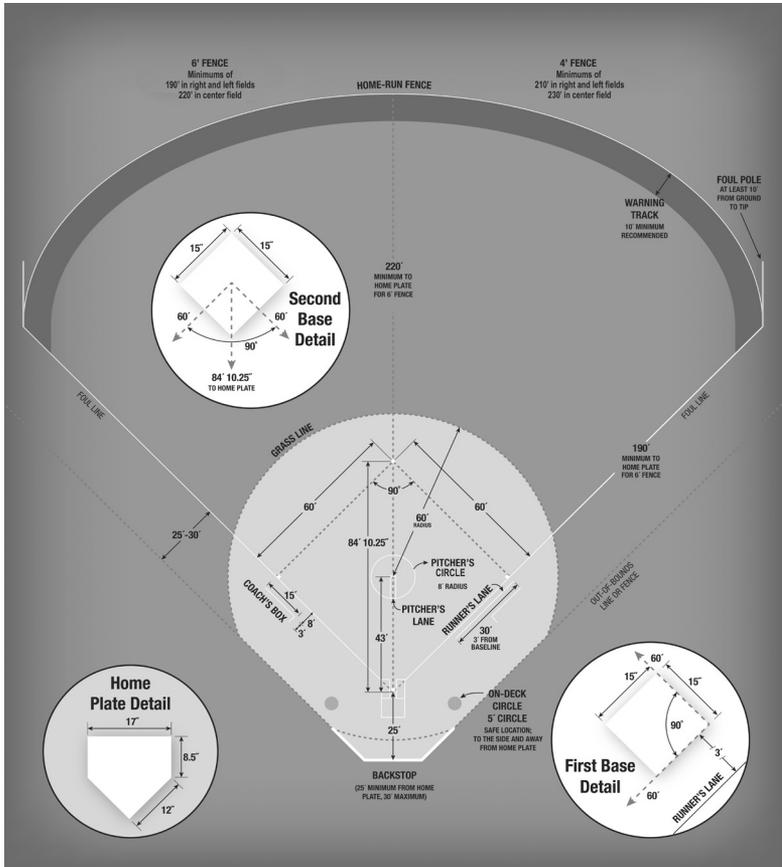
2.35 Warning Track

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

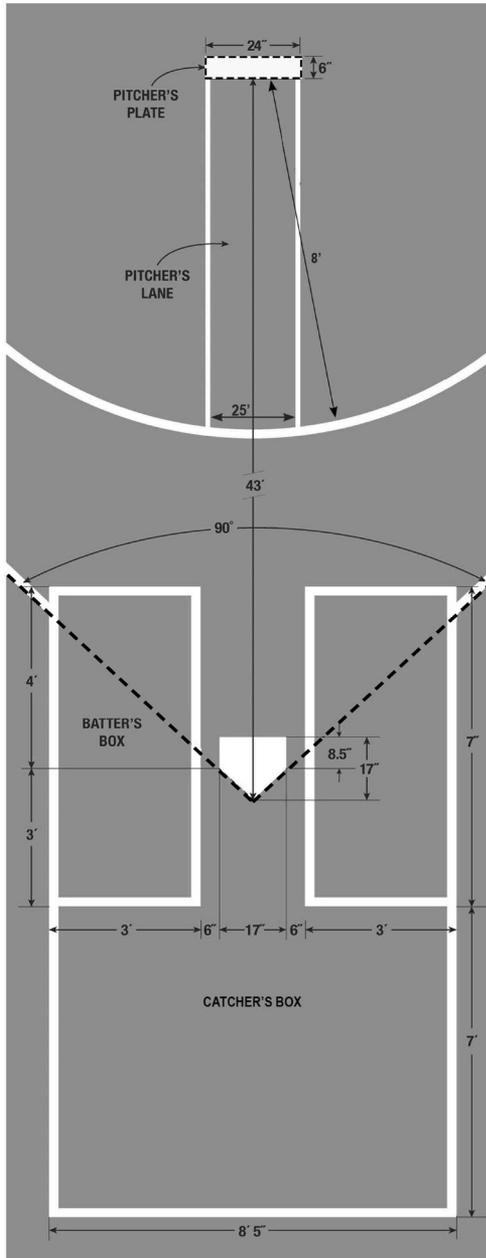
Dimension Table

Backstop	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from home plate
Bases	15 inches square and 1½ to 3½ inches thick
a. home plate to first/third	a. 60 feet from back point of home plate to the back of the base
b. home plate to second	b. 84 feet 10¼ inches from back point of home plate to the middle of the base
Batter's boxes	6 inches from home plate; 3 feet wide by 7 feet long; front lines 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate
Catcher's box	7 feet in length from rear outside corners of the batter's boxes; 8 feet 5 inches wide
Coaches' boxes	Marked by two lines. The first is a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first and third base lines extended from the back edge of the bases toward home plate; the second is a line 3 feet long drawn perpendicular to the end of the 15-foot line closest to home plate (see diagram)
Fences*	Smooth arc between sideline fences of not more than 235 feet from home plate
	6-foot fence -- 190 feet in right and left fields and 220 feet in center field
	4-foot fence -- 210 feet in right and left fields and 230 feet in center field
Fences (new construction)	6-foot fence -- 200 feet in right and left fields and 220 feet in center field
Foul pole	Extend a minimum of 10 feet, preferably 40 feet, above the ground; screening* attached to fair side at least 6 inches wide*; white or fluorescent orange.
Home plate	Front edge 17 inches wide; sides are parallel to the inside lines of batter's boxes and are 8½ inches long; sides of the point facing the catcher are 12 inches long
Infield	Center of second base is one corner of 60-foot square and the measurement to first and third bases is to the back edge of each base; all measurements made from the apex or back point of home plate
Skinned portion*	60-foot* arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate
Lines (markings)	2 to 4 inches wide
On-deck circle	5 feet in diameter; 2½ feet in radius
Pitcher's circle	8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate
Pitcher's lane	8-foot lines drawn within the outer edges of the pitcher's plate toward the inside edges of the inside front corners of the batter's boxes; 24 inches wide at the pitcher's plate and 25 inches wide where it intersects the pitcher's circle
Pitcher's plate	24 inches long by 6 inches wide; 43 feet from the back point of home plate
Runner's lane	30-foot line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3 feet from the first base line, starting halfway between home plate and back edge of first base.
Sideline territory	25-foot minimum and 30-foot maximum distance* from the foul lines extended to a point down the line as deep as the home run fence
Warning track*	10-15 feet wide material different from the outfield surface
*Recommended	

Softball Field Specifications



Field-marking lines must be drawn.



Field-marking lines must be drawn.

RULE 3

Equipment and Uniforms

Neither the NCAA nor the rules committee certifies the safety of any softball equipment. Only equipment that meets the specifications written in the NCAA Softball Rules may be used in intercollegiate competition.

3.1 All Equipment

3.1.1 All equipment used in intercollegiate competition should be of a nature commonly available to the general public through retailers.

EFFECT—If there is a question regarding the availability of the equipment, the umpire shall determine whether the equipment will be allowed in the game. In all cases, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but within 24 hours after the incident. The applicable head coach also may file an Incident Report.

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

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

3.2 Ball

3.2.1. The ball shall be an optic yellow sphere with raised red thread seams. It shall have a polycore center. The cover shall be smooth and made of chrome-tanned, top-grain horsehide or cowhide. It shall be affixed to the core by cement and sewn with waxed cotton or linen thread by the two-needle method with not fewer than 88 stitches per cover. The ball shall meet the following specifications.

Minimum circumference: 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches; maximum circumference: 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches;

Minimum weight: 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces; maximum weight: 7 ounces;

Maximum COR (coefficient of restitution): .47;

Compression: Minimum 275 pounds; Maximum 375 pounds; and
Maximum dynamic stiffness: 7,500 pounds per square inch.

3.2.2 The host team shall be responsible for providing a minimum of 12 game softballs of the same specifications and manufacturer.

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

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

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

3.3 Bats—Game

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

3.3.1.1 The barrel, taper and handle shall be one piece or multi-piece permanently assembled.

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

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

3.3.1.3 Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of damage (rattles, dents, burrs, excessive wobble and cracks) and not have any attachment nor be altered from their certification specifications.

3.3.1.4 Bats shall bear either the permanent ASA 2004 and/or fastpitch USA Softball certification mark, be on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List as maintained on the NCAA softball playing rules website and be inspected for damage by each game's umpires. (See also Rule 5.2.)

3.3.1.5 Shall not be more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight.

3.3.1.6 Shall not be more than 2¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/32 inch is permitted to allow for expansion.

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

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

3.3.1.7.2 The bat may have a knob of at least ¼ inch protruding at not more than a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or adjustable, but must be permanently fastened. The knob also may be a flare or cone taper that extends from the knob down the handle of the bat. It cannot exceed the diameter of the knob and can extend no more than three inches toward the barrel. The knob may be taped or marked for identification as long as there is no violation of this section. The knob may be solid or hollowed out to house an embedded metric sensor. If a sensor is used, it shall (1) not affect performance; (2) be secured by a locking mechanism and a back-up mechanism to keep it in place; and (3) have a distinguishing "offline" mode to indicate data cannot be accessed during a game.

- 3.3.1.7.3 The handle is the area between the knob and taper that is covered by the grip. It must be tubular and shall have a grip of cork, tape (no smooth or plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the knob. It may not exceed two layers. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral but need not be a solid layer. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only.
- 3.3.1.7.4 The taper is the transition area that connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. Its length and material can vary, and the taper has the fewest rule specifications. Like the barrel, it must be free of rattles, dents, burrs and cracks.
- 3.3.1.7.5 The barrel is between the taper and end cap and is the intended contact area for the pitch. The bat barrel shall be round and smooth to 0.050 inches in diameter, and the shell color(s) shall contrast with the color of the ball.
- 3.3.1.7.6 The end cap is a rubber, vinyl, plastic or other approved material inserted firmly, secured and permanently affixed at the barrel end of the bat so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer, without replacing, damaging or destroying it. A bat made of one-piece construction need not have an end cap.
- 3.3.2 Bat construction may be traditional single wall, multi-wall, layered composite or backstop style. A backstop style bat is a bat which structurally deviates from a traditional layered composite design by having a softer outer which acts as a "backstop" or "governor" to ensure batted ball speeds will remain under the required 98 mph performance threshold. Minimum barrel compression standards for each model bat shall be available on the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List.

3.4 Inappropriate/Damaged Bats

- 3.4.1 An inappropriate bat is a bat that is illegal, altered or nonapproved. No player or team personnel shall bring an inappropriate bat onto the field or into a team area from the time the umpires enter the field until after they depart.
- 3.4.1.1 An illegal bat is a bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (that is, particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits, etc.) as set forth in Rule 3.3.1.
- 3.4.1.2 An altered bat is a bat that is an illegal or nonapproved bat that has been changed to resemble a legal bat or was a legal bat that has been intentionally changed from the specifications established in the USA Softball bat certification process and as required in Rule 3.3.1. **Exception:** Marking for identification on the knob, laser etching other than on the barrel and replacing the grip are legal.
- 3.4.1.2.1 The use of any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of bats (for example, shaving, rolling, artificially warming or using a bat warmer) is prohibited and renders the equipment altered and unsuitable for play.

3.4.1.3 A nonapproved bat is a bat that does not bear the ASA 2004 or fastpitch USA Softball certification mark, is not on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List or does not have the correct sticker confirming barrel compression testing.

EFFECT—(3.4.1 to 3.4.1.3)—If an umpire detects the inappropriate bat during the pregame inspection, the bat shall be removed from the team’s possession. (See Appendix C.)

If a batter enters the batter’s box with an inappropriate bat, or has completed their turn at bat using that bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the bat shall be removed from the team’s possession, the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and base runners not put out on the batted ball returned to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.1.) *Exception:* In all cases, advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

If a batter has completed their turn at bat using the inappropriate bat and after the first pitch to the next batter, if the bat can be positively identified within the half inning, it shall be removed from the team’s possession. The batter who used the bat shall be declared out if on base and ejected, but any advance by base runners shall stand.

In all cases regarding possession or use of an inappropriate bat, the head coach is ejected from the game. In addition, the plate umpire shall remove the bat from the game, doubleheader, series or tournament and submit an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor and equipment consultant. The head coach may retrieve the bat at the conclusion of play from the on-site administrator. See also Rule 13.7.2 for additional effect for equipment misuse.

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

EFFECT—If an umpire detects the damaged bat during the pregame inspection or anytime during the game, the bat shall be removed from the team’s possession. The plate umpire shall file an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor and equipment consultant. The head coach may retrieve the bat at the conclusion of play from the on-site administrator. (See Appendix C.)

3.5 Bats—Warmup

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

EFFECT—The presence of an inappropriate bat or an inappropriate number of bats in the on-deck circle (see Rule 11.1.2) shall result in the equipment’s removal from the game (not returned to the dugout), and the player shall be warned. Should the previously removed inappropriate bat reappear in the on-deck circle, the on-deck batter shall be ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

3.6 Gloves/Mitts

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

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

3.6.1.1 The catcher may wear a leather glove or leather mitt of any dimension.

3.6.2 Gloves/mitts may not be the color of the ball but may be any combination of other colors.

3.6.3 The use of any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of gloves, including adding adhesive or creating a sticky or tacky coating, is prohibited and renders the equipment altered and unsuitable for play.

EFFECT—(3.6.1 to 3.6.3)—If noticed before a play, the umpire shall direct the fielder to remove the glove/mitt. Should the illegal glove/mitt reappear, the offending player shall be ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

If a play is made with the illegal glove/mitt, the glove is removed from play and the offensive coach has the option to: (a) take the result of the play; or (b) nullify the play resulting in the batter returning to bat, assuming the ball and strike count they had, base runners returning to the bases legally occupied at the time of the last pitch, and play resuming.

3.7 Required Protective Equipment

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

3.7.1.1 **Student-Athlete Base Coach.** A student-athlete in the coaches' box is required to wear a protective helmet that meets NOCSAE standards whenever the ball is live from the first pitch to the last out of the half-inning.

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

3.7.2 Catcher. The catcher must wear body protectors and softball shin guards that offer protection to at least the foot-to-knee area. The catcher must wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. Highly reflective, mirror-like chrome-finish helmets of any color are prohibited. In addition, the catcher must wear a protective face mask. Traditional baseball/softball catcher's headgear or ice hockey goalie-style headgear may be worn but, in either case, must bear a permanent mark indicating compliance with the NOCSAE combined helmet and mask standard.

Catchers and other uniformed team members who receive warmup pitches on the field of play must wear a helmet with facemask. It is strongly recommended anyone who receives warmup pitches off the field of play wear a helmet with facemask.

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

3.8 Optional Protective Equipment

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

3.8.1 Braces/casts/elbow guards/prostheses/splints.

3.8.1.1 Players may wear braces, casts, elbow guards, prostheses or splints as long as the equipment is well-padded to protect not only the affected player, but also their opponents. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard must be properly padded.

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

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

3.8.3 Defensive headgear.

3.8.3.1 A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets must be the same color. Highly reflective, mirror-like chrome-finish helmets of any color are prohibited.

3.8.3.2 A defensive player may wear a face mask, either attached to a helmet or not.

EFFECT—(3.8.1 to 3.8.3)—If possible, the player shall remove the item upon request of the umpire. If impossible or the player chooses not to

comply with the umpire's request, they may be substituted for or ejected from the game. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1).

3.8.4 Elbow/knee/shin pads. Elbow/knee/shin pads are permissible.

3.9 Shoes

Shoes are considered required equipment and are therefore not subject to the uniform logo rule. (See Rule 3.10.6.1.) The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal spikes. Spikes must not extend in excess of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch from the sole and may not be round. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened and the entire surface of the attachment is in contact with the existing surface of the shoe.

3.10 Uniforms

All eligible players shall be attired with uniforms (jersey, pants/shorts and socks) of identical style, color and trim differing only in size, player's numbers and names and logos/patches as described in this rule. Uniforms, all accessories and protective equipment must be worn properly and as designed. **Exception:** A player shall not be penalized for changing a uniform part due to saturation of blood.

3.10.1 Headgear. Visors, headbands and caps are uniform accessories, may be mixed, and must be of the same predominant color and worn as intended by the manufacturer. **Exception:** The catcher's headgear may be of a different color than other defenders' headgear.

3.10.2 Inclement weather apparel. Inclement weather garments worn by multiple players should be of the same style, color and trim but must not be distracting, interfere with the game or pose a safety risk to the player(s) or their opponents.

3.10.3. Numbers. All uniform jerseys must have a distinct whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back (0 and 00 are considered the same number). The number(s) or its outline shall be of a contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. It is recommended that jerseys have 3- to 4-inch high numbers of a contrasting color on the front of the jersey. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number.

3.10.4 Optional uniform markings. Optional markings must be placed on the front or sleeve of the competition uniform and may not interfere with any required markings.

- a. An institutional or conference logo/patch, which may not exceed 4-square inches.
- b. A national or state flag of the member institution, which may not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ -square inches.
- c. A commemorative/memorial patch, which may not exceed 4-square inches.
- d. As authorized by the institution or conference, an additional commemorative/memorial patch (e.g., names, mascots, nicknames, logos, and marks intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events, or other causes), which may not exceed 4-square inches. While not all team

members are required to wear the additional patch, the patch must be identical for those who choose to wear the additional patch.

- e. As authorized by the institution or conference, other names/words intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events, or other causes on the back of the jersey/uniform where the player's name is traditionally located. The names/words may vary by team members.

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

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

3.10.6 Logos. A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (for example, celebrations on the playing field, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:

3.10.6.1 Athletics equipment (for example, shoes, helmets, softball bats, gloves, batting gloves) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public.

3.10.6.2 The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including socks and warmups) and all other uniform accessories (for example, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors or hats) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (for example, a patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo.

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

3.10.8 Signal arm band. It is not required that players wear a signal arm band, but if worn, it shall be worn on the arm and as intended by the manufacturer or in a pocket.

3.10.9 Undergarments. It is not required that players wear undergarments, but if worn by more than one player, the apparel must be the same in color/pattern. Shirt style and sleeve length may vary. Visible undergarments must contrast with the color of the ball and be worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn, slit or rolled up).

EFFECT—(3.10.1 to 3.10.9)—The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not complying with the uniform rules. If possible, the player shall remove the impermissible item(s) or correct the violation. If impossible or the player chooses not to comply with the umpire's request, they shall be ejected from the game. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

RULE 4

Game Personnel

4.1 Assistant Coach

An assistant coach is responsible for aiding the head coach. An assistant coach assumes responsibility for the team in the event the head coach is unavailable to perform their duties. Assistant coaches may not leave their position in the dugout or bullpen area to appeal, question or argue any play on the field. **Exception:** The assistant coach assumed responsibility for the team as a result of the head coach being unavailable. (See Rules 4.4.3 and 13.3.5.)

4.2 Authorized Personnel

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.2 During a game, no one except players, coaches, managers, medical personnel, scorekeepers, necessary institutional personnel and bat handlers shall occupy a team's dugout. All personnel must be in appropriate attire and must be in their team's bench area or bullpen and remain there until the ball is dead or is in the pitcher's possession in the circle and time has been called. Restriction to the dugout excludes the batter, the on-deck batter, base runner(s), base coaches and the nine defensive players when appropriate. (See Rules 6.5 and 6.6.)

4.3 Base Coach

A base coach may be the head coach, an assistant coach, or an eligible, uniformed team member who occupies the coach's box at first base or third base

to direct the offense. Base coaches are restricted to the coaches' boxes (only one base coach per box) before the pitch is released.

4.4 Head Coach

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

4.4.1.1 The team's conduct;

4.4.1.2 Observance of the official rules;

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

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

4.4.1.5 All communication with the umpire whether initiated by assistants or other team personnel. If the head coach leaves the field, they should inform the umpire of their temporary replacement. Violations of inappropriate behavior by assistant coaches will not be tolerated. (See Rules 13.1, 13.2 and 13.13.4.)

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

4.4.3 In the event the head coach is unavailable, an acting head coach shall be named. They must be an approved representative of the institution and may include a student coach or student manager, but a student-athlete may not be appointed. (See Rule 13.2.1.)

4.5 Medical Personnel

If, during a game, a student-athlete, coach or umpire is injured and requires medical attention, on-site medical personnel shall be responsible for treating the injured party appropriately. If they can be treated without undue delay, play shall be suspended until the injured party has received appropriate medical care. If the injury to a student-athlete requires extensive treatment and they can be safely removed from the playing field, an eligible substitute or temporary replacement player in the event of a possible concussion (see Rule 8.6) shall replace the injured player and play shall be resumed. In the event of either a serious injury or an injury of unknown severity, the injured party should remain on the field until medical personnel can arrange for transportation that will not compromise the injury.

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

4.6 Official Scorer

The host team, conference commissioner or tournament director shall appoint and identify (at the pregame meeting) an official scorer for each game. The official scorer shall:

- 4.6.1 Record in writing the team lineups, names of the head coaches and umpires, and inning, score, number of outs, base runners' positions and count on the batter throughout the game;
 - 4.6.2 Have sole authority to make all decisions involving scoring judgment. The scorer shall be objective and shall score for both teams in a similar manner;
 - 4.6.3 Have a current copy of the NCAA Softball Rules at the game and shall know the rules pertinent to their responsibilities (for example, illegal reentry, unreported substitution, designated player);
 - 4.6.4 Sit in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout), whenever possible (it is recommended the scorer's position be identified to the umpires);
 - 4.6.5 Communicate their decisions to both teams and members of the media present;
 - 4.6.6 Inform the public-address announcer of all substitutions recorded and relayed by the umpire;
 - 4.6.7 Ensure all of their decisions are in agreement with the NCAA Softball Rules and the umpire's decision, and have the authority to rule on any scoring matter not specifically covered in the rules;
 - 4.6.8 Notify the umpire immediately if the teams attempt to change sides before three outs are recorded in one half of an inning;
 - 4.6.9 Notify an umpire immediately in the bottom of an inning if the home team has enough runs to win;
 - 4.6.10 Not notify an umpire if the offensive team is batting out of order or if either team has an unreported substitution or an illegal player (this is the responsibility of the opposing team);
- Note: In the unfortunate circumstance that the official scorer is in the team dugout, they may communicate with their own team.*
- 4.6.11 In addition to the plate umpire, make note in writing of the exact situation at the time the game is protested or halted, including the inning, score, number of outs, base runners' position and count on the batter; and
 - 4.6.12 Ensure that the home team's and visitor's scorebooks concur.

4.7 On-Site Administrator

- 4.7.1 Host administration shall designate an on-site administrator whose responsibilities include:
 - 4.7.1.1 Collaborating with participating coaches to determine the fitness of the field in the event of unsatisfactory weather or field conditions (see Rule 5.3.1);
 - 4.7.1.2 Making themselves known to umpires and opposing coaches not later than the pregame meeting;
 - 4.7.1.3 Securing inappropriate and damaged bats that fail the umpire's inspection in a safe location until they are retrieved by the appropriate head coach at the end of the game, doubleheader, series or tournament, whichever is later, and as applicable;
 - 4.7.1.4 Ensuring the existence of proper sporting conditions and behavior of spectators throughout competition (see Rule 5.10);

- 4.7.1.5 Assisting umpires with ejections by escorting the ejected person(s) to an allowable area (see Rule 13.2.1);
- 4.7.1.6 Informing the umpire crew of severe weather conditions and providing spectators with appropriate information;
- 4.7.1.7 Providing facility or dangerous-situation information to umpires that leads to their consideration of calling a game (see Rule 6.17.3);
- 4.7.1.8 Ensuring the umpires have safe passage between the field and their dressing room and/or vehicles between and after games; and
- 4.7.1.9 Monitoring the audio and video board operations and abiding by the intent of these guidelines and policies, including between-inning entertainment. (See Appendix F, B5.)

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

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

4.8 Public-Address Announcer

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

4.9 Team Representative

A team representative is a member of the coaching staff (including volunteer and student coaches) or team manager. Team representatives are entitled to occupy space in the dugout, on the field or in the press box, and confer with each other or with players during charged conferences except as restricted by NCAA bylaws. They shall be held accountable for their actions as representatives of their institution.

4.10 Umpires

- 4.10.1 Game officials who are contracted to rule on the plays of the game shall be the plate umpire, who judges, counts, and gives a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes (when they deem necessary), and a base umpire(s), whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions.
 - 4.10.1.1 The umpires are approved officials of the institution or conference by which they have been assigned to a particular game and are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. It is strongly recommended that the umpires not be affiliated with a team or its institution.
 - 4.10.1.2 A minimum of two officials must be contracted for each game. However, a game may be played with one official because of unforeseen circumstances, if the opposing coaches agree.
- 4.10.2 All umpires shall adhere to the policies, procedures and umpire mechanics as outlined in the current Collegiate Commissioners Association

- (CCA) Softball Umpire Manual, and shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship.
- 4.10.3 All umpires shall have equal authority to:
 - 4.10.3.1 Suspend play;
 - 4.10.3.2 Warn or eject a player, coach or team personnel or to order that person(s) to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules;
 - 4.10.3.3 Enforce prescribed penalties;
 - 4.10.3.4 Make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension of play; and
 - 4.10.3.5 Protect the well-being of the participants by granting warmup pitches, fielding, throwing and/or running to players after an injury, in inclement weather, or as deemed appropriate.
 - 4.10.4 The plate umpire shall have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game, and shall have the authority to:
 - 4.10.4.1 Ensure the pace of the game is acceptable and take action to address a situation that could create an unnecessary delay or interrupt the flow of the game. This includes consideration to grant a timeout request by the offense or defense; and
 - 4.10.4.2 Make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.
 - 4.10.5 Umpires shall not impose an effect on a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the effect would be an advantage to the offending team.
 - 4.10.6 The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and should report to the site at least one (1) hour ahead of time, introduce themselves to the appropriate game management personnel, start the game at the designated time and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when they arrive on the field and report to the on-site administration or host coach, and it ends when they leave the confines of the field after the game.
 - 4.10.7 Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless incapacitated by injury or illness.

RULE 5

Game Management and Pregame Procedures

5.1 Pregame Practice

5.1.1 **Batting.** The visiting team shall be given equal access to batting practice and equipment available to the home team. This includes a minimum of 30 minutes of batting practice beginning not less than 60 minutes and not more than 90 minutes before the game, as scheduled by the home team.

5.1.2 **Fielding.** If conditions allow, each team will be permitted a maximum of eight minutes of defensive warmup on the game field. Both teams may agree to shared-field defensive warmup (for example, shuttle balls) in lieu of or in addition to the individual eight-minute provisions. The host team shall determine which team will take pregame infield/outfield first.

Note: The opposing team may have a pitcher and catcher warm up together in foul territory with two additional teammates posted near them for protection purposes.

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

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

5.2 Pre-Competition Barrel Compression Testing (BCT) and Inspection of Bats

Softball barrel compression testing is required to be conducted according to accepted protocols at a minimum prior to the start of each tournament, series, doubleheader, or single midweek/weekend game during the regular season.

5.2.1 Upon arrival for barrel compression testing, each coach shall:

5.2.1.1 Provide a new, printed copy of the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List to the BCT testing manager, with the team name and date completed. Only the first page and page(s) that lists the bats available for play need to be printed;

5.2.1.2 Highlight the entire line on which each model bat available for play appears;

- 5.2.1.3 Enter the number of bats of each model that will be on the field or in a team area;
 - 5.2.1.4 Arrange the bats in the same order the models appear on the annotated NCAA Approved Softball Bat List;
 - 5.2.1.5 Retrieve the bat list from the testing manager after BCT completion, ensuring the information on the first page has been completed by the testing manager; and
 - 5.2.1.6 Ensure this completed bat list is available to the umpires upon their arrival to the field for each game of the day and keep it readily available throughout the game(s).
 - 5.2.1.6.1 If BCT is only performed once prior to the start of a tournament or series, the same list may be used on subsequent days unless a new bat list is published (see Rule 5.2.3.1).
- 5.2.2 The BCT testing manager shall ensure all bats tested are on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List and follow the protocol in Appendix C of testing until each bat has two passes or two fails, whichever occurs first. Bats that fail will be removed from the team's available bats for the duration of the game, doubleheader, series or tournament, as applicable. Bats that pass BCT will be identified with distinctive, destructible stickers. The BCT testing manager shall complete the information on the first page of the bat list and return the list to the coach.
- EFFECT—(5.2.1 to 5.2.2)—Bats that fail BCT shall be removed from a team's possession. If removed by an NCAA representative, the bat shall be sent to the NCAA softball equipment consultant for further evaluation, otherwise the disposition of the bat will be determined by tournament or conference protocol.**
- 5.2.3 Before each game, the umpires shall reconcile the total number of appropriately stickered bats with the number of bats indicated on the team's BCT annotated NCAA Approved Softball Bat List, making sure the number of stickered bats does not exceed the number of bats listed as having been tested.
 - 5.2.3.1 If a new bat list is published when a series or tournament is in progress and BCT is not performed again, the coach shall provide the first page of the original BCT annotated list, along with a new, current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List, with the number of tested and stickered bats of each model indicated and the entire line highlighted, to the umpires who shall then individually reconcile each bat model with the new list and with the total number of tested bats from the first page of the original BCT annotated list.
 - 5.2.3.2 It is highly recommended that each team arrange the bats outside their dugout in the same order the models appear on the bat list.
 - 5.2.3.3 All discrepancies in count must be resolved and bats not accounted for in the count and via highlight shall not be allowed to remain in any team area nor on the field.
 - 5.2.4 Also before each game, the umpires shall inspect the bats for suitability and any obvious damage.

5.2.5 Bats deemed inappropriate or damaged by the umpires shall be removed from the team's possession and secured by the on-site administrator for the duration of the game, doubleheader, series or tournament, and the team's NCAA Approved Softball Bat List appropriately edited.

EFFECT—(5.2.3 to 5.2.5)—The game shall not be started until each team's appropriate list is presented. Failure to present a bat for pregame inspection that is later discovered in the team's possession or dugout, shall be considered an unsporting act and subject to the effect in Rule 13.2.1. If no specific player is in possession of the bat at the time it is brought to the umpire's attention, the head coach shall be the person ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) (See also Rule 3.4.1.) If a previously removed bat is rediscovered, see Rule 3.4.1. In addition, the head coach is ejected from the game. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) In all cases, the plate umpire shall remove any inappropriate or damaged bat from the game, doubleheader, series or tournament and shall file a Noncompliant/Inappropriate Bat Report. The head coach may retrieve the bat before the team leaves the site for the final time.

5.3 Fitness of the Field

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

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

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

5.3.4 Maintenance of the field before and during games shall be the responsibility of the home-team management. The home team may hand drag/rake the field after a complete inning, provided it does not delay the start of the next inning. Additional in-game field maintenance may be requested by the umpire(s).

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

5.3.6 The umpire(s) shall have the lights turned on when necessary. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.

5.4 Game Balls

Game balls must be available a minimum of one (1) hour before the scheduled starting time of the game. Each game shall begin with two new game balls (one rubbed by each team, so the manufacturer's gloss is removed) and 10 additional new or game-quality balls that also have been sufficiently rubbed up. See also Rule 3.2.

5.5 Umpires' Pregame Duties

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

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

5.5.2 The umpires shall verify the availability of a minimum of 12 game softballs, including two new balls rubbed up by each team and 10 additional balls from the host team's game management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play.

5.5.3 The umpires shall inspect bats according to Rule 5.2.

5.6 Pregame Suggested Protocol

It is recommended that the following protocol be used:

5.6.1 Submit lineup to the official scorekeeper;

5.6.2 Bat display and inspection;

5.6.3 Team infields and/or shuttle balls;

5.6.4 Pregame meeting;

5.6.5 Introductions;

5.6.6 National anthem (if applicable);

5.6.7 Pregame announcement; and

5.6.8 Play.

5.7 Lineup Card

5.7.1 The lineup card lists all eligible players and the starting offensive players in the order in which they are to bat (batting order) and is submitted by the head coach before the start of the game. (See Rule 11.8.)

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

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

Notes:

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

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

5.8 Pregame Meeting

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

- 5.8.1 Identify the official scorer and their location, and the on-site administrator (if not previously introduced to opposing coaches and umpires).
- 5.8.2 Review lineup cards with each team's coach and provide one last opportunity for changes without the changes being charged as substitutions. Once returned to the umpire, each team's lineup is official. In the event of a subsequent change, the plate umpire shall report the substitution(s) to the opposing team, official scorer and public-address announcer.

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

- 5.8.3 Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail, if agreeable with the visiting team. If the coaches do not agree, the umpire crew shall determine the ground rules.
- 5.8.4 Review special game rules (for example, tiebreaker, halted game, conference or tournament rules, or required departure time if applicable for a flight). (See Rules 6.16 and 6.18.)

5.9 Scouting, Electronic Equipment and Video Review

- 5.9.1 A team may film or video only contests in which it is playing, but may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game that is or will be televised. **Exception:** *A tournament host may stream video of all games in its tournament and is not restricted to filming and streaming video of only games in which it is a participant.*
- 5.9.2 Only non-uniformed team personnel (including players) may be outside team areas for the purpose of scouting and videoing a contest, recording pitch speeds, charting pitches, keeping score or running the scoreboard, but in doing so, they render themselves ineligible for the game.
- 5.9.3 Taking photos and videoing done by any team personnel may not be done from the team's dugout or bullpen; however, unattended video cameras may be positioned in these team areas.

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

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

Note: Turning on or off videotaping equipment between half innings does not constitute a violation.

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

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

5.9.8 Team personnel, including players, are prohibited from carrying or wearing any device capable of transmitting information while on the field (e.g., cell phone, smart watch). Use of a cell phone camera in a team area is prohibited from the start of the pregame meeting with the umpires until the game's conclusion. **Exception:** See Rule 5.9.9.

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

5.9.9 An exclusively one-way electronic communication device may be used by the defense to relay the pitch or play call from the dugout to the field.

5.9.10 Video review of designated plays is permitted as outlined in Appendix G. In games using video review, each head coach has two challenges to initiate a review of the plays designated in Appendix G for the entirety of the game. The challenge must be indicated before the next pitch, before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding position and left fair territory, or before the umpires have left the field of play. Additionally, the crew chief may initiate a review of these plays at their discretion beginning with the sixth inning in any game. **Exception:** The crew chief may not initiate a review of runners leaving early on a pitch.

5.9.11 Television monitoring or institutional video review equipment also may be used in the following situations:

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

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

5.9.11.3 By the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor to confirm the accuracy of an Incident Report involving a protest or suspension. (See Rule 13.13.5.)

5.10 Crowd Control

The responsibility for crowd control rests with the director of athletics and the on-site administrator of the host institution. The on-site administrator shall be prepared to use the public-address system at the first sign of poor sportsmanship and request cooperation in maintaining proper playing conditions.

5.11 Artificial Noisemakers Use

Objects used to make noise or amplify sound to show support, approval or opposition to playing action, other than body parts, are considered artificial noisemakers. It is not permissible to use equipment to make noise (e.g., banging on a bench/bucket with equipment, shoes, or hands, banging bats and balls).

5.11.1 Spectators shall not use artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers.

EFFECT—Such instruments shall be removed from the spectator areas by the game management personnel. Any subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in removal from the site and the umpire shall file an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. See Rule 13.2.1.

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

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

5.12 Media/Photographers

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

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

5.13 Bands

Bands, or any component thereof, shall not play while the ball is live. If both teams have a band present, play may only occur immediately before the team's offensive half-inning and/or for about 10 seconds immediately after a score. If only one band is present, play may occur whenever the ball is dead as long as it does not interfere with the public-address announcer.

RULE 6

The Game

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

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

The home team starts the game on defense (in the field), and its objective is to prevent offensive players from becoming base runners and advancing around the bases. The home team may be determined in a variety of ways (e.g., coin flip, mutual agreement, conference or tournament assignment, custom). When three offensive players are legally put out, a half inning has been played, and the teams change from offense to defense and from defense to offense, respectively.

6.1 Regulation Game

6.1.1 A regulation game shall be seven innings unless:

6.1.1.1 The game is extended because of a tie score. (See Rule 6.15.)

6.1.1.2 The game is shortened because:

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

6.1.1.2.2 The umpire declares the game called (see Rule 6.17), forfeited (see Rule 6.20), or halted (see Rule 6.18); or

6.1.1.2.3 The eight-run rule is invoked. (See Rule 6.14.)

6.1.2 It is a regulation game when the umpire terminates play by calling, "Game." If a team wishes to lodge an appeal or protest on the final play of the game, it must immediately inform the plate umpire of that intent (see Rule 7). Once the umpires leave the field, a protest will not be allowed.

6.1.3 Speed-up, free substitution, time limits or any other optional rules not specified in this rules book may not be used for official NCAA contests.

6.2 Scoring of Runs

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

6.2.2 One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches first, second and third bases and home plate before the third out of a half inning. **Exceptions:**

(1) The base runner placed on second base to begin the tiebreaker is exempt

from touching first base; and (2) with two outs, score any run in which the base runner is awarded home plate during a live ball even though a trailing runner is tagged out before the lead runner touches home plate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.3 Winning the Game

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

6.3.1 The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team scores the winning run in its half inning even though it is an incomplete inning. (See Rule 14.5.1.)

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

6.3.3 The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

Exception: If the game is regulation and the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score and all game stats shall stand and be credited as played.

6.4 Starting the Game

The game begins when a pitch is thrown. The game shall start on time unless the host team gives previous notice that the game has been postponed or will be delayed in starting.

6.5 Positions of the Offensive Team

The offensive team:

6.5.1 Must follow the original batting order throughout the game.

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

6.5.3 Must keep all personnel, except for those directly involved in the situation, in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is live. These restrictions also apply during stoppages of play, including conferences, pitching changes, substitutions and injuries.

EFFECT—The umpire shall warn the violator and issue a team warning. If the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject them. The next violation of this rule by anyone on the warned team will result in the ejection of the head coach. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

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

6.5.4.1 Warmup swings on the field of play by the batter who is in foul territory (provided they are outside the batter's box) and the on-deck batter in their team's on-deck circle.

6.5.4.2 Warmup running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

6.5.4.3 A base runner(s) who is on base before a pitching change may lead off their respective base(s) during pitching warmups.

6.5.5 Must not position any coaches or uniformed team members near or behind home plate, or behind the backstop, while the pitcher is throwing warmup pitches or pitching to a batter.

EFFECT—(6.5.4 to 6.5.5)—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject them. The next violation of this rule by anyone on the warned team will result in the ejection of the head coach. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6.5.6 Assistant coaches may not leave their position in the dugout or bullpen area to appeal, question or argue any play on the field. *Exception:* See Rule 4.1.

EFFECT—The violator shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6.6 Positions of the Defensive Team

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

6.6.1 **Pitcher.** See Rules 10.1 and 10.2.

6.6.2 **Catcher.** The catcher must be within the catcher's box from the start of the pitch until the pitch is released. No part of the catcher's feet may be outside the lines until the pitch is released. *Exceptions:* (1) When the umpire suspends play (no effect); (2) When the batter is positioned in the front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer to the plate without effect. At all times, the catcher must avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter legally has the right to the entire batter's box.

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

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

6.6.4 A player should not be considered to have changed defensive positions if they do not exchange fielding positions with another player but only temporarily station themselves at a different location on the field (for example, a fourth outfielder or fifth infielder). (See also Rule 8.1.)

6.6.5 All personnel, except the nine defensive players on the field, must remain in the dugout, bullpen or team area while the ball is in play and during stoppages of play, including conferences, pitching changes, substitutions and injuries. *Exception:* Personnel directly involved in the stoppage of play

(e.g., coaches, medical personnel, substitutes) are permitted to be out of the dugout, bullpen or team area.

EFFECT—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject them. The next violation of this rule by anyone on the warned team will result in the ejection of the head coach. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6.6.6 Assistant coaches may not leave their position in the dugout or bullpen area to appeal, question or argue any play on the field. *Exception:* See Rule 4.1.

EFFECT—The violator shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6.6.7 At the start of the game, between half innings and during pitching changes, warmups are permitted. (See Rule 10.19 for warmup pitches.)

6.6.7.1 Not more than four players and the pitcher throwing and catching one ball in the infield;

6.6.7.2 Any number of players in the outfield throwing and catching; and

6.6.7.3 Warmup running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

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

EFFECT—(6.6.7.1 to 6.6.7.3)—The umpire shall warn the violator and their coach for the first offense in the game. For a second offense in the same game, a ball is awarded to the batter. For a third offense in the same game, the head coach is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

6.7 Time Between Half Innings

6.7.1 For all games (media or non-media), teams are allowed a maximum of 90 seconds between half innings and at the start of the game for warmups. The time between half innings begins when the last defensive player crosses the foul line. (See Rule 2.34.)

6.7.1.1 The time limit may be shortened by mutual agreement between the two teams or by conference or tournament policy.

6.7.1.2 If a television agreement requires a longer time limit between innings and/or half innings and at the start of the game, that time will become the maximum allowable time.

EFFECT—(6.7.1)—At the end of the time limit, if the defensive team is not ready to play, a ball will be awarded to the batter, and if the offensive team is not ready to play, a strike will be assessed to the batter.

6.8 Live Ball

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

6.9 Dead Ball

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

6.9.2 Once a ball is declared dead, it cannot be made live and remains dead until an umpire indicates resumption of play.

- 6.9.3 A dead ball is also ruled when a fielder contacts a ball in live-ball territory when any part of their body is in contact with dead-ball territory. **Exception:** A fielder's foot may be on a line marking dead-ball territory.
- 6.9.4 No spectator(s) shall reach out of the stands or enter the field and interfere with a play. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator. **Exception:** It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.6.2.

- 6.9.5 While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, base runners may not advance and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of:
- 6.9.5.1 Acts that occurred while the ball was live (such as, but not limited to, an illegal pitch, interference, obstruction, an overthrow into dead-ball territory, a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field); or
 - 6.9.5.2 As a result of a dead-ball appeal.
- 6.9.6 Between pitches and after a dead ball, each base runner must return to their base. A base runner who must return to a base while the ball is dead need not touch intervening bases. (See Rule 7.1.1.2.6.)

Note: If a fielder steps on the tarp, they will be considered to have entered dead-ball territory.

6.10 Delayed Dead Ball

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

- 6.10.1 Delayed dead ball is called under the following circumstances:
- 6.10.1.1 Detached equipment interference (see Rule 9.3.4); and
 - 6.10.1.2 Plate umpire interference in a steal (see Rule 9.6).
- 6.10.2 Delayed dead ball with an option for the offended team is called under the following circumstances:
- 6.10.2.1 Inaccurate lineup, unreported/misreported substitute, illegal player (see Rule 8.3);
 - 6.10.2.2 Catcher and fielder obstruction (see Rules 9.5.2 and 9.5.3);
 - 6.10.2.3 Illegal pitch (see Rule 10.8);
 - 6.10.2.4 Batter interference (see Rule 11.20);
 - 6.10.2.5 Runner leaving a base before the release of the pitch (see Rule 12.14.2);
 - 6.10.2.6 Thrown bat endangering an umpire or player not making a play on the ball (see Rule 11.20.5.3); and
 - 6.10.2.7 Illegally batted ball (see Rule 11.15).
- 6.10.3 Although not a delayed dead ball, an option is afforded the offended team when an illegal glove is used to make a play. (See Rules 3.6 and 12.9.3.1.)
- 6.10.4 In all cases involving an option, the umpires will confer and the plate umpire will then bring the coaches together to explain the options available

to the offended coach or to deal with violations by both teams. Once a coach makes a selection, that decision is final.

6.11 Suspension and Resumption of Play

6.11.1 “Dead Ball” or “Time” shall be called and signaled for the purpose of suspending play, by any umpire.

6.11.1.1 Before the pitch, the umpire may hold up a hand instructing the pitcher not to pitch until the batter, catcher and umpire are ready. The ball is dead, and no other play shall be allowed until the umpire lowers their hand, signifying “Play ball.”

6.11.2 An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations:

6.11.2.1 When, in their judgment, conditions justify halting the game.

6.11.2.1.1 Play should be suspended at the end of the half inning whenever possible (for example, as darkness approaches and there are no game lights, as an impending storm approaches or as field conditions begin to deteriorate).

6.11.2.1.2 Play should be suspended immediately without regard to timing within the inning when spectator or participant safety is compromised (for example, in the event of lightning detected within the danger zone, serious injury to a participant or if players’ footing or grip on the bat or ball is obviously compromised).

6.11.2.2 As noted in the Lightning Policy and Concussions Policy in Appendixes E and H, respectively (information provided by the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports regarding concussions, lightning and extreme cold).

6.11.2.3 When they leave their position to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.

6.11.2.4 When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.

6.11.3 An umpire should not temporarily suspend play in the following situations:

6.11.3.1 At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed or when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.

6.11.3.2 After the pitcher has started the pitch.

6.11.3.3 While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire or in the case of an injury, until a play has been completed or each runner has been held at their base. **Exception:** When necessary to protect a player with a significant injury, the umpire may use discretion and suspend play immediately and before resumption, award a base(s) that offensive players would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had play not been suspended.

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

6.11.4 “No pitch” shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while play is suspended.

- 6.11.5 A runner, who is stopped at a base when play is suspended, may not advance nor return during the suspension of play.
- 6.11.6 After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher takes their place on the pitcher's plate with the ball in their possession, the catcher is in the catcher's box, all base runners have reoccupied the base they occupied at the time of the pitch and the umpire signals "Play ball."
- 6.11.6.1 The pitcher must allow sufficient time for the base runner to return to their base.

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

- 6.11.6.2 The base runner is obligated to return to their base without undue delay.

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

6.12 Conferences

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

- 6.12.1 Each team is allowed seven charged conferences involving team representatives (defensive and offensive combined) per regulation game.
- 6.12.2 Each team is allowed seven charged player-to-player conferences not involving team representatives per regulation game.
- 6.12.3 Each team is allowed one charged conference involving team representatives and one charged player-to-player conference per half inning for each extra inning. Any remaining conferences from regulation do not carry over into extra innings.
- 6.12.4 If either team is charged with a conference involving team representatives, both teams may hold conferences, including with base runners, who are no longer restricted to the vicinity of their bases. Runners may not vacate their bases during player-to-player conferences charged to the defense.
- 6.12.5 If the umpire suspends play to allow team personnel to tend to an injured person, to administer an ejection or to resolve a protest on site, both teams may hold uncharged conferences, including with base runners, who are no longer restricted to the vicinity of their bases.
- 6.12.6 During the suspension of play for the administration of a substitution, both teams may hold uncharged conferences, but base runners are restricted to the vicinity of their bases. **Exception:** Base runners are not restricted to the vicinity of their bases during a pitching change that has allowable warmup pitches.

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

- 6.12.7 **Charged Defensive Conference.** A defensive conference is a meeting that takes place anytime a defensive team representative(s) delays the game or requests a suspension of play for any reason and delivers a message (by

any means) to any defensive player, or a fielder leaves their position, goes to the dugout area, and gives the umpire reason to believe they have received instruction.

6.12.7.1 The defense is entitled to one defensive conference during the half inning. Once it is used, one additional defensive conference is allowed for each pitcher entered into the pitching position who has not yet pitched in that half inning and this additional defensive conference counts toward the total conferences allowed in Rule 6.12.1. **Exception:** In extra innings, the defense is only entitled to one defensive conference, regardless of pitching changes.

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

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

EFFECT—(6.12.7 to 6.12.7.3)—The umpire shall not permit more than the allowable number of defensive conferences per half inning, nor more than seven combined defensive and offensive conferences per team in regulation, and not more than one defensive conference per each half inning. The team representative(s) or player(s) who initiates an unallowed conference shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Exceptions: The following are not charged defensive conferences:

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

6.12.7.3.2 Requesting a suspension of play in order:

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

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—(6.12.8 to 6.12.8.3)—The umpire shall not permit more than one offensive conference in any half inning (regulation or extra innings), nor more than seven combined offensive and defensive conferences in regulation. The team representative(s) or player(s) who initiates an unallowed conference shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Exceptions: The following are not charged offensive conferences:

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

6.12.8.3.2 Requesting a suspension of play in order:

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

6.12.9 **Charged player-to-player conference.** A player-to-player conference is a meeting that takes place anytime a player(s) delays the game or requests a suspension of play for any reason and delivers a message to another player(s).

6.12.9.1 There may be only two charged player-to-player conferences per team per half inning in regulation innings. In extra innings, there may be only one per team per half inning.

6.12.9.2 The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when a player-to-player conference has been charged and record the inning on the team's lineup card.

6.12.9.3 A charged player-to-player conference begins when the game is delayed or suspended to deliver a message to the player(s) and ends when the player(s) return to their positions.

6.12.9.4 When the defensive team is charged with a player-to-player conference, base runners may not abandon the vicinity of their bases without it being a charged conference.

EFFECT—(6.12.9 to 6.12.9.4)—The umpire shall not permit more than two player-to-player conferences per team per half inning, nor more than seven per team in regulation, and not more than one player-to-player conference per team per each half inning in extra innings. The team representative(s) or player(s) who initiates an unallowed conference shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Notes:

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

6.13 Doubleheaders and Series

- 6.13.1 A doubleheader refers to two regularly scheduled games played in succession on the same day.
- 6.13.2 A series refers to two or more regularly scheduled games played consecutively against the same opponent.
- 6.13.3 The first game of a doubleheader or series must be completed before the subsequent game(s) may start.
- 6.13.4 The second game of a doubleheader should start 20 minutes after completion of the first game, unless otherwise determined by mutual consent.

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

6.14 Eight-Run Rule

A regulation eight-run-rule game shall be declared by the plate umpire if one team is ahead by eight or more runs after five or more equal innings. Complete innings must be played unless the home team reaches the eight-run lead while at bat in the last inning. Any hit that results in an eight-run lead by the home team (after 4½ innings) is treated as a game-ending hit. (See Rule 14.5.) Whenever the visiting team reaches the limit in the fifth or any inning thereafter, the home team must have its opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

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

Exception: For NCAA tournament play only, the respective NCAA divisional softball committees may elect to remove the eight-run rule for games played between the final two teams of the championship, provided it is formally declared before the start of the tournament.

6.15 Tie Game (Regulation)

- 6.15.1 The plate umpire shall declare a regulation tie game if the score is tied when the game must be called after five or more equal innings, or if the home team is at bat when the game is terminated and was behind, but has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs as the visiting team.
- 6.15.2 All individual and team statistics from a tie game shall be incorporated into the official playing record.
- 6.15.3 If the competing teams, or league, conference or tournament committee, wish not to be bound by the tie-game rule and wish to complete a regulation tie game from the point at which the game was terminated, they may do so by formally opting to use the halted-game rule. Otherwise, a game stopped after five or more innings with the score tied is considered a regulation tie

game, not a halted game, and may not be resumed. Intent to use the halted-game rule must be declared not later than the pregame meeting.

6.16 Tiebreaker Rule

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

- 6.16.1 Starting with the top of the predetermined inning (it is recommended for use beginning in the 10th inning) and each half-inning to follow, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half inning being placed on second base (for example, if the No. 5 batter is the lead-off batter, the No. 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). A substitute may be inserted for the base runner. For scoring, see Rule 14.30.
- 6.16.2 Whether the tiebreaker procedure will be used, and when it shall be invoked, must be determined not later than the pregame meeting. Use of the tiebreaker also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.

6.17 Called Game

- 6.17.1 The plate umpire shall declare a called game if, after five or more innings have been completed, they terminate play (for reasons such as lightning, darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the spectators or players in danger). The score shall be that of the last equal inning played, except that in the following circumstances, the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:
 - 6.17.1.1 If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in its five offensive half innings.
 - 6.17.1.2 If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.
 - 6.17.1.3 If a team is ahead by eight or more runs after five innings, or if the home team is at least eight runs ahead after 4½ innings.
- 6.17.2 If the scoring in an incomplete inning has no bearing on which team wins the contest, all individual and team statistics shall be included and the score shall consist of all runs to the point the game was called.
- 6.17.3 After consultation with the on-site administrator, the game may be called at any time because of facility problems, crowd behavior or other causes that place the spectators or players in danger.
- 6.17.4 An air travel policy that allows a game to conclude before its actual completion may be established by conference or tournament policy or if agreed upon by opposing coaches. In the event that team air travel conflicts with continued play:
 - 6.17.4.1 A forfeit shall not be declared as long as an ending time is communicated and agreed upon not later than the pregame meeting. The head coaches are required to agree on either a mandatory drop-dead time (in which case the playing action ceases the next time the ball becomes dead and the game outcome is determined as in Rule 6.3 or, if tied, 6.15) or a time at which no new inning will begin and communicate their

choice to the umpires, on-site administrator and tournament personnel, if applicable.

6.17.4.2 The game could be a “Called Game” (see Rule 6.17), a “Halted Game” (see Rule 6.18) or “No Game” (see Rule 6.19).

6.18 Halted and Interrupted Games

6.18.1 The plate umpire shall declare a halted game if play must be temporarily suspended with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. Whether a halted game will be resumed must be determined at the pregame meeting. Use of the halted-game rule also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.

6.18.2 Whether or not the halted-game rule is in effect, play shall be interrupted in the event of safety concerns for participants or spectators. Concerns regarding lightning, or deteriorating field or playing conditions that affect footing or grip on the ball, should be immediately addressed and, with the help of the on-site administrator, participants and spectators should be directed to safety. In the event of concern for deteriorating conditions in the imminent future, every effort should be made to suspend the game at the end of the next half inning.

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

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

6.18.5 Halted games of less than regulation length that are not resumed shall be declared “no game.”

Notes:

- 1. If the halted-game rule is not used, a game stopped with the score tied is considered a regulation tie game (if it qualifies under Rules 6.1 and 6.15) or no game (Rule 6.19), not a halted game, and may not be resumed.*
- 2. See Appendix E for the Lightning Safety regarding weather.*

6.19 No Game

The plate umpire shall declare “no game” if play is terminated before each team has completed five innings or if a halted game of less than five innings is not resumed.

Exceptions:

6.19.1 If the home team scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning, or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the visiting team has scored in its five offensive half innings, the umpire shall award the win to the home team, and it shall count as a regulation game.

6.19.2 Teams previously have agreed to resume a halted game.

Note: Individual and team statistics from a “no game” shall not be incorporated into the official playing record.

6.20 Forfeited Game

6.20.1 The plate umpire shall declare the game a forfeit awarded to the offended team in the following cases:

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

6.20.1.2 If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play.
Exception: In the event that team air travel conflicts with continued play, a forfeit shall not be declared as long as the departure time from the field is communicated not later than the pregame meeting.

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

Note: For Rules 6.20.1.1 to 6.20.1.3, in addition to the forfeit, the head coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution’s next two previously scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring). (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

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

6.20.1.5 If, after an umpire’s warning, any one of the rules of the game is willfully and persistently violated.

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

6.20.1.7 If, because the umpire crew removes players from the game for any cause, there is an insufficient number of eligible players to fill the lineup.

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

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

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

6.20.3 There shall be no forfeit of a contest until both participating teams are present and the umpires have assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

Notes:

- 1. All game umpires must concur in order to declare a game forfeited.*
- 2. If the umpire crew declares the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the game.*

6.21 No Contest (per NCAA Statistics Policies)

“No Contest” is declared when:

- 6.21.1 A team does not appear for its scheduled game. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract.
- 6.21.2 A protest is ruled valid but the game is not regulation and not resumed.
- 6.21.3 Both teams are unable to field teams to continue a game in progress.

RULE 7

Appeals and Protests

7.1 Appeals

- 7.1.1 An appeal is a play or rule violation on which the umpire responsible for the play does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player. The following may be appealed:
- 7.1.1.1 Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at or overrunning first base. (See Rule 12.10.)
 - 7.1.1.1.1 Must be a live-ball appeal.
 - 7.1.1.1.2 Must be made before the batter-runner returns to first base.
 - 7.1.1.2 Missing a base. (See Rule 12.10.)
 - 7.1.1.2.1 May be a live- or dead-ball appeal.
 - 7.1.1.2.2 Must be made before the next pitch.
 - 7.1.1.2.3 Must be made before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory, and the catcher has clearly vacated their normal fielding position.
 - 7.1.1.2.4 Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.
 - 7.1.1.2.5 A runner is assumed to have touched the base and if a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
 - a. If a runner misses home plate and the fielder either misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire shall make no signal, verbal or nonverbal. If a proper appeal is made, by tagging the plate or runner before the runner returns to the plate, the runner shall be declared out.
 - b. If a batter-runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made before they return to first base.
 - 7.1.1.2.6 If a runner misses an intervening base of a base award while the ball is dead, they may retreat to touch that base as long as they have not touched the final base of the award. Once they touch the final base of an award, they may not return and are vulnerable for an appeal.
 - 7.1.1.2.7 If a base runner forced to advance (because the batter became a batter-runner or due to a one-base award) misses the base to which they were forced, that appeal is a force out. If a base runner misses a base to which they were not forced, it is a timing play. (See Rule 6.2.)
 - 7.1.1.3 Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (See Rules 12.8 and 12.10.)

- 7.1.1.3.1 May be a live- or dead-ball appeal.
- 7.1.1.3.2 Must be made before the next pitch.
- 7.1.1.3.3 Must be made before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and left fair territory, and the catcher has clearly vacated their normal fielding position.
- 7.1.1.3.4 Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.
- 7.1.1.4 Participation by an improper player (batting out of order, player who is listed inaccurately on the lineup card, unreported player and illegal player): (See Rule 8.3 and Appendix B.)
 - 7.1.1.4.1 Must be a dead-ball appeal.
 - 7.1.1.4.2 Must be made before the umpires leave the field of play.
- 7.1.1.5 Switching base runners on occupied bases. (See Rule 12.8.3.)
 - 7.1.1.5.1 After the ball has been put in play, it may be a dead-ball appeal.
 - 7.1.1.5.2 Must be made before the end of the half inning.
 - 7.1.1.5.3 Must be made before the umpires leave the field.
- 7.1.2 Appeals may be made when the ball is live or dead. After a request by a player or coach, the umpire responsible for the play may solicit needed information from other members of the crew before ruling on the appeal.
 - 7.1.2.1 Live-ball appeal:
 - 7.1.2.1.1 A live-ball appeal is made by a fielder, who is holding the ball securely in hand/glove, touching the base the runner missed or left before a fly ball was first touched or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided they are still on the playing field and have not returned to that base, and indicating to the umpire what is being appealed (if necessary).
 - 7.1.2.1.2 Runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play.
 - 7.1.2.1.3 A live-ball appeal can be made after a play on a runner.
 - 7.1.2.1.4 When the ball goes out of play, a live-ball appeal cannot be made.
 - 7.1.2.2 Dead-ball appeal:
 - 7.1.2.2.1 Once a live ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called or the ball has become dead, a coach or any fielder (with or without the ball) may ask the umpire to make a decision on the appealed play.
 - 7.1.2.2.2 Runners may not advance as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.
 - 7.1.2.2.3 When the ball goes out of play, all runners must be given an opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities (advancing or returning), as determined by the umpire. Once a runner has been given sufficient time to advance or return and shows no immediate intention of doing so, a dead-ball appeal can be made. (See also Rule 7.1.4.)
 - 7.1.2.2.4 If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitcher's plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.

- 7.1.2.2.5 When “Play ball” has been declared by the plate umpire and the pitcher, coach or a fielder then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call “Time” and allow the appeal process.
- 7.1.3 At the end of a half inning, appeals must be made immediately after the third out. At the completion of the game, the umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play. Once the umpire crew has exited the field, an appeal or protest cannot be considered.
- 7.1.4 A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left before a fly ball was first touched when:
- 7.1.4.1 They have left the field of play.
 - 7.1.4.2 A following runner has scored.
 - 7.1.4.3 They are standing on a base beyond the base they missed or left before a fly ball was first touched, and the umpire suspends play.
 - 7.1.4.4 The ball is put back into play after having been dead.
 - 7.1.4.5 On a dead-ball base award, they have touched the final base of the base award.

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

7.2 Protests

- 7.2.1 A protest is the formal inquiry into an umpire’s decision and shall be allowed in the following cases:
- 7.2.1.1 Failure to apply the correct rule to a situation.
 - 7.2.1.2 Failure to impose the correct effect for a given violation.
 - 7.2.1.3 Misapplication of a playing rule.
- 7.2.2 Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment of an umpire. Examples of protests that will not be considered are:
- 7.2.2.1 Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
 - 7.2.2.2 Whether a runner was safe or out.
 - 7.2.2.3 Whether a pitch was a ball or strike.
 - 7.2.2.4 Whether a pitch was legal or illegal.
 - 7.2.2.5 Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.
 - 7.2.2.6 Whether a base runner did or did not leave their base before a fly ball was first touched.
 - 7.2.2.7 Whether a fly was or was not caught legally.
 - 7.2.2.8 Whether a fly was or was not an infield fly.
 - 7.2.2.9 Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.
 - 7.2.2.10 Whether the field was or was not fit to continue or resume play.
 - 7.2.2.11 Whether there was or was not sufficient light to continue play.
 - 7.2.2.12 Whether a player or live ball did or did not enter a dead-ball area or touch some object or person in dead-ball territory.
 - 7.2.2.13 Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.

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

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

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

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

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

7.2.5.2 If the resolution of the above meeting is unsatisfactory, the protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and submit a protest using the electronic Protest Form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

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

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

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

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

7.2.5.3.3 If the protesting team wins the game, a written protest is not filed. However, if the protesting team loses the game, at the conclusion of the game and as soon as possible, the plate umpire will notify the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor of the protest. Within 24 hours, the opposing coach, the plate umpire and the protesting coach must each complete an electronic Protest Form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. If pertinent institutional video is available, it shall be made available to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

at the time of the reports. All protest decisions by the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor are final.

- 7.2.5.3.4 The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:
- a. The protest is considered to be invalid, and the game score stands as played.
 - b. The protest is considered valid, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall either be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made, or declared a “No Contest.” (See Rule 6.21.)

Notes:

1. *Each conference is responsible for determining if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared “No Contest.” The competing teams are responsible for arranging to complete the protested game.*
2. *For nonconference games, competing teams are responsible for determining if the game shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared “No Contest.” The competing teams are responsible for arranging to complete the protested game.*

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

- a. The same lineup card shall be used when the game is resumed, a pregame meeting shall be held to verify accuracy (such as changed jersey numbers), and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.
- b. If a player was ejected in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because they were legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew a suspension that has not yet been served.

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

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

7.2.6 During play that determines an NCAA qualifier and during NCAA championship play itself, the coach shall immediately notify the plate umpire of their intent to protest before the next pitch. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team must voice its protest intentions before the umpires exit the field. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire’s decision violates NCAA rules, the following steps shall be taken:

- 7.2.6.1 The protesting coach must first identify the alleged failure to apply the correct rule, effect or misapplication of a rule. The opposing coach then may provide input, followed by the crew privately collaborating to attempt to settle the dispute. These steps should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using an NCAA Softball Rules Book. Then, the crew will bring both coaches together to explain its ruling. If the crew is unable to settle the dispute or the resolution of the

meeting is unsatisfactory, the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor must be contacted to resolve the protest.

7.2.6.2 All protest decisions by the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor are final.

7.3 Umpire's Judgment

7.3.1 No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of their respective duties as outlined in these rules.

7.3.2 Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.

7.3.3 An umpire may, but is not required to, consult their associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the calling umpire. **Exceptions:** (1) On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the defense, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball and before the next pitch, legal or illegal; and (2) On a decision regarding a pick-off, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with their associate(s).

7.3.4 Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed, but is never subject to protest (see Rule 7.2.2). Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with their associate(s) before taking any action, but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.

7.3.5 The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire on a live ball places a batter, batter-runner, a base runner or the defensive team in jeopardy or prevents them from making the appropriate play. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

RULE 8

Players and Substitutes

8.1 Players on a Team

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—(8.1.1.1 and 8.1.1.2)—A forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team with sufficient players in the event one team is no longer able to field a full team of eligible players. In the event neither team can field a team, the game is declared “No Contest” (see Rule 6.21) unless the failure of one of the teams to field a team is as a result of a misconduct suspension(s). (See Rules 13.3 and 13.4.) If a team could not field a team for the first game of the day in a tournament, subsequent games on the same day will be declared “No Contest.”

8.1.2 Players and Responsibilities.

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

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

8.1.2.2 Substitute refers to a player not listed on the lineup card as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first nine or 10 (if a designated player is used) players listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. A substitute who is replaced may not reenter the game at any time for any reason. (See Rule 8.5.) **Exception:** Concussion reentry. (See Rule 8.6.2.).

- 8.1.2.3 **Catcher.** The defensive player to whom the pitcher throws when pitching to a batter.
- 8.1.2.4 **Designated Player (DP).** The player who is initially listed on the lineup card in the team's batting order but not in the defensive lineup. (See Rule 8.2.)
- 8.1.2.5 **Fielders.** The nine players on the defensive team who take positions on the field and attempt to stop the offensive team from scoring.
- 8.1.2.6 **Flex.** The player who is initially listed in the 10th spot on the lineup card who may play any defensive position and may only enter the game on offense in the designated player's spot in the batting order. (See Rule 8.2.)
- 8.1.2.7 **Offense Player (OP).** The player in the batting order who is not playing defense because the DP has entered to play defense.
- 8.1.2.8 **Pinch Hitter.** A player inserted into the lineup in the place of the batter. The pinch hitter stays in the lineup until they are replaced by the player for whom they batted or another substitute.
- 8.1.2.9 **Pinch Runner.** A player inserted into the lineup in the place of a base runner. The pinch runner stays in the lineup until they are replaced by the player for whom they ran or another substitute.
- 8.1.2.10 **Pitcher.** The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters.
- 8.1.2.11 A defensive player is entitled to change to a different defensive position at any time as long as the change is reported to the plate umpire. The plate umpire shall report the change to the official scorer and to the opposing coach before the next pitch. (See also Rule 6.6.4.) **Exception:** Temporary defensive alignments or shifts do not need to be reported.

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

8.2 Designated Player/Flex

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

- 8.2.1 If the DP/flex is to be used, they must be different players, the DP must be listed in the batting order and the flex must be listed in the 10th spot on the lineup card at any defensive position (see Rule 8.1.1.2) presented at the pregame meeting.

EFFECT—A lineup card is subject to Inaccurate Lineup Card effects if reported to the plate umpire. See Rule 8.3.2.

- 8.2.2 The flex is designated to play defense and may not play offense only. If the flex is to play offense, it must only be in the DP position in the batting order, at any time and any number of times, and it must be reported to the plate umpire each time. Only one (the DP or the flex) may play offense at a time.
- 8.2.3 The DP is designated to play offense for the flex and may not play defense only. However, both the DP and the flex may play defense at the same time by having the DP replace any other defensive player on the field (that player remains in their spot in the batting order and is known as the OP) at any

time, any number of times and for any number of players, provided it is reported to the plate umpire each time.

8.2.4 The player(s) in the DP spot is charged with a substitution only when they are withdrawn from the batting order and the player(s) in the flex spot is charged with a substitution only when they are no longer listed as playing defense.

8.2.5 The DP position may be substituted for any number of times:

8.2.5.1 By an eligible substitute player off the bench (see Rule 8.5) keeping the number of players in the lineup at 10; or

8.2.5.2 By the player in the flex position who must assume the DP spot in the batting order and play offense and any defensive position, reducing the number of players in the lineup to nine and making the DP option inactive. If the DP option is not used again, the game may legally end with nine players.

8.2.5.2.1 The player in the flex position may move into the DP spot in the batting order (nine players in the lineup), and back to the flex position if the DP option is used again (10 players in the lineup) any number of times and it does not count as a substitution for the flex player, provided each movement is reported to the plate umpire.

8.2.6 The flex position may be substituted for any number of times:

8.2.6.1 By an eligible substitute player off the bench (see Rule 8.5) keeping the number of players in the lineup at 10; or

8.2.6.2 By the player in the DP position who must remain in the DP spot in the batting order and play offense and any defensive position, reducing the number of players in the lineup to nine and making the flex option inactive. If the flex option is not used again, the game may legally end with nine players.

8.2.6.2.1 The player in the DP position may play offense and defense for the flex position (nine players in the lineup), and return to playing offense only or also playing defense for an OP (10 players in the lineup) any number of times and it does not count as a substitution for the DP player, provided each movement is reported to the plate umpire.

EFFECT—(8.2.2 to 8.2.6)—Each change must be reported to the plate umpire or be subject to Unreported/Misreported Player effects (see Rule 8.3.3). *Exception:* If the flex plays offense in a batting order position other than that of the DP, they are considered an illegal player. (See Rule 8.3.4.)

8.2.7 After being charged with a substitution as in Rule 8.2.4, the starting DP and flex players may reenter one time, but substitutes may not reenter.

8.2.8 The starting DP reentering or a substitute DP entering the game must be placed in the DP spot in the batting order. They must play offense for the flex but may also play defense for any player (flex or OP). If they also play defense for the flex, the lineup is again reduced to nine players.

8.2.9 The starting flex reentering or a substitute flex entering the game may be placed in the lineup as follows:

8.2.9.1 In the 10th spot in the lineup and play defense only, anywhere on the field; or

8.2.9.2 In the DP spot in the batting order and play both offense and defense, as in Rule 8.2.5.2. The player currently occupying the DP spot must be withdrawn from the lineup (nine players in the lineup).

8.2.9.3 If the flex spot is inactive and there are nine players participating in the game as in Rule 8.2.6.2, a substitute flex player may be entered in the 10th spot in the lineup without first reentering the starting flex player.

8.2.10 The DP position listed on the pregame lineup must retain the same spot in the batting order throughout the entire game.

EFFECT—(8.2.7 to 8.2.10)— A player who illegally entered or reentered the game is subject to ejection (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) and illegal player effects if reported to the plate umpire (see Rule 8.3.4).

8.3 Improper Player

8.3.1 **Batting Out of Order.** (See Rule 11.9.)

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

Note: A player's name takes precedence over a listed uniform number. If the player's name is correct on the lineup card, but the uniform number is not, the name takes precedence over the number. (See Rule 5.7.)

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

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

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

(1) Nullify the play. The batter assumes the ball and strike count they had before the infraction was reported and continues their turn at bat. Each base runner returns to the last base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

(2) Take the results of the play and disregard the violation.

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

(1) The error may be corrected without penalty.

(2) All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.

(3) The lineup card shall be corrected.

(d) If reported by the defensive team while the offending player is on offense, after they have completed their turn at bat and before a pitch

has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:

- (1) The offending player shall be called out.
 - (2) All results from a ball batted by the offending batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, walk, dropped third strike or a base hit, shall be nullified.
 - (3) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the offending player.
 - (4) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (e) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense, after they have completed their turn at bat and a pitch has been delivered to the following batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:
- (1) The turn at bat is legal.
 - (2) All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
 - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (f) If reported by the defensive team, while the offending player is on offense as a pinch runner or the tiebreaker runner, and it follows a pitch in which the runner has advanced one or more bases and before the next pitch has been thrown.
- (1) The offending player shall be called out.
 - (2) Any advance by other base runners is nullified.
 - (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.
- (g) In all other cases regarding base runners who have not batted but are base runners, the error is correctable without penalty.
- 8.3.3 Unreported/Misreported Players.** An unreported/misreported player is one who has a right to change defensive position, enter or reenter the game but has not been reported or has been inaccurately reported to the umpire before their participation. The following regulations govern unreported/misreported substitutions, players, defensive changes and reentries: (See also Appendix B.)
- 8.3.3.1 If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, there is no penalty regardless of the length of time the unreported/misreported player was in the game. The unreported/misreported player shall be declared officially in the game.
- 8.3.3.2 If an unreported/misreported player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is made, there is no penalty. The unreported/misreported player shall be declared officially in the game.
- 8.3.3.3 If the unreported/misreported player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:
- 8.3.3.3.1 A pitch has been thrown, but the unreported/misreported player still is at bat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—The unreported/misreported player is declared officially in the game. In addition, the unreported/misreported player, if on base, is declared out. All other play stands.

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

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

EFFECT—The unreported/misreported player is declared officially in the game. The offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count

they had before the report of the unreported/misreported player with each base runner returning to the base legally occupied at the time of the last pitch.

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

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

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

Notes:

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

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

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

8.3.4.1.1 An ejected or suspended player entered or reentered the game.

EFFECT—A forfeit in favor of the offended team. See Rule 6.20.

8.3.4.1.2 A starter who has entered or reentered the game in a position to which they are not entitled.

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

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

8.3.4.1.5 A player rendered ineligible under Rules 13.2 and 13.3.

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

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

8.3.4.2 The following regulations govern illegal players, as described in Rules 8.3.4.1.2 through 8.3.4.1.7:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- d. The illegal player is the runner placed on second base in the tiebreaker or is a pinch runner, a pitch has been thrown and:
 - (1) The illegal player is on their original base when the violation is reported by the defensive team.

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—The illegal player is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) In addition, the illegal player, if on base, is declared out. Any advance by other base runners stands.

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

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

EFFECT—The player is ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) The offensive team has the option of:

- (1) taking the result of the play; or

(2) **nullifying the play and having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count they had before the report of the illegal player and each base runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.**

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

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

Notes:

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

8.4 Starting Player

8.4.1 Starting players and substitute players are listed on the official lineup card submitted to the plate umpire at the pregame meeting (see Rule 5.7). A listed starter and substitute may exchange roles at the pregame meeting and would then take on their respective new participation opportunities (that is, a starting player becomes an available substitute and a previously listed substitute becomes a starter who then has reentry rights).

8.4.2 Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to reenter the game one time as long as they assume their original spot in the batting order. **Exception:** The flex may reenter either in the designated player's spot in the batting order or in their original (10th, nonbatting) spot in the lineup.

8.5 Substitute Player

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

8.5.1.1 Any player may be substituted for at any time when the ball is dead.

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

8.5.1.3 A coach may make substitutes by notifying the plate umpire of the forthcoming changes. Substitutes are not required to enter the game at the time the substitution is reported to the plate umpire. Projected reentries are not allowed.

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

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

8.5.1.6 The batter may be removed before having received a pitch, whether or not they have completed their turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.

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

8.5.2 **Pitcher substitution.** A pitching substitution shall be governed by the following (see also Rule 10.19):

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

8.5.2.2 A pitcher is considered to be in the game when the conditions of Rule 8.5.1.2 have been satisfied and they throw a warmup pitch or a pitch to the first batter they face if they are not entitled to warmup pitches.

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

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

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

8.6 Reentry and Concussion Reentry

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

8.6.2 A player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (see Appendix H) must be immediately removed and receive appropriate medical evaluation. They may not return until cleared by the appropriate medical personnel.

8.6.2.1 While the evaluation is taking place, the injured player, whether a starter or a substitute, may be replaced by any eligible player who has not yet participated in the game.

8.6.2.2 If the injured player is cleared to resume participation, they may resume their lineup spot. The temporary replacement player may again participate in the game as a substitute in the same lineup spot only, and provided they were not already a withdrawn substitute or a reentered starter before becoming the temporary replacement player or otherwise becomes ineligible.

8.6.2.3 If a team has no remaining eligible players, a starter or substitute who has previously participated in the game may replace the injured player. **Exception:** A player rendered ineligible by ejection cannot replace the injured player.

EFFECT—(8.6.1 to 8.6.2.3)—A player who illegally reentered the game shall be ejected and subject to illegal-player penalties. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Notes:

1. *Violation of the reentry rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*
2. *If a substitution violates both the reentry and the player-substitution rules, the illegal/unreported player shall be ejected and subject to illegal-player penalties. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)*
3. *Projected reentries are not allowed. (See Rule 8.5.1.3.)*

RULE 9

Defense

9.1 No Huddle Defense

After an out, the defense is allowed to throw the ball around the infield, but then must throw the ball directly to the pitcher. A team cannot huddle at the pitcher's circle or elsewhere or it will be charged as a player-to-player conference.

EFFECT—The umpire shall charge the team with a player-to-player conference per Rule 6.12.9.

9.2 Catch

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

9.2.2 For a legal catch:

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

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

9.2.2.3 A fielder does not need to reestablish themselves in live-ball territory after contacting dead-ball territory before contact with the ball as long as they maintained contact with live-ball territory and are no longer in contact with dead-ball territory.

9.2.2.4 A fielder must reestablish themselves with both feet in live-ball territory after entering dead-ball territory before contact with the ball if they did not maintain contact with the ground in live-ball territory.

9.2.2.5 A fielder may leave live-ball territory and be airborne at the time of a catch.

EFFECT—(9.2.2.1 to 9.2.2.5)—The ball is live until the defender carries the ball into dead-ball territory. (See Rule 9.4.) The batter is out, but base runners may advance with liability to be put out while the ball is live.

9.3 No Catch

A catch shall not be credited when:

9.3.1 A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with any part of their body or properly worn equipment other than their hand(s) or a glove/mitt.

9.3.2 Immediately after a catch, the fielder collides with another player, umpire or fence, or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.

EFFECT—(9.3.1 and 9.3.2)—The ball is live, the batter-runner and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

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

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

9.3.4 The fielder intentionally uses any equipment or part of their uniform that is detached from its proper position.

EFFECT—See Rule 9.5.4.

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

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

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

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

9.3.7 The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground beyond the original plane of the home run fence when they catch the ball.

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

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

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

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

9.4 Catch and Carry

A fielder may not catch or field a live thrown or batted ball and carry it into dead-ball territory. See Rule 14.20.10 for scoring.

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

If, in the umpire's judgment, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes, pitches or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-

ball territory, the ball is dead, and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

Notes:

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

9.5 Obstruction

9.5.1 Obstruction occurs when:

9.5.1.1 A defensive player, neither in possession of the ball nor in the act of fielding a batted ball, impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitch or impedes the progress of any runner who is legally running bases on a live ball. It can be intentional or unintentional.

9.5.1.2 A defensive player, while not in possession of the ball:

- a. Blocks any part of the leading edge of first, second or third base or home plate (as defined); or
- b. Otherwise blocks the runner from advancing or returning to a base.

9.5.2 The defensive player is not considered obstructing if they are in possession of the ball or they are, in the judgment of the umpire, making a legitimate reaction to the trajectory of the ball after it is thrown.

Notes:

1. *Once in possession of the ball, the defensive player can be positioned between the runner and the base/plate.*
2. *Obstruction may be ruled even though there is no physical contact.*
3. *If in the umpire's judgment, the runner would have clearly been put out then the obstruction is ignored.*
4. *Obstruction can occur on a force or tag play.*

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other base runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher

obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. Once a base runner has passed a base, they are considered to have reached that base, even if they missed it.

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

9.5.4 Fielder Obstruction.

9.5.4.1 A fielder who is not in possession of the ball nor in the act of fielding a batted ball shall not impede the runner.

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

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

9.5.4.4 A fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball shall not intentionally alter their motion to obstruct the batter-runner or base runner.

9.5.4.5 A fielder shall not fake a tag on a runner advancing or returning to a base. A fake tag occurs when a fielder, not in possession of the ball, pretends to have the ball and simulates a tag, which causes the runner to slow down or stop.

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

EFFECT—(9.5.4.1 to 9.5.4.6)—Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner, obstruction shall be called and a delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

If the obstructed player is put out before reaching the base they should have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called at the time of the apparent putout and the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) they should have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction.

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

If the runner collides flagrantly, the ball is dead and the runner is declared out and ejected. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

Notes:

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

9.5.4.7 A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner rounding a base.

9.5.4.8 A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner returning to or leading off a base. If a play is being made on the runner, the fielder may be charged with obstruction with no warning issued.

9.5.4.9 A fielder shall not use force to push a runner off the base they possess in order to put them out. (See Rule 9.5.6.2 if excessive force is used.)

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

EFFECT—(9.5.4.7 to 9.5.4.10)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify their coach. Subsequent violation of the same rule by the same individual shall result in a one-base award to the obstructed runner and each other base runner forced to advance. The awards shall be to the base beyond the base where

obstruction occurred unless the runner safely advances farther on their own, in which case no award is given.

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

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

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

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

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

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

9.5.5 **Equipment Obstruction.** A fielder shall not intentionally contact or catch a fair batted, thrown or pitched ball with any equipment or any part of their uniform that is detached from its proper place on their person.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

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

9.5.6 **Flagrant Player Obstruction.**

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

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

EFFECT—(9.5.6.1 and 9.5.6.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The appropriate obstruction effect is applied, and in addition, the offender shall be ejected without warning. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

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

9.5.8 An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed unless one of the following occurs:

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

9.5.8.2 When another violation is being played upon.

9.5.8.3 The obstructed runner commits an act of interference.

9.5.8.4 The obstructed runner passes another runner.

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

9.5.8.6 A proper appeal is made for missing a base.

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

9.5.8.8 The umpire determines the runner is clearly beaten by the throw.

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

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

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

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

9.6 **Umpire Interference**

9.6.1 Umpire interference occurs:

9.6.1.1 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the umpire or their attached equipment or clothing before passing a fielder (other than the

pitcher), or after passing a fielder (including the pitcher) but another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

9.6.1.2 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the umpire or their attached equipment or clothing before touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

EFFECT—(9.6.1.1 and 9.6.1.2)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a hit, but, if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* It is not interference and the ball remains in play, if the ball: (1) hits the umpire after passing a fielder other than the pitcher, and no other fielder has a reasonable chance to make a play; or (2) hits the umpire after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

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

9.6.1.3 When the plate umpire or their clothing interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner on a pickoff or steal attempt.

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

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

9.7 Equipment Blocked Ball

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

9.7.2 When a ball becomes lodged in an umpire's or offensive player's attached equipment or clothing,

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.6.3.

9.7.3 When a ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's attached equipment or clothing,

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.6.4.

9.8 Foul Batted Blocked Ball

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

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

9.9 Fair Batted Blocked Ball

A fair batted ball becomes blocked:

9.9.1 When it contacts loose equipment belonging to the defense.

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

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

EFFECT—(9.9.1 to 9.9.3)—See Rule 12.12.3.

9.10 Live Thrown Blocked Ball

A live thrown ball becomes blocked:

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

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

EFFECT—(9.10.1 and 9.10.2)—See Rule 12.12.8.3.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.3.6.

9.11 Pitched Blocked Ball

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.7.2.

9.12 Game Personnel in Unauthorized Areas

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

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.3.5.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.3.6.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.8.3.

RULE 10

Pitching

10.1 Pitching Position Required for a Legal Pitch

10.1.1 The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when they have:

- a. Their hands apart;
- b. Both feet on the ground;
- c. Their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate;
- d. Their stride foot in contact with the pitcher's plate or its backward extension, provided their entire foot is not outside the width of the pitcher's plate;
- e. Their hips in line with first and third bases; and
- f. The catcher in position to receive the pitch.

10.1.2 In distinguishing the pitcher's feet:

10.1.2.1 The pivot foot is the one that maintains contact with the pitcher's plate, absorbs the body's weight, pushes off against the plate during the initial step phase of the pitch, and drags along the ground or disengages from the playing surface during the final phase of the pitch.

10.1.2.2 The stride foot is the one that starts on or behind the pitcher's plate and extends forward toward home plate as the pitcher steps to deliver the pitch to the batter. The stride foot must land on or within the lines of the pitcher's lane.

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

EFFECT—(10.1.1 to 10.1.3)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.2 Taking the Signal

10.2.1 Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following:

10.2.1.1 Be in the proper pitching position required for a legal pitch (see Rule 10.1.1).

10.2.1.2 The stride foot may be on or behind the pitcher's plate as far back as desired. Once the pitcher initially sets the toe of their stride foot, they may not move that foot in any direction prior to the step/stride and delivery.

10.2.1.3 Hands must be separated.

10.2.1.4 The ball must be held and remain in one hand, either bare or gloved, in front of, at the side of or behind the body.

Notes:

1. *Rolling (not tossing) the ball is legal as long as contact is maintained with the hand (including the wrist).*
 2. *A ball dropped by the pitcher before their hands have come together and then separated shall be live and the base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.*
- 10.2.2 While in the pitching position and taking the signal, the pitcher must give, take or appear to take a signal. The signal need not come from the catcher.

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

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

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

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

10.3 Start of the Pitch

The pitch officially begins and cannot be discontinued once the hands have separated after coming together. The pitching motion consists of the start of the pitch, windup, step/stride and delivery. (See diagram at end of rule.)

10.4 The Windup

The windup phase of the pitch begins when the hands come together and ends when the hands separate. The pitcher may use any windup desired providing they do not, after having taken the signal and bringing their hands together:

- 10.4.1 Make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- 10.4.2 Separate their hands and then return the ball to both hands.
- 10.4.3 Stop and change direction more than twice.

EFFECT—(10.4.1 to 10.4.3)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.5 Step/Stride

- 10.5.1 The pitcher must take only one step/stride forward toward home plate as they deliver the pitch.
- 10.5.2 A portion of the stride foot must remain in contact with the ground at all times before beginning the forward step.

Note: Once the pitcher has established their stride foot, simply dropping or rocking onto their heel is not a violation.

10.5.3 It is legal to slide the pivot foot forward or across the pitcher's plate provided contact with the pitcher's plate is maintained. **Exception:** Physical contact with the pitcher's plate may be lost if all of the following apply:

10.5.3.1 The pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate when the pitcher turns, twists or bends their pivot foot;

10.5.3.2 If the pivot foot has not reduced the distance to home plate; and

10.5.3.3 The pivot foot must remain in contact with the ground; however, rocking onto either the toe or heel is allowed.

10.5.4 While pushing off from the pitcher's plate, both feet may disengage from the playing surface as long as they remain within the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate and do not create a replant of the pivot resulting in the pitcher being farther away from the pitcher's plate. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate resulting in the non-pivot foot becoming closer to home plate is illegal.

10.5.5 The pitcher is not allowed to hop or drag to a replant (crowhop), gain a second starting point and push off their pivot foot. Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may trail on the ground but may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.

EFFECT—(10.5.1 to 10.5.5)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.6 Delivery

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

10.6.1 Once the hands have separated and the pitching arm begins the clockwise motion that will result in the release of the pitch, not more than 1½ revolutions of the pitching arm may occur.

10.6.2 The pitcher's step/stride to the batter must be continuous.

10.6.3 The pitch shall be released underhand and the hand shall travel below the hip.

10.6.4 The release of the pitch and follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forward.

10.6.5 The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.

EFFECT—(10.6.1 to 10.6.5)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.7 Ball Dropped During Pitch

The effect for a pitch dropped during its delivery varies based on when it happens.

10.7.1 When the pitcher drops the ball before their hands have come together and then separated.

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

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

EFFECT—If the batter does not have a reasonable opportunity to hit the pitch, a defensive player may retrieve it, the ball is live, a ball is awarded to the batter, and the base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out. If the batter would have had a reasonable opportunity to hit the

pitch but the defensive player retrieves it, obstruction is ruled, the ball is dead and the batter and all other base runners are awarded one base (whether forced or not).

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

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

10.8 Illegal Pitch

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

EFFECT—If the pitch is released, the umpire calls “Illegal” loud enough for nearby players to hear. If an illegal pitch occurs but the pitch is not released, it is a dead ball. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

Simultaneously, the umpire gives the delayed dead-ball signal and waits to suspend play until the non-contacted pitch has reached the plate, or the play has been completed. Assuming no other violation has occurred (for example, leaving early):

(1) **If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any runner fails to advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team may choose the result of the play or the standard effect for an illegal pitch, which is that a ball is awarded to the batter.**

(2) **If the batter reaches first base safely and each other base runner advances at least one base, the play stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled. Once a runner has passed a base, they are considered to have reached the base, even if they missed it.**

(3) **If the 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.**

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

Note: The umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to both the pitcher and their coach, if requested.

10.9 Quick Pitch

A quick pitch, intended to catch the batter off balance or otherwise unprepared to bat, shall be ruled to be “No pitch.”

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

10.10 No Pitch

“No pitch” shall be declared when:

10.10.1 The pitcher pitches while play is suspended.

10.10.2 A base runner is legitimately off base (namely, after a foul ball), and the pitcher fails to allow sufficient time for the base runner to return.

10.10.3 The pitcher delivers a quick pitch.

10.10.4 If a player violates the time-between-pitch rule (see Rule 10.18) and that causes their opponent to also violate the rule.

10.10.5 The batter is hit by a pitch that has not yet reached the front line of the batter's box, and is not judged as having been able to enter the strike zone, assuming they did not swing or attempt to bunt. (See Rule 11.13.3.4.)

EFFECT—(10.10.1 to 10.10.5)—The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

10.10.6 A base runner is called out for leaving their base before release of the pitch.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. At the conclusion of the play, if the defensive head coach does not select the result of the play, “No Pitch” is declared, the offending base runner is out, the batter is returned to the batter’s box and other base runners returned to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch unless superseded by another violation.

10.10.7 The pitcher stops or hesitates in their delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box, holding up their hand or using any other action as if requesting time.

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared.

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

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared and a warning is given to the offending team. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the violator(s) being ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

10.11 Discontinuing a Pitch/Stepping Off the Pitcher’s Plate

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

10.11.2 The pitcher may not remove themselves from the pitching position by stepping forward or sideways off the pitcher’s plate before the start of the pitch. They must step backward. See Rule 10.3.

EFFECT—(10.11.1 and 10.11.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled and illegal pitch is enforced. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.12 Ball Rotation

10.12.1 As a general rule, the current game ball is in play until such time as it leaves the playing field or is rejected by an umpire because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play. However, each pitcher shall have a choice of game balls at the start of their respective half-inning and may request a different ball at any time.

10.12.2 If the pitcher does not like the ball they have, they must return it to the plate umpire before receiving a different ball.

10.12.2.1 The pitcher may not hold more than one ball at a time for trial purposes.

10.12.2.2 The game shall not be unduly delayed (for example, to retrieve a particular ball that has been fouled away from the playing field).

EFFECT—(10.12.1 to 10.12.2.2)—The plate umpire shall control ball rotation and not allow a violation of the rule.

10.13 Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher

10.13.1 Under the supervision and within view of the umpire, a resin (a drying agent) may be used on the pitcher's hand/fingers. Any substance (including resin, dirt or saliva) applied to the pitcher's hands and fingers must be wiped off if it would transfer to the ball.

10.13.2 No player or other team personnel may apply moisture or any substance to the ball or into a glove that will then contact the ball or do anything else to deface the ball. **Exception:** All new game balls shall be sufficiently rubbed up so as to remove the manufacturer's gloss before being put in play by the umpire.

EFFECT—(10.13.1 and 10.13.2)—The ball is a delayed dead ball. For the first offense, a ball shall be awarded to the batter and a warning shall be issued to the pitcher when the substance comes in contact with the ball. For the second offense, the pitcher shall be ejected. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

10.13.3 The pitcher who brings a resin bag to the pitching circle is responsible for removing it each half inning as they leave the field.

10.13.4 The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or thighs that an umpire considers distracting. This includes a batting glove, sweatband, loose lacing on a glove or ball-colored logos. **Exception:** The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.

10.13.5 Pitchers may wear braces, casts, elbow guards, prostheses or splints on their pitching arms. (See Rule 3.8.1 for additional restrictions.)

EFFECT—(10.13.3 to 10.13.5)—The pitcher shall remove the item upon request of the umpire or be ejected from the game. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

10.14 Intentionally Pitching at a Batter or Umpire

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

EFFECT—If, in the umpire's judgment, such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall warn the pitcher, catcher and the head coach that future violations by any pitcher from their team will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher, and possibly the catcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher without warning. The head coach and/or catcher of the offending team also may be ejected at this time if the umpire believes it is appropriate. A warning may be issued to one or both teams before the start of the game or at any time during a game if the umpire believes it to be appropriate. (Behavioral ejections; see Rules 13.2.1 and 13.8.) If the batter is hit by the pitch, the effect for hit by pitch also applies. (See Rule 11.13.)

10.14.2 The pitcher shall not intentionally attempt to hit an umpire with a pitch.

EFFECT—If, in the umpire’s judgment, such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall eject the pitcher, catcher and the head coach. (Behavioral ejections; see Rules 13.2.1 and 13.8.) In addition, the head coach shall be suspended from the institution’s next two previously scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring).

10.15 Intentional Base on Balls

If the pitcher purposely throws ball four to a batter, it is scored an intentional base on balls. All pitches must be legally pitched to the catcher.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter is awarded first base. If forced, other base runners advance one base without jeopardy of being put out but may advance further at their own risk. If not forced, other base runners may advance at the risk of being put out. Not delivering each pitch legally to the catcher is an illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

***Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out.**

10.16 Returning a Pitched Ball to the Pitcher

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

Exceptions:

1. To play on a base runner.
2. When the batter becomes a base runner.
3. After a strikeout.
4. After a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.
5. When “no swing” is ruled and help is requested on a checked swing, which might be strike three.
6. When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.
7. An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

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

In addition, on the first offense, the offending player shall be warned. On subsequent offenses, the offender shall be ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter.

10.17 Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher’s Plate

The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while their foot is in contact with the pitcher’s plate after they have taken the pitching position. If the throw from the pitcher’s plate occurs during a live-ball appeal play, the appeal(s) is canceled. (See Rule 10.11.1.)

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

10.18 Time Allowed Between Pitches

The pitcher has 20 seconds from the time they receive the ball from the catcher to separate their hands and deliver the pitch. The catcher must be in the catcher's box and the batter in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." (See Rule 2.34.)

EFFECT—The ball is dead. If the batter is in violation of the timing, a strike is assessed. If the pitcher or catcher is in violation of any part of the timing sequence, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each base runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out. In addition, on the first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending player. On the second offense, the offending player shall be ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

10.19 Warmup Pitches

10.19.1 A warmup pitch is any pitch delivered to home plate during a suspension of play.

10.19.2 At the start of the game and beginning of each half inning, the pitcher of record may throw any number of warmup pitches and one throw to any base during the time allowed. Play shall be suspended during this time.

Note: If the catcher is the third out or on base when the third out is made, the offensive team should have someone ready to warm up the pitcher.

10.19.3 After a pitching change not necessitated by an injury to the replaced pitcher, a relief pitcher may throw not more than five warmup pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base. Play shall be suspended during this time.

10.19.3.1 If media goes to break during a pitching change, a relief pitcher is allowed to throw any number of warmup pitches during the break, but must be ready when the plate umpire calls "Play ball."

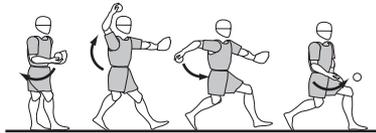
10.19.3.2 After injury to a pitcher, the relief pitcher must be allowed adequate time to warm up.

10.19.3.3 The pitcher shall be given adequate time to warm up after any substantial delay caused by inclement weather, injury or delayed play by the umpire.

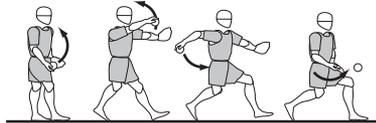
10.19.3.4 A pitcher shall not be allowed warmup pitches if returning to pitch in the same half inning unless media goes to break.

EFFECT—(10.19.2 to 10.19.3.4)—A ball shall be awarded to the next batter(s) faced for each warmup pitch/throw in violation of this rule. In addition, if a player other than the pitcher of record throws a warmup pitch, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending coach for a first violation. Subsequent violation by the same team shall result in ejection of the head coach. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

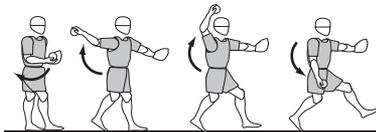
Legal Pitching Motions



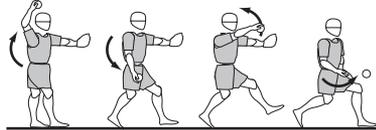
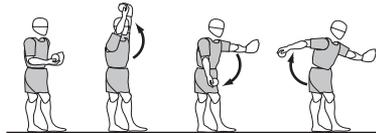
Straight Backswing



Straight Upswing



Rocker Windmill



Pendulum Windmill

RULE 11

Batting

The batter is entitled to one unobstructed swing at each pitch from the time it leaves the pitcher's hand until it is contacted by the catcher.

At the start of the game and between half innings, warmup swings on the field of play shall be limited to the batter (provided they are in foul territory and outside the batter's box) and the on-deck batter (provided they are in the on-deck circle).

11.1 On-Deck Batter

11.1.1 The on-deck batter is restricted to the on-deck circle nearest their dugout for warmup swings.

11.1.1.1 They may leave the on-deck circle to take their turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

EFFECT—(11.1.1.1)—See Rule 11.19.

11.1.2 The on-deck batter may not have more than two bats in the on-deck circle — one or two official softball bats; one approved warmup bat that meets specifications in Rule 3.5; or one official softball bat and one approved warmup bat.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.5.

11.2 Legal Position in the Batter's Box

11.2.1 The batter must be within the batter's box and the catcher within the catcher's box within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." (See Rule 2.34.)

EFFECT—If the batter does not comply, the ball is dead. A strike is called, and if this pitch is the third strike, the batter is declared out on strikes. If the pitcher or catcher is in violation of any part of the timing sequence, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. (See Rule 10.18.)

11.2.2 The batter shall not leave their position within the batter's box when the pitcher is in pitching position in contact with the pitcher's plate unless permission is granted by the umpire.

EFFECT—The batter leaves the batter's box at the risk of having a strike delivered, unless they request and are granted a suspension of play from the plate umpire. If the plate umpire does not suspend play as requested by the batter and the pitcher legally delivers the pitch, it shall be called a ball or strike, depending upon the location of the pitch. The ball remains live.

11.2.3 Any part of each foot in contact with the ground must be completely within the lines of the batter's box until the pitch is released.

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

11.2.4 Once the pitcher has taken (or appeared to take) a signal, both hands must be touched in view of the plate umpire and the hands have separated, they must deliver the pitch, and the batter shall not leave their position in the batter's box.

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

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

If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, "No pitch" is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

11.2.5 At the moment of bat-ball contact, the batter may not contact the pitch when any part of their body is touching home plate or the ground outside the lines of the batter's box.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The coach of the defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the standard effect for illegal contact, which is a strike on the batter and all base runners must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If the standard effect for illegal contact is chosen, and it is the third strike, the batter is declared out.

Notes:

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

11.3 Balls and Strikes

11.3.1 **Strike zone.** The zone is the area above home plate between the bottom of the batter's sternum and the top of their knees when they assume their natural batting stance. The top of the ball must be on or within the horizontal plane, and either side of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate. (See diagrams at the end of this rule.)

11.3.1.1 The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher, and in relation to the batter's natural position as the pitch crosses home plate.

11.3.2 **Called ball.** A ball is awarded to the batter:

11.3.2.1 When a legal pitch that is not struck at by the batter does not enter the strike zone on the fly, touches the ground before reaching home plate or touches home plate.

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

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

11.3.2.2 When an illegal pitch is called and the pitch is not contacted, swung at or, if hit, the team does not elect to take the results of the play.

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

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

EFFECT—See Rule 10.18.

11.3.2.4 For each unallowed warmup pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.19.

11.3.2.5 When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher after a foul tip and each pitch not contacted. See Rule 10.16 for exceptions.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.16.

11.3.2.6 When a team representative, personnel or player of the defense intentionally removes, or covers with infield material, any required lines on the field or intentionally covers the pitcher's plate or home plate.

EFFECT—See Rule 2.20.3.

11.3.3 **Called strike.** A strike is charged to the batter:

11.3.3.1 For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground.

11.3.3.2 For each legally pitched ball that is swung at by the batter and missed.

11.3.3.3 For each foul tip.

EFFECT—(11.3.3.1 to 11.3.3.3)—The ball is live, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.

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

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

11.3.3.5 When the batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.3.3.6 For each pitch that touches any part of the batter's person as they swing and miss.

11.3.3.7 For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter or their clothing when they are in the batter's box and have fewer than two strikes.

11.3.3.8 For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in or would have been in the strike zone.

EFFECT—(11.3.3.6 to 11.3.3.8)—The ball is dead, and base runners may not advance. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

11.3.3.10 When a team representative, personnel or player of the offense intentionally removes, or covers with infield material, any required lines on the field or intentionally covers the pitcher's plate or home plate.

EFFECT—See Rule 2.20.3.

11.3.3.11 When the effect for a pitch contacted when any part of the batter's body is touching the ground outside the lines of the batter's box is chosen.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.2.5.

11.4 Fair Ball

A legally batted ball that:

11.4.1 Settles on or is touched on or over fair territory between home plate and first base, or between home plate and third base.

11.4.2 While on or over fair territory, touches a player, umpire, or their attached equipment or clothing.

11.4.3 Touches first, second or third base, unless a fielder or runner previously touched it while the ball was in foul territory.

11.4.4 Bounces over or past first or third base regardless of where the ball hits after passing the base.

11.4.5 First falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first or third base.

Note: Beyond first or third base is determined by the baseline between first and second base and the baseline between second and third base (see diagram at the end of Rule 2).

EFFECT—(11.4.1 to 11.4.5)—The ball is live. The batter and base runners advance with liability to be put out.

11.4.6 Shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted.

11.4.7 While in flight, hits the foul pole or while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the home run fence.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.5.

11.4.8 Is in fair territory when a runner, who is in fair territory, interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. See Rule 12.17.1 for batter-runner interference and Rule 12.17.2 for base runner interference.

Note: A batted ball signaled fair may be changed to foul if additional information provided to the calling umpire is accepted.

11.5 Foul Ball

11.5.1 A legally batted ball that:

11.5.1.1 Accidentally touches the batter, or touches the dirt, pitcher's plate or home plate and then the batter, while they are still in the batter's box.

11.5.1.2 Accidentally touches the bat a second time, whether or not the batted ball first touches the dirt, pitcher's plate or home plate, while the bat is still in the batter's possession and they are still in the batter's box.

11.5.1.3 Accidentally comes into contact with the batter-runner or their bat (held or discarded) whether or not the batted ball first touches the dirt, pitcher's plate or home plate, while the ball is in foul territory and judged by the umpire as not having a chance to become fair.

11.5.1.4 Settles untouched on, or first touches/is touched by (1) a fielder or umpire, (2) either of their attached equipment or clothing, (3) accidentally by a base runner or their equipment/clothing, or (4) any object foreign to the natural playing surface on or over foul territory between home plate and first base or home plate and third base, even if the batted ball first rolled against the discarded bat (see Rule 11.12.1) or hit the ground in fair territory including the pitcher's plate and home plate.

11.5.1.5 Bounces or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory.

11.5.1.6 First falls or is touched on or over foul territory beyond first or third base.

Note: Beyond first or third base is determined by the baseline between first and second base and the baseline between second and third base (see diagram at the end of Rule 2).

11.5.1.7 Is in foul territory when a base runner interferes with a defensive player's reasonable chance to make a play on the ball.

11.5.1.8 Goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher or their equipment other than their hand or gloved hand.

11.5.1.9 Shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted.

EFFECT—(11.5.1.1 to 11.5.1.9)—The ball is dead, it is a strike on the batter if they have fewer than two strikes or are attempting a bunt, and base runners must return to the bases held at the time of the pitch, if not called out for interference. *Exception:* In 11.5.1.4 and 11.5.1.6 if the first touch is by a fielder on a ball in flight that is legally caught according to Rules 9.2 and 9.3, the ball is live, the batter is out and base runners may advance with liability to be put out after tagging up.

11.5.2 A legally batted ball that is declared foul cannot be changed regardless of additional information that might be made available to the calling umpire.

Exception: Dead-ball awards (i.e., out-of-the-park home run, ground-rule double and hit by pitch).

11.6 Foul Tip

11.6.1 A ball that travels sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught unassisted by the catcher.

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

11.6.2 A base runner may advance on a foul tip without tagging. The foul tip is treated as a noncontacted pitch unless it is illegally contacted.

EFFECT—(11.6.1 and 11.6.2)—The ball is live, a strike is charged to the batter, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.

11.7 Hits, Bunts, Slaps

11.7.1 **Hit.** A hit is a legally batted fair ball.

11.7.1.1 No intent to contact the ball is necessary.

11.7.1.2 The batter becomes a batter-runner as soon as they legally hit a fair ball.

11.7.1.3 The ball is live.

11.7.1.4 The batter is liable to be put out.

11.7.1.5 Base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

11.7.1.6 If a fair-hit ball should touch a base runner or umpire while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.

11.7.2 **Bunt.** A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped into the infield with the bat.

11.7.2.1 Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn — pulled backward away from the ball.

11.7.2.2 On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third-strike rule applies.

11.7.2.3 If, with fewer than two strikes, the batter's attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike, and the ball is dead. With two strikes, the batter is declared out, and the ball is dead.

11.7.2.4 A bunt that is caught in the air remains live and in play, regardless of the number of strikes on the batter, and whether it is fair or foul.

11.7.3 **Slap.** A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

11.8 Batting Order

The batting order that is delivered to the plate umpire must be followed throughout the game, except that a starting player may be replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the starting player in the batting order.

In addition, the flex may replace the designated player on offense. The first batter listed on each team's lineup card shall lead off their respective team's half of the first inning. After the first inning, the first (lead-off) batter in each half inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed their full turn at bat in the preceding inning. If the third out in a half inning is made before a batter completes their turn at bat, they shall be the first batter in the next inning, and they shall start with a 0-0 count.

11.9 Batting Out of Order (See also Appendix B)

- 11.9.1 A player is batting out of order when they fail to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.
- 11.9.2 Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one pitch has been made to the following batter or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
- 11.9.3 The effect for batting out of order varies depending upon when the infraction is reported to the plate umpire.

EFFECT—(11.9.1 to 11.9.3)—If the error is reported while the improper batter is at bat, the correct batter may take their place and legally assume any balls and strikes. Any runs scored or bases advanced while the improper batter was at bat shall be legal.

Note: The offensive team may correct an improper batter at home plate with no effect.

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

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

Notes:

1. *Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.*
2. *No base runner shall be removed from the base they are occupying to bat in their proper place (except the batter who has been taken off the base by the plate umpire as in the effect above). They merely miss their turn at bat with no effect. The batter following them in the batting order becomes the legal batter.*
3. *The public-address announcer shall announce the players as listed on the lineup card. The public-address announcer, umpires or official scorer shall not call attention to the improper batter. If this occurs, the plate umpire shall warn the public-address announcer and/or the official scorer that on the next infraction, they will be removed from that position.*

11.10 Checked Swing

- 11.10.1 A checked swing is the restraining action a batter takes to stop an attempted hit or slap that puts the batter in jeopardy of a strike being assessed. If the batter is attempting to avoid being hit by a pitch rather than attempting to contact it, checked swing does not apply.
- 11.10.2 A pitch should be called a strike when it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether the batter checked their swing.
- 11.10.3 A pitch should be called a ball when:
- 11.10.3.1 The swing is checked (resulting in no swing) and the pitch did not enter the strike zone or did not contact the bat.
 - 11.10.3.2 The plate umpire is in doubt regarding a checked swing or is blocked out.
- 11.10.4 If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the defense requests help, the plate umpire shall ask for help.
- 11.10.5 If an out is made on the bases in addition to an out on a properly appealed checked swing, the checked swing out is assessed before the out on the bases.

Note: As a general rule, there are four factors when determining if a batter has swung at the ball or checked the swing: (1) Did they make an attempt to hit/bunt/slap the pitch? (2) Was the barrel of the bat out in front of their front hip? (3) Did they roll their wrists? (4) Did they swing through the ball and bring the bat back or draw the bat back before the pitch arrived?

11.11 Dropped Third-Strike Rule

- 11.11.1 A dropped third strike is called anytime there are two outs or with fewer than two outs and first base unoccupied and the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground.

EFFECT—The ball is live, the batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- 11.11.2 When the batter is entitled to attempt first base on a dropped third strike and the pitch rebounds off the catcher or their glove/mitt and there is unintentional contact between the ball and the discarded bat or batter-runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner and base runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out.

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base is occupied, the batter is automatically out, the ball is live, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

11.12 Hitting Ball a Second Time

11.12.1 The batter may not, after contacting a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

EFFECT—If the bat is still in the batter’s hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time and the batter is in the batter’s box, the ball is dead, a foul ball is ruled, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the bat is still in the batter’s hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time and the batter is out of the batter’s box, or if the contact is unintentional, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the bat is out of the batter’s hand(s) (on the ground), the ball rolls against the dropped bat in fair territory and, in the umpire’s judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball. If the ball touches the dropped bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the dropped bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball regardless.

If the bat is out of the batter’s hand(s) (dropped or thrown) and it hits the ball in fair territory, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Hitting the Ball a Second Time

Batter	Bat	Batted Ball	Effect
In box	In hands	Fair or foul	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Fair	Batter out
Out of box	In hands	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
In/out of box	In hands	Fair or foul (intentional)	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Fair	Live
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Foul	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Fair	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (intentional)	Batter out

Notes:

- If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a base runner or a fielder, the ball remains live, and there is no interference.*
- If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.*
- If the batter simply drops their bat and the catcher trips over it, no interference is called.*

11.12.2 The batter may not intentionally make contact with a ball in foul territory or intentionally interfere with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike.

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

11.12.3 The batter may not swing and miss a pitch and then unintentionally hit it on the follow-through or after it bounces off the catcher or their glove/mitt.

EFFECT—Dead ball is signaled. The pitch is a strike. The head coach of the defensive team may choose either the result of the play or it is a dead ball strike and all base runners must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.12.4 The batter may not swing and miss a pitch and then intentionally hit it on a second swing nor intentionally with the bat (discarded or in their hands) after it bounces off the catcher or their glove/mitt.

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

11.13 Hit Batter (by Pitch)

11.13.1 A batter is awarded first base when a pitch, neither swung at nor called a strike, is entirely within the batter's box and it strikes the batter or their clothing. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required; however, the batter may not obviously try to get hit by the pitch. (See Rule 11.13.3.1.)

11.13.2 A batter is awarded first base when a pitch neither swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter or their clothing while they are in the batter's box, except as noted in Rule 11.13.3 that follows.

EFFECT—(11.13.1 and 11.13.2)—The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Base runners may not advance unless forced.

Notes:

- 1. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.*
- 2. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.*
- 3. If a batter swings and the ball hits their hands sending it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter. If it is strike three, the batter is out.*

11.13.3 The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:

11.13.3.1 The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch (which is not entirely in the batter's box) or they obviously tried to get hit by the pitch (regardless of its location).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a ball or strike (depending on its location), and the batter remains at bat, except the batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike or the batter is awarded first base if the pitch was "Ball four." Base runners advance if forced.

Note: The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter and could include a batter freezing and unable to move due to the unusual movement or speed of the pitch.

11.13.3.2 The batter is hit by a pitch in the strike zone or by a pitch that does not reach the plate but would have been in the strike zone had it not hit the batter.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a strike. The batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike; otherwise, they remain at bat. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.13.3.3 The pitch touches any part of the batter, including their hands or clothing, as they swing and miss for a third strike.

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

11.13.3.4 The batter is hit by a pitch that has not yet reached the front line of the batter's box, and is not judged as having been able to enter the strike zone, assuming they did not swing or attempt to bunt.

EFFECT—“No Pitch.” See Rule 10.10.

11.14 Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing

The effect for a batted ball that hits the batter (including their clothing and attached equipment) or hits the dirt, home plate or pitcher's plate, and then hits the batter (including their clothing and attached equipment) varies depending on the location of the batter.

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

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

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

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

11.15 Illegally Batted Ball

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter contacts the pitch and:

11.15.1 Any part of their body is touching home plate or the ground outside the lines of the batter's box.

Note: In cases in which there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The coach of the defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the standard effect for illegal contact, which is a strike on the batter and all base runners must return

to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If it is the third strike, the batter is declared out.

11.15.2 An inappropriate bat is used.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.4.

11.16 Infield Fly Rule

The infield fly rule is in effect when declared by the umpire because the batter hits a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second base or all three bases are occupied, and there are fewer than two outs.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if the batted ball is fair.

Each base runner may tag up and advance with the liability to be put out once the batted ball is touched (before it is caught), the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is dropped intentionally or allowed to fall untouched, the ball is live, the batter-runner is out, which removes all force plays, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. A base runner need not retouch their base(s).

Notes:

1. *If the ball is near the foul line, the umpire shall declare, “Infield fly, the batter is out if fair.”*
2. *The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches its highest point and based on the position of the closest infielder, regardless of who makes the play.*
3. *Any defensive player who positions themself in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule.*
4. *An outfielder may catch an infield fly in the outfield provided an infielder could have caught the ball with ordinary effort.*
5. *If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.*
6. *If a declared infield fly ball falls untouched to the ground in foul territory and rolls into fair territory before passing first or third base, it is an infield fly.*
7. *If interference occurs during the flight of a potential infield fly, the ball is immediately dead and the plate umpire shall judge if the ball is in fair or foul territory. If fair, the batter shall be declared out and if foul, infield fly would not have applied so the batter is returned to the batter’s box and a foul ball assessed to their count. In any case, the violator is out and runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.*
8. *Failure of players and coaches to hear the call shall not void the call.*

11.17 Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball

11.17.1 An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is trapped or guided to the field shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

11.17.2 An infielder may not intentionally drop a fair fly ball, a line drive or a bunt when there are fewer than two outs and base runners are on first base; first and second bases; first and third bases; or first, second and third bases.

EFFECT—(11.17.1 and 11.17.2)—The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at

the time of the pitch. *Exception:* The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. (See Rule 11.16.) If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

11.18 Interference

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

EFFECT—As a general rule, when batter interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes a delayed dead ball, (2) an out is called, and (3) each base runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner. If the batter-runner has not touched first base at the time of the interference, each base runner shall return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. When a base runner(s) is called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice.

11.19 Interference by On-Deck Batter or Offensive Team Personnel

The on-deck batter or offensive team personnel may not interfere with the defensive player's reasonable opportunity to make a play on a batted ball. This would include offensive team personnel reaching out of the dugout or entering the field.

EFFECT—If the interference is with a defensive player attempting to make a play on a batted ball, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* For interference by base runners, see Rule 12.17.2.

11.20 Interference by Batter

Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before they complete their turn at bat.

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the batter is out and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the batter is out and each base runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference. *Exceptions:* (1) If a base runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the base runner, instead of the batter, is out. (2) If the catcher is not making a play on a base runner but the batter or umpire interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the base runner, consequently, advances safely, the umpire should suspend play and return each base runner to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

Notes:

1. *The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at home plate.*
2. *If the catcher or their throw to a base hits the batter or their bat while the batter is in the batter's box, the ball is live and there is no interference unless the contact is intentional and initiated by the batter.*

11.20.3 The batter, after being declared out, may not interfere with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the base runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall also be declared out. In addition, each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the batter struck out and is still in the batter's box when they interfere with the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner, the base runner being played on, not the runner closest to home plate, is also out.

11.20.4 The batter may not swing and miss a pitch and then intentionally hit it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or their glove/mitt.

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

Note: If the batter swings and misses the pitch but accidentally hits the ball or catcher on the follow-through, it is a delayed dead-ball strike and the head coach of the defensive team may choose either the result of the play or it is a dead-ball strike and all base runners must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.20.5 The batter may not release the bat in such a manner that it:

- 11.20.5.1 Hits the catcher and prevents them from making a play.

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

- 11.20.5.2 Is thrown (that is, discarded with force) into fair or foul territory, whether intentional or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play; interference shall be called.

EFFECT—(11.20.5.1 and 11.20.5.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The defensive team shall choose either the result of the play or the batter is out and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a double play, two outs may be declared.

11.20.5.3 Is thrown into fair or foul territory, whether intentional or not, and it has the potential to endanger anyone who is not making a play on the ball; interference shall be called.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. For a first violation, the offending team is warned. For any subsequent violation by the same team, the offended coach is given the option of either the results of the play or the batter being declared out and base runners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire’s judgment, interference prevented a double play, two outs may be declared.

11.21 Batter is Out

The batter is out when:

11.21.1 The on-deck batter or any other member of the team at bat, excluding base runners, interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. (See Rule 12.17.2 for interference by base runners.)

11.21.2 The batter enters the batter’s box with or is discovered using an inappropriate bat.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.4.

11.21.3 The offense bats out of order, and the defense challenges the action after the improper batter has completed their turn at bat and before a pitch has been made to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.9.

11.21.4 If there are two strikes, any part of the batter’s body is touching home plate or the ground outside the lines of the batter’s box at the moment of bat-ball contact, and the defense chooses the standard effect for an illegally batted ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.15.1.

11.21.5 The batter throws the whole bat into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.20.5.2.

11.21.6 A batted ball hits the batter, or hits the dirt or home plate and then hits the batter when the batter is out of the batter’s box, and the batted ball is considered fair.

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

11.21.7 The batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.12.

11.21.8 The batter swings and misses a pitch and then intentionally hits it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or their glove/mitt.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.12.4.

11.21.9 The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.3.3.5.

11.21.10 The batter's third strike is a foul tip.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Base runners may advance without tagging but with liability to be put out.

11.21.11 A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher.

11.21.12 The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is occupied.

EFFECT—(11.21.11 and 11.21.12)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

11.21.13 A pitch touches any part of the batter's person, including their hands or clothing, as they swing and miss for a third strike.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.13.3.3.

11.21.14 The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.13.3.1.

11.21.15 The batter hinders the catcher or any fielder from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or intentionally hinders a player (for example, on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

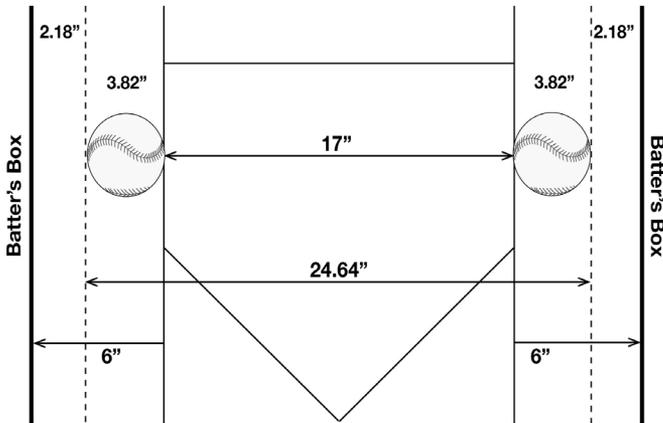
EFFECT—See Rule 11.20.2.

11.21.16 The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.20.1.

The Strike Zone

View from behind Home Plate
Horizontal View



The width of the strike zone is **fixed** and does not change with each batter. It extends to the outer edge of the ball when the inner edge is over any part of home plate.

Home plate is 17" wide and the diameter of a softball is 3.82". Therefore, any pitch completely within that 24.64" is a strike.

The space between the outer edge of home plate and the inner edge of the batter's box is 6". It is shared space for pitchers and batters and for balls and strikes.

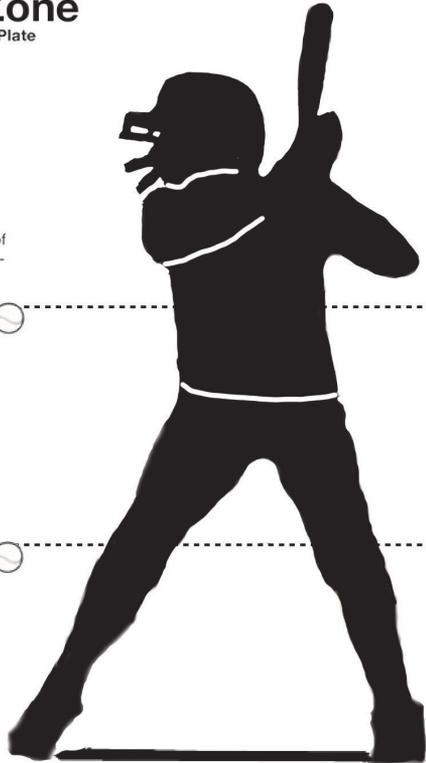
The Strike Zone

View from behind Home Plate
Vertical View

The height of the strike zone is **variable** extending from the top of the ball at the bottom of each batter's sternum...



to the top of the ball at
the top of the knees.



RULE 12

Base Running

Note: As defined in Rule 1.19, the term “runner” includes batter-runner and base runner.

12.1 Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner, and Base Runner(s) May Advance with Liability to be Put Out

The batter becomes a batter-runner and a runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out:

- 12.1.1 After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- 12.1.2 Because of a dropped third strike as defined in Rule 11.11.
- 12.1.3 When a fair batted ball unavoidably strikes a base runner (not in contact with a base) or an umpire, including the attached equipment or clothing of either, after touching a fielder (including the pitcher). (See Rule 11.7.1.6.)
- 12.1.4 When a fair untouched batted ball unavoidably strikes a base runner (not in contact with a base) or an umpire, including the attached equipment or clothing of either, after passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), and no other fielder had a chance to make a play. (See Rule 11.7.1.6.)
- 12.1.5 When a base runner is unintentionally hit by a fair untouched batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.
- 12.1.6 When a fair batted ball becomes lodged in a defensive player’s uniform or equipment. (See Rule 9.7.3.)

EFFECT—(12.1.1 to 12.1.6)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out, unless they are forced, in which case they must advance.

12.2 Runner(s) May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out

A runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out:

- 12.2.1 When they legally overrun or overslide first base, but attempt to advance further.
- 12.2.2 After reaching the final base of a delayed dead ball award or live ball (base on balls) award. (See Rule 12.12.)
- 12.2.3 When a thrown ball hits an umpire.
- 12.2.4 When a thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.
- 12.2.5 When a thrown ball becomes lodged in a defensive player’s uniform or equipment.

EFFECT—(12.2.1 to 12.2.5)—The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.3 Base Runner(s) May Advance With Liability to be Put Out

A base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out:

12.3.1 When a pitch leaves the pitcher's hand (whether pitched or dropped).

12.3.2 When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.

12.3.3 When a pitch hits an umpire.

12.3.4 When a pitch enters foul territory but is not blocked.

12.3.5 When a foul tip is legally caught.

12.3.6 When an infield fly is not caught.

Note: No tag-up is necessary.

12.3.7 When unavoidably struck by an untouched fair batted ball over foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.3.1 to 12.3.7)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

12.4 Runner is Out

The runner is out:

12.4.1 When, on a play where they are not forced, a fielder legally tags them as in Rule 12.9.1.

12.4.2 When, on a force play, a fielder puts them out as in Rule 12.9.2.

12.4.3 When they physically pass (that is, completely overtakes) a preceding runner before that runner has been put out, unless the passed runner (1) was obstructed or (2) was tagging up on a fly foul ball that is ultimately uncaught.

Notes:

1. *If this was the third out of the half inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding runner would count.*

2. *Runners are returned to proper order as soon as the ball is declared dead.*

12.4.4 When a coach or anyone other than another runner who has not yet crossed the plate physically assists them while they are actively running the bases and the ball is in play.

EFFECT—(12.4.1 to 12.4.4)—The ball is live. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.4.5 When they are running to any base in regular or reverse order, and they attempt to avoid or delay a tag by running out of the base path.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.10.5.

12.4.6 When they commit an act of interference.

EFFECT—See Rules 12.17.1 and 12.17.2.

12.4.7 When a member of the offense or offensive team personnel interferes with:

12.4.7.1 The defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner.

12.4.7.2 A runner(s) who is legally running the bases on a dead-ball award until the player(s) contacts home plate.

12.4.7.3 The umpire's ability to see that all bases are properly touched.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.3.

12.4.8 When base coach interference is ruled.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.4.

12.4.9 When they violate the look-back rule.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.16.

12.4.10 When, once they return to a base for any reason, they leave the base, unless:

12.4.10.1 A play is made on them or another runner; or

12.4.10.2 The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.14.1.

12.4.11 When they abandon their base or their effort to run the bases.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.11.

12.5 Batter-Runner is Out

The batter-runner is out:

12.5.1 When they hit a fair ball and are legally put out before reaching first base.

12.5.2 When they hit a fair or foul ball, other than a foul tip, and it is legally caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, or any object or person other than a defensive player.

12.5.3 When they are legally put out before reaching first base after a dropped third strike as in Rule 11.11.

EFFECT—(12.5.1 to 12.5.3)—The ball is live. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

12.5.4 When they hit an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.16.

12.5.5 When either of their feet is completely outside the runner's lane, in contact with the ground, and, in the judgment of the umpire, they interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. **Exceptions:** They may run outside the runner's lane: (1) if they have not yet reached the start of the runner's lane; (2) to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball; or (3) if they leave the lane on their last stride in order to touch first base.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.1.5.2.

12.5.6 When an umpire judges an intentionally dropped fair fly ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.17.2.

12.5.7 When they step back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.10.4.

12.5.8 When the immediate preceding base runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.17.2.4.

12.5.9 When they run the bases in reverse order, run intentionally into the outfield between bases or run through first base unnecessarily into the

outfield on a walk, dropped third strike or any batted ball either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.

Note: Retreating to a base during a rundown is not considered running the bases in reverse order.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.10.3.

12.6 Base Runner Is Out

The base runner is out:

12.6.1 When they leave the base they are occupying before the pitch is released and the defensive coach does not take the result of the play.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.14.2.

12.6.2 When they use a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

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

12.7 Runner is Out After a Proper Appeal

The runner is out after a proper appeal as described in Rule 7.1 when they fail to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base.

EFFECT—The ball may be live or dead at the time of the appeal. The runner is out after a proper appeal without effect on other runners.

12.8 Base Runner Is Out After a Proper Appeal

The base runner is out after a proper appeal as described in Rule 7.1:

12.8.1 When they fail to retouch their base before a fielder tags them or the base, after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.

12.8.2 When they leave their base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball first touches the fielder.

Note: Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.

EFFECT—(12.8.1 and 12.8.2)—The ball may be live or dead at the time of the appeal. The base runner is out after a proper appeal without effect on other base runners.

12.8.3 When, after a conference, base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied, the ball has been put back in play, and before the end of the half inning.

EFFECT—Each base runner on the improper base shall be declared out and ejected. In addition, the head coach shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike behavior. (Behavioral ejections; see Rule 13.2.1.)

12.8.4 When, after play has resumed, they fail to return to touch the base they previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.9 Tag and Force Plays

12.9.1 Tag Play: A runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play and they are not in contact with a base when they are legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or legal glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand(s) or legal glove/mitt holding the ball. **Exceptions:** (1) A batter-runner who initially reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides it may immediately return without liability to be put out provided they do not feint or attempt to advance to second base. (See Rule 12.10.8.) (2) When a batter-runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made. (See Rule 12.10.13.) (3) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position and does not attempt to advance. (See Rule 12.10.7.) (4) A runner may overrun or overslide home plate after legally touching it without liability to be put out. (See Rule 12.10.10.) (5) A runner is not considered tagged out on a force play. (See Rule 12.9.2.1.1.)

12.9.1.1 A runner is not out when they are tagged while off a base:

12.9.1.1.1 With a ball not securely held by a fielder.

Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.

12.9.1.1.2 With a hand or legal glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player's other hand.

EFFECT—(12.9.1.1.1 to 12.9.1.1.2)—The ball is live.

12.9.1.1.3 By a fielder who, by using force, pushes a runner off the base they possess.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. See Rule 9.5.4.9 (Fielder Obstruction) or 9.5.6.2 (Flagrant Player Obstruction).

12.9.2 Force Play: A force play occurs when a base runner loses their right to occupy a base because the batter becomes a batter-runner and the batter-runner or a trailing runner who is also forced has not yet been put out. When a forced base runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base they last occupied, the force play is reinstated.

12.9.2.1 A runner is considered forced out if they must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another runner, but:

12.9.2.1.1 They are legally tagged as in Rule 12.9.1 before they reach the forced base.

12.9.2.1.2 The fielder, while having and maintaining possession of the ball in their hand(s) or legal glove/mitt, contacts the base in advance of the runner.

12.9.2.1.3 The fielder touches the ball, held in their hand(s) or legal glove/mitt, to the forced base in advance of the runner.

Note: There cannot be a force play if the batter does not become a batter-runner.

12.9.3 The runner is not out:

12.9.3.1 When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt, unless the offensive coach opts to take the result of the play.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.6.

12.9.3.2 When a fielder uses any equipment or part of their uniform that is detached from its proper position to catch or contact:

12.9.3.2.1 A batted fair ball or a batted foul ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, might become fair.

EFFECT—See Rules 12.12.4 and 12.12.5.

12.9.3.2.2 A thrown ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.8.5.

12.9.3.2.3 A pitched ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.12.7.6.

12.9.3.3 When an improper live-ball appeal is made. (See Rule 7.1.)

EFFECT—An appeal will not be accepted.

12.10 Running the Bases, Missing a Base, Tagging Up after a Caught Fly Ball

12.10.1 A runner must touch each base in order (first, second, third and home plate) when they are advancing and the ball is in play or dead. All awarded bases also must be touched, and in legal order.

Note: Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in legal order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

12.10.2 A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.

EFFECT—(12.10.1 and 12.10.2)—For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the runner is out if, before they reach each untouched base, they are legally tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base they failed to touch, including home plate (live-ball appeal). If the appealed runner is the batter-runner at first base, or any other base runner forced to advance, this is a force out and no runs would score if it was the third out. It is still a force out when a base runner misses a base to which they were forced to advance and is subsequently appealed after the batter-runner or a trailing base runner has been retired. 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.

12.10.3 A runner shall not run bases in reverse order or intentionally run into the outfield between bases either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.

Note: Retreating to a base during a rundown is not considered running the bases in reverse order.

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

12.10.4 The batter-runner may not step back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

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

12.10.5 When they are running to any base in regular or reverse order, the runner may not attempt to avoid or delay a tag by running out of the base path. (See also Rule 2.6.)

EFFECT—The ball is live. The runner is out if they deviate from the base path when the fielder is attempting to put them out, but each other runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out. *Exceptions:* (1) A base runner is not out when they run behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base path in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the batted ball in the base path; and (2) The runner is not out when they fail to run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in their possession.

12.10.6 The runner shall not slide out of the baseline nor outside their reach of the base they are attempting to slide into in order to slide directly at a fielder.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.13.3.

12.10.7 When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither they nor the trailing runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the runner may stay where they are without liability to be put out, or they may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, play is suspended, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

12.10.8 The batter-runner may legally overrun/overslide first base after initially reaching it safely, but if they feint or make an attempt to advance to second, they may be tagged out (while they are off base) by a defensive player with the ball.

Note: A batter who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike is treated the same as if they batted the ball.

12.10.9 A runner who overruns or overslides a base and loses contact with it is in jeopardy of being put out, except as noted in Rules 12.10.8 and 12.10.10.

EFFECT—(12.10.8 and 12.10.9)—The ball is live. The runner is out if tagged while not in contact with the base.

12.10.10 A runner may overrun or overslide home plate after legally touching it without liability to be put out.

Note: For scoring purposes, a runner who overslides a base and is tagged out, whether attempting to return or advance, is not credited with attaining that base. If a batter-runner, they are credited with not more than a triple. If a base runner attempting to steal, charge them with caught stealing. For all other purposes, the player is considered to have attained the base.

12.10.11 A runner, in the course of running the bases, is considered to have acquired the base if they touch the base or pass the base (within a body's length). If they pass the base but have failed to touch it, they are considered to have touched it until the defense appeals they have missed the base. See Rule 7.1.1.

12.10.12 If a runner misses home plate and the fielder either misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire should make no signal, verbal or nonverbal. If an appeal play is made (that is, by tagging either the runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.

12.10.12.1 If a runner misses home plate, they are considered to have scored on a timing play. If they return and touch home plate, the time is established upon contact with home plate. If they do not return, the time is established at the time they pass home plate.

12.10.13 If a batter-runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.

12.10.14 A base runner must return to their base or remain in contact with their base until a batted fly ball (fair or foul) is first touched by a fielder. The initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the base runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.10.14.1 If a base runner leaves a base too soon on a legally caught fly ball, they may return in an attempt to retag with liability to be put out. Either the base runner or the base may be tagged by the defender in advance of the base-runner's return. This is considered a timing play and not a force out.

EFFECT—The ball is live (live-ball appeal). The base runner is out if they fail to retouch the base occupied at the time of the pitch before a fielder tags them or the base. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored in advance of the appeal would count.

12.10.15 During a dead ball, a runner may return to a missed base or a base they left illegally even though they are awarded bases by the umpire. If they fail to legally touch the appropriate base, a proper appeal may result in the runner being ruled out.

EFFECT— An appeal must be honored even if the base missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball was before or after an award. Bases missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.

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

12.10.16.1 They have left the field of play;

12.10.16.2 A trailing runner has scored;

12.10.16.3 They are standing on a base beyond the base they missed or left too soon, and play is suspended;

12.10.16.4 The ball is put back into play after having been dead; or

12.10.16.5 On a dead-ball base award, they have touched the final base of the base award.

Note: If the runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, they can continue.

12.10.17 The failure of a preceding base runner to touch or retouch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing runner cannot score a run when a

preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

12.10.18 Between pitches and after a dead ball, each base runner must return to their base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the base runner to return to their base, and the base runner is obligated to return to their base without undue delay.

EFFECT—When the ball is live and the base runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, they will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball as in Rule 12.14.2. “No pitch” shall be declared and the runner is directed to return to their base.

When the ball is dead, the ball will not be put in play until each base runner has retouched their base. However, a base runner may be declared out if, after being allowed a reasonable amount of time, they fail to retouch the base.

12.10.19 Should play be suspended while a base runner is standing on a base, they may not advance.

12.11 Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases

No runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

12.11.1 Not proceeding to first base after a fair batted ball, a base on balls or a dropped third strike.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if they are touched while off base, the base is touched before they reach it, or they leave the field of play. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.11.2 Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if they require medical treatment, they may receive it before proceeding to first base without being declared out. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced.

12.11.3 Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction. (See Rule 9.5.3.)

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The offensive coach may elect to take the result of the play or to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, in which case, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each base runner may advance only if forced.

12.11.4 After reaching a base safely, the runner abandons their base (for example, obviously heads toward their position or the dugout believing they were put out, the batted ball was foul, etc.), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner or base runner(s) is out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.11.5 Regarding the scoring of runs when, with two outs, the runner does not proceed to a base to which they are forced to advance.

EFFECT—The ball is live and the runner is out. Whether or not a run scores is determined by the defense. If the runner is declared out for

abandonment, it is a timing play and the run would score if another runner touched home plate before the offending runner is declared out. If the defense puts the runner out by force out (tagging them or playing the ball to the base to which the runner was forced), the run would not score.

12.12 Base Awards

12.12.1 In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, they may be called out for a base-running violation.

Notes:

1. *If a base runner touches the next base and returns to their original base, the original base they left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an award.*
2. *If forced, each base runner must advance one base with no liability to be put out.*

In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

12.12.2 **First base.** The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

12.12.2.1 After a base on balls.

EFFECT—The ball is live (unless blocked) and the batter becomes a batter-runner. The batter-runner may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner must advance one base with no liability to be put out, but may advance farther with liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.12.2.2 After catcher obstruction.

EFFECT—See Rule 9.5.3.

12.12.2.3 After being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.13.

12.12.2.4 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes an umpire or their attached equipment or clothing before touching a fielder (including the pitcher) or before passing a fielder (other than a pitcher).

12.12.2.5 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes an umpire or their attached equipment or clothing after passing a fielder (including the pitcher), but another fielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.12.2.4 and 12.12.2.5)—The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a hit, but, if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

12.12.2.6 When runner interference is ruled and the effect does not include the batter-runner being called out.

EFFECT—See Rules 12.17.2 and 12.17.3.

12.12.3 **Second base.** The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:

- 12.12.3.1 When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.
- 12.12.3.2 When a fair batted ball bounces over, wedges under or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field, or becomes blocked.
- 12.12.3.3 When a fair batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.
- 12.12.3.4 When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory (excluding a ball deflected over the home run fence in fair territory), or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a base runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.
- 12.12.3.5 When a fair batted ball deflects off a fence and then off a fielder before going over the home run fence.
- 12.12.3.6 When a fair batted ball deflects off a member of the defensive team in an unauthorized area.
- 12.12.3.7 When a fair batted fly ball clears a home run fence as noted in Rule 2.22.2.

EFFECT—(12.12.3.1 to 12.12.3.7)—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and is credited with a two-base hit (double). Each other base runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

- 12.12.4 **Third base.** The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:
 - 12.12.4.1 When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with their cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of their uniform that is detached from its proper place on their person.
 - 12.12.4.2 When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, might become fair.

EFFECT—(12.12.4.1 and 12.12.4.2)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter is awarded third base and credited with a three-base hit (triple), but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner is awarded home plate.

- 12.12.5 **Home plate.** The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:
 - 12.12.5.1 When a fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without being caught, touching the ground or going through the fence.
 - 12.12.5.2 When a fair batted fly ball is deflected by a fielder or fielders over the home run fence in fair territory.
 - 12.12.5.3 An illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence in flight.

Note: The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment that is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

EFFECT—(12.12.5.1 to 12.12.5.3)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.

12.12.6 Judged bases. A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:

12.12.6.1 When a fielder, not in possession of the ball nor in the act of fielding a batted ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes them.

EFFECT—See Rule 9.5.4.5.

Notes:

1. *A base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.*
2. *An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed. For exceptions, see Rule 9.5.8.*

12.12.6.2 When a spectator reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator, except that a fielder may reach into the stands or over a fence to attempt to catch a batted fly ball, and interference would not be ruled.

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

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

12.12.6.3 When a ball becomes lodged in an umpire's or offensive player's attached equipment or clothing.

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

12.12.6.4 When a ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's attached equipment or clothing.

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

12.12.6.5 When an umpire suspends play to protect a player who was seriously injured.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter, batter-runner and base runners are awarded the appropriate bases.

12.12.7 One base. A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:

12.12.7.1 If forced to vacate a base because of a one-base award to the batter.

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each base runner advances one base if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.12.7.2 When a pitch is blocked (that is, it lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop or into dead-ball territory).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball or on a dropped third strike as in Rule 11.11. Each base runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.7.3 When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory. (See Rule 9.4.)

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.

12.12.7.4 When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters dead-ball territory or becomes blocked.

12.12.7.5 When a fielder legally catches the ball but it falls into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—(12.12.7.4 and 12.12.7.5)—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

12.12.7.6 When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a pitched ball with any equipment or any part of their uniform that is detached from its proper place.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Each base runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out. If the pitch resulted in a base on balls or a dropped third strike as in Rule 11.11, the batter-runner is awarded first base, but may advance farther with liability to be put out. *Exception:* If no play is apparent, there is no penalty.

12.12.8 **Two bases.** A runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

12.12.8.1 If forced to vacate a base because of a two-base award to the batter.

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. Each base runner advances two bases if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.12.8.2 When the batter is awarded second base as in Rule 12.12.3.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner and each other base runner are awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.12.8.3 When a live thrown ball crosses into dead-ball territory (whether the ball rebounds onto playable territory or not), deflects off a member of the defensive team in an unauthorized area, or contacts loose defensive equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

EFFECT—The ball is ruled blocked and dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is

based on the position of the lead runner. *Exceptions:* (1) When a fielder loses possession of the ball. (See Rule 12.12.7.4.) (2) If the ball becomes blocked because of offensive equipment not involved in the game, see Rule 12.17.3.6.

12.12.8.4 If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.

12.12.8.5 When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with any equipment or part of their uniform that is detached from its proper place.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Each runner is entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Exception: If no play is apparent, there is no penalty.

Notes:

1. *The direction that a runner is headed when any of Rules 12.12.8.3 to 12.12.8.5 occurs has no bearing on the award. When a runner is returning to a base, they are awarded two bases from that base. For example, if they were returning to first base and a throw left the fielder's hand before the runner got back to first base, the runner would be awarded third base.*
2. *When a runner touches the next base and returns to their original base, the original base they left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an award.*
3. *If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner (that is, two runners between first and second bases will be awarded second and third bases; however, if two runners are between second and third bases, both will be awarded home plate).*

12.12.9 **Three Bases.** A fielder shall not intentionally contact or catch a fair batted ball or a batted foul ball, which might become fair, with their cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of their uniform that is detached from its proper place or their person.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance three bases from the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

12.12.10 **Home Plate.** A runner is entitled to advance to home plate with no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three- or four-base award to the batter.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance to home plate.

12.13 Collisions

The rules committee is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions with the catcher at home plate and with infielders at all bases. The intent of this rule is to encourage runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions whenever possible.

12.13.1 When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder:

12.13.1.1 If the defensive player blocks the base (plate) or baseline, the runner may slide into the base and make contact with the fielder as long as the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the base (plate). A legitimate attempt is making contact with the ground before reaching the base or fielder.

12.13.1.2 The runner must make an actual attempt to reach the base (plate).

12.13.1.3 The runner may not attempt to dislodge the ball from the fielder. Contact above the waist shall be judged by the umpire as an attempt by the runner to dislodge the ball.

12.13.1.4 The runner must attempt to avoid a collision if they can reach the base without colliding.

12.13.1.5 The runner must be called out if they remain on their feet and deliberately, with great force, collide flagrantly with a fielder regardless if the fielder has possession of the ball.

EFFECT—(12.13.1.1 to 12.13.1.5)—The ball is dead. The runner is called out for deliberately colliding into a fielder, even if the ball is dislodged. If the runner deliberately collided into a fielder before they were put out and, in the umpire’s judgment, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the offender and player being played on shall both be declared out. If the deliberate collision occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will also be declared out. If an obstructed runner deliberately collides into a fielder, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out. If the act is determined to be flagrant/malicious, the ball is dead and the runner is declared out and ejected. Any runners not declared out must return to the base(s) occupied at the time of the deliberate collision. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.)

12.13.2 The runner, although not required to slide to avoid contact with the defensive player, slides in a manner that, in the umpire’s judgment, was malicious (for example, spikes up).

12.13.3 The runner shall not slide out of the baseline (i.e., the runner cannot reach the base) of the base they are attempting to slide into in order to slide directly at a fielder.

EFFECT—(12.13.2 and 12.13.3)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out and ejected, and each other runner shall return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) The umpire has the option to issue a team warning when this behavior is not egregious enough to warrant an ejection. (See Rule 13.1.2.) The umpire may also rule interference if this contact prevents the defensive player from making another play. (See Rule 12.17.)

12.13.4 To prevent a deliberate collision ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched.

12.13.5 Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

Note: The first fielder fielding a batted ball is protected from obstruction, but thereafter, if both the fielder and the runner are acting appropriately, neither player shall be penalized for the incidental contact.

12.14 Leaving A Base

12.14.1 A runner may not leave the base they attained at the conclusion of play once the ball is in the pitcher's possession in the pitcher's circle.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The violator is called out at the moment they lose contact with the base. Exceptions: (1) a play is made on them or another runner, or (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle. (See Rule 12.16.)

12.14.2 A base runner may not leave the base they attained until the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with their base at the time a pitch leaves the pitcher's hand. **Exception:** When the pitcher (1) does not allow sufficient time for a base runner to return to a base or (2) delays their release in order to deceive the runner into leaving early, the base runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. At the conclusion of the play, the coach of the defensive team shall have the option of (1) taking the result of the play or (2) "No pitch" is declared, the batter is returned to the batter's box and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch unless superseded by another violation.

Notes:

- 1. In determining the result of play, ignore the leaving-early violation and apply the effects for any other rule violations in the order in which they occurred. That end result becomes the first option.*
- 2. The second option is the traditional effect for the leaving-early violation and is applied with no regard for any action that follows the pitcher's windup.*

12.15 Occupying Bases

A runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until they have legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

EFFECT—The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of the fielder.

Note: If a runner is being run down between bases and the trailing runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the trailing runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner, however, returns safely to the base they left and both runners then are occupying the same base, the trailing runner is out if touched with the ball.

12.16 Look-Back Rule

12.16.1 The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base and the pitcher has possession (for example, has the ball in their hand or glove, under their arm or chin, or between their legs) and control

of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both their feet are within the circle or on the lines.

- 12.16.2 When a runner is legally off their base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing their turn at bat and they are in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner may continue moving forward in the direction they are going without stopping; or they may immediately and directly go back in the other direction. If the runner is stopped as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner must immediately and directly go forward or back. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a base hit as long as the batter-runner continues past first base.
- 12.16.3 When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:
- 12.16.3.1 A runner standing off their base must immediately return to the base they last occupied or advance to the next base.
- 12.16.3.2 A runner who starts back to the base they last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.
- 12.16.3.3 A runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.
- 12.16.3.4 The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.
- 12.16.3.5 The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return nonstop to first base or, if they do not retouch first base, must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the batter-runner is heading back toward first base within the baseline extended, they may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended baseline in foul territory commits them to first base while stepping beyond the baseline toward the second-base side commits them to second base.
- 12.16.3.6 The batter-runner may round first base, stop, and make an immediate decision to advance or return without again stopping or reversing direction.
- 12.16.4 Once the runner has determined a direction, they may not reverse direction unless the pitcher:
- 12.16.4.1 Throws the ball from in the pitcher's circle.
- 12.16.4.2 Carries the ball outside the pitcher's circle.
- 12.16.4.3 Has one foot completely outside the pitcher's circle, on the ground, while in possession of the ball.
- 12.16.4.4 Sets the ball on the ground or no longer has the ball in their possession and control (including handing it to another player).
- 12.16.4.5 Makes a play on the runner or another runner.

Note: When the pitcher's circle is not visible, the umpire must use good judgment in determining if they would or would not be in the circle.

- 12.16.5 The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

12.16.5.1 They fake a throw.

Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher's arm moves forward.

12.16.5.2 They make any aggressive body movement toward the runner (for example, steps toward the runner, head and body fakes toward the runner).

12.16.6 There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the runner to comply with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the runner.

EFFECT—(12.16.1 to 12.16.6)—The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two runners are off base and both are called out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first as it is not possible to obtain more than one out under the look-back rule. The ball is dead when the first runner is called out, and the other runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.

12.17 Interference

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

EFFECT—As a general rule, when on-deck batter, batter-runner, base runner or coach interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes dead, (2) an out is called, and (3) each runner not put out prior to the interference must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner. If the batter-runner has not touched first base at the time of the interference, each base runner shall return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. When a base runner(s) is called out for interference with a batted ball, the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice.

12.17.1 Interference by Batter-Runner

12.17.1.1 The batter-runner may not contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.12.1.

12.17.1.2 The batter-runner may not throw the whole bat into fair territory and thereby interfere with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

EFFECT—See Rule 11.20.5.2.

12.17.1.3 The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. For example:

12.17.1.3.1 They may not make contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base.

12.17.1.3.2 They may not intentionally make contact with a ball in foul territory.

12.17.1.3.3 They may not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a fair ball or foul ball that might become fair.

12.17.1.4 The batter-runner may not intentionally interfere with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike.

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

12.17.1.5 The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder's attempt to throw or to receive a thrown ball. For example:

12.17.1.5.1 The batter-runner may not slide into first base to interfere with the play whether on them or another runner.

12.17.1.5.2 The batter-runner may not run outside the runner's lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interfere with the fielder taking the throw to make a play at first base. **Exception:** The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane: (1) if they have not yet reached the start of the runner's lane; (2) to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball; or (3) if they leave the lane on their last stride in order to touch first base.

Notes:

1. *The batter-runner has not interfered if a fielder does not throw, hesitates before throwing or makes an errant throw.*

2. *The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is in contact with the ground and is completely outside either line. It does not matter if the ball hits them or where the ball hits their body.*

3. *A foot in the air retains the status it last had when it was in contact with the ground.*

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

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

EFFECT—(12.17.1.3 to 12.17.1.6)—The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and each base runner not put out prior to the interference must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, and occurs before an out is made on any runner, the base runner closest to home plate at the time of the pitch also shall be called out.

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

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

12.17.2 Interference by Runners and Base Runners

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

12.17.2.1.1 The runner may not contact a fair batted ball, while off base, before it touches a fielder (including the pitcher) or before it passes a

fielder (other than the pitcher), who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.17.2.1.2 The runner may not contact an untouched, fair batted ball after it passes a fielder if another fielder has a chance to make a play.

12.17.2.1.3 The runner may not intentionally contact a ball that an infielder has missed.

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

Notes:

1. *Calling a runner out for removing their helmet does not affect force-play situations.*

2. *When a removed batting helmet is accidentally hit with a live ball, the ball remains in play.*

12.17.2.1.5 Physical contact by the runner with a fielder attempting to field a fair batted ball shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

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

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

12.17.2.1.5.2 The runner may not at any time unnecessarily wave their arms or verbally distract the fielder. Merely running in front of the fielder or jumping over the ball while proceeding to the next base is not interference, even though it may be distracting to the fielder or screen their view of the ball. In addition, a runner may not intentionally distract or run at any fielder in an effort to distract them while not making an attempt to run directly to the base. A warning will be issued to the player. This pertains to any defensive player regardless if the defensive player is the one making a play on the ball. If the defensive player is making a play on the ball, interference also will be called.

12.17.2.1.5.3 It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to make a play, and the runner contacts the fielder. However, if the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact, interference or obstruction subject to the opinion of the umpire.

12.17.2.1.5.4 If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the base runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall determine which one is more likely to field the ball, and only that fielder is entitled to protection.

12.17.2.1.5.5 It is not interference if the ball ricochets off one defensive player, and another player still has the opportunity to make a play unless the runner intentionally interferes with the second fielder.

EFFECT—(12.17.2.1 to 12.17.2.1.5.5)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base unless they are the player guilty of interference. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. The offending runner is out. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. *Exceptions:* (1) If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the runner being played on also is called out. If the interference occurs after the runner is put out, the runner closest to home plate also is called out. (2) If the interference is with a fielder attempting to field a routine fair fly ball, the batter is also out. (3) If the base runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the base runner and the batter are out. However, if the base runner is stopped at base when they are struck by an infield fly, only the batter is out. (4) If two base runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first base runner is out.

12.17.2.1.6 The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a foul batted fly ball or a foul ball that might become fair, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.17.2.1.7 The base runner may not intentionally make contact with a foul ball that, in the umpire's judgment, might become fair or that a fielder has a reasonable chance to make a play on.

EFFECT—(12.17.2.1.6 and 12.17.2.1.7)—The ball is dead, a foul ball is charged to the batter and the offending base runner is out. Each other base runner must return to the base touched at the time of the pitch. If the foul ball is a bunt attempt with two strikes on the batter, the batter is also declared out if there are less than two outs. If there are two outs at the time of the interference on the foul bunt, the at-bat is scored as a fielder's choice. In either case, the first batter in the next inning is the batter who was in the on-deck circle at the time of the foul bunt.

12.17.2.2 The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.

12.17.2.3 The base runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball.

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

EFFECT—(12.17.2.2 and 12.17.2.3)—The ball is dead. The offending base runner is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. If

forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. *Exception:* If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the offending base runner is put out, the player being played on also shall be called out.

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

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

12.17.2.5 A runner may not remain on their feet and deliberately, with great force, collide into a defensive player. (See Rule 12.13.)

EFFECT—See Rule 12.13.1.5.

12.17.2.6 It is not interference, and the runner is not out:

12.17.2.6.1 When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made a play.

12.17.2.6.2 When the runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed a fielder (other than the pitcher) and, in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play. If the ball contacts the runner while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball; it cannot be caught as a fly ball.

12.17.2.6.3 When the runner, not in contact with a base, is unintentionally hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher).

12.17.2.6.4 When a batted ball is misplayed, the ball bounds away or past the fielder, and then the fielder and runner collide.

12.17.2.6.5 When the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder.

12.17.2.6.6 When the runner is hit with a fair batted ball while standing in foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.17.2.6.7 When a fielder fields a ground ball and attempts to tag the runner who crashes into them causing the ball to come loose.

Note: It is not interference because the fielder is no longer fielding the ball.

12.17.2.6.8 When a fielder is standing watching the ball roll near the foul line and the runner makes incidental contact, the fielder is not protected as they are not fielding the ball.

EFFECT—(12.17.2.6.1 to 12.17.2.6.8)—The ball is live, and all runners (including the batter-runner) may advance with liability to be put out.

12.17.2.6.9 When the base runner is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, unless they intentionally interfere with the ball or a fielder making a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the closest defensive player is behind the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, and credited with a base hit, and each other base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the base runner are out. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

12.17.3 Interference by a Retired Runner, Offensive Team Personnel or Loose Offensive Equipment

12.17.3.1 An offensive player, who no longer has status (a retired runner or a runner who has scored), may not interfere with a defensive player making a play on an active runner.

12.17.3.2 Once the pitch has crossed home plate, offensive team personnel may not interfere with a fielder who has a reasonable chance to make a play on a thrown or pitched ball within the field of play.

EFFECT—(12.17.3.1 and 12.17.3.2)—**The ball is dead, and the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance.**

12.17.3.3 Offensive team personnel shall not stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

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

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

12.17.3.4.1 Offensive team personnel, other than base coaches and base runner(s), shall not touch a runner(s) until the runner(s) contacts home plate.

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

EFFECT—**For the first offense of Rule 12.17.3.4, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending team.**

If a subsequent offense of Rule 12.17.3.4 occurs that violates Rule 12.17.3.4.1, the ball is dead and the player touched is immediately declared out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If a subsequent offense of Rule 12.17.3.4 occurs that violates Rule 12.17.3.4.2, the ball is dead and the batter-runner is

declared out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time team personnel entered fair territory. In all cases, each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the violation.

12.17.3.5 When a fair batted ball or live thrown ball contacts a member of the offensive team/game personnel in unauthorized areas (for example, outside the dugout but in the field of play).

12.17.3.6 When a fair batted ball or live thrown ball contacts loose offensive equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

EFFECT—(12.17.3.5 and 12.17.3.6)—The ball is ruled blocked and dead. If no apparent play is obvious, no one is called out. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked, unless forced to advance.

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

12.17.4 Interference by a Base Coach

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

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

12.17.4.2 The offensive coach near third base shall not run in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball with a runner in scoring position, drawing a throw to home plate.

EFFECT—(12.17.4.1 and 12.17.4.2)—The ball is dead, the runner closest to home plate shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. *Exception:* If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live. It is not interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming.

RULE 13

Misconduct

The highest standards of good sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Codes of Conduct.

13.1 Warnings

Inappropriate conduct by participants may result in either informal or formal warnings at the discretion of an umpire. Umpires are not required to warn participants for inappropriate behavior before assessing a penalty except as noted specifically in the rules.

13.1.1 An informal warning may be given for circumstances where an umpire's discretion is used to prevent a situation from escalating to a degree when the umpire will be compelled to act. They are advisory in nature and carry no consequences if the undesirable behavior ceases.

13.1.2 A formal warning is issued for circumstances when the umpire needs to intervene and prevent inappropriate behavior from occurring or reoccurring. When given, they are to be clearly articulated as warnings and noted on the plate umpire's lineup card.

13.2 Ejections

13.2.1 Whether a warning is issued or not, umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for rule violations, unsporting acts, or behavioral or verbal misconduct. The on-site administrator shall make themselves available to assist the umpire crew as the violator exits the field.

13.2.1.1 An administrative ejection is given for rule violations regarding equipment, lineup management, conferences and warmup activities.

13.2.1.2 A behavioral ejection is given for rule violations relating to play, including all violations of Rule 13 and actions of batters, runners, pitchers and fielders.

EFFECT—(13.2.1.1 and 13.2.1.2)—An ejected player may remain in the dugout but shall not remain on the playing field or communicate with opponents or umpires.

Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field, dugout and other team areas and be out of sight and sound until the umpires' jurisdiction ends (see Rule 4.10.6). Out of sight and sound means unable to view the remainder of the contest and the umpires cannot hear any additional comments. They shall not communicate (visually, electronically or verbally) further with the teams or umpires. For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

Note: In the event of an ejection of a head coach, an umpire shall ask the departing coach to identify an acting head coach. If the head coach declines to do so or no institutional representative is available, the umpires shall initiate forfeit proceedings.

Exception: An ejected coach may participate in a limited capacity during a game only to attend to an injured or ill player or to ensure the safety of players when their safety is in question.

In all cases involving an ejection, the ejecting umpire shall, and the offending head coach may, submit an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours after the incident. The institution's director of athletics and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

13.2.2 Team personnel and players shall not continue to argue, excessively express themselves, use offensive language or taunt the umpires after an ejection. The order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel must be obeyed in a timely manner.

EFFECT—The umpire should notify the offender that failure to comply as noted above will result in a forfeit. If the directive is not obeyed in a timely manner, a one-minute forfeit warning shall be issued to the head coach. If the warning expires, a forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team not at fault.

13.2.3 The umpires have the authority to issue a pregame or postgame ejection for unsporting behavior that occurs from the time the umpires arrive at the competition site until the umpires leave the competition site, if the conduct would have resulted in an ejection had it occurred during the game.

EFFECT—The umpire shall notify the appropriate head coach of the ejection, and if the affected team has a subsequent game that day, the on-site administrator also will be notified. The violator shall serve the ejection in their team's next regularly scheduled and played contest. All conditions for the effect of an in-game behavioral ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1 EFFECT.

13.3 Misconduct

Whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere, umpires have the authority to eject a player, coach or team representative for misconduct (verbal or nonverbal) or unsportsmanlike conduct including but not limited to the following:

13.3.1 Use profanity or vulgarity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.

13.3.2 Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials or question the integrity of an umpire (for example, suggesting bias or cheating).

13.3.3 Make disparaging public comments on officiating to the media.

EFFECT—(13.3.1 to 13.3.3)—If the violation occurs during pregame activities while the umpires are at the competition site or during the game, the offender shall be ejected with or without a warning. (See Rule 13.2.1.) If the violation occurs after the game but while the umpires are still present at the competition site, the offender shall serve a postgame

ejection. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.3.) If the violation occurs at any other time, the institution's director of athletics and conference office shall be notified as well as the NCAA Championship Committee in the event of a violation during the postseason. For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.3.4 Question the strike zone and any call based purely on umpire's judgment.

EFFECT—A team warning shall be issued for the first offense in a game. Subsequent violations by the same team shall result in a behavioral ejection of the violator(s). All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1. For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

Note: A coach or player may, on occasion, request feedback regarding the specific location of a pitch or ask a point of rule as long as it is not made in an argumentative fashion and does not delay play.

13.3.5 Assistant coaches may not leave their position in the dugout or bullpen area to appeal, question, or argue on the field. (See Rules 4.1, 6.5.6 and 6.6.6.)

EFFECT—The violator shall be immediately ejected. (Administrative ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.3.6 Make a verbal threat of physical harm to an opponent or umpire.

EFFECT—The violator shall be ejected (behavioral ejection) and shall serve a two-game suspension in the team's next previously scheduled and played games in the traditional season (spring). The umpire shall notify the appropriate head coach that the reason for the ejection is a violation of Rule 13.3.6 (threat of physical harm) not later than the end of the game. For violations by ejected/suspended personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.3.7 Coaches, players and team representatives may not display unsportsmanlike conduct or engage in unsportsmanlike behavior. Umpires have the authority to penalize this conduct with a warning or an ejection if it violates the spirit and intent of the rules.

13.4 Physical Contact with an Umpire or Opponent

Any threat of physical intimidation or harm, including spitting at, pushing, shoving, kicking, or striking with the head, fist, hands, arms, legs, knees or equipment in a confrontational manner shall not be tolerated and is grounds for a behavioral ejection combined with suspension. Whether contact is made with another individual is irrelevant. When, during a confrontation, an individual uses unsporting acts or comments that, in the opinion of the umpire, provoke the other individual to retaliate by fighting or using physical intimidation, both individuals shall be penalized equally.

EFFECT—The ejecting umpire shall immediately notify the head coach and the on-site administrator that the reason for the ejection is violation of Rule 13.4. Notice shall take place not later than at the conclusion of the game (if video review is not requested or available) or after video review by the umpires. This may be reviewed in-game if using video review or postgame per Rule 5.9.10.

The perpetrator shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring). For a second offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall serve a four-game suspension. For a third offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition (if applicable). For violations by ejected/suspended personnel, see Rule 13.13.

All conditions for the effect of an in-game behavioral ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1 EFFECT. In addition, as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident, the offending head coach is responsible for submitting an electronic Incident Report, and the opposing coach may submit one as well. *Exceptions:* (1) A coach or player involved in a fight who was defending themselves and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended. (2) If a coach or player makes physical contact with an opponent in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, they shall not be ejected or suspended.

13.5 Leaving Team Area to Join a Brawl

Leaving a team area (that is, a dugout or bullpen) or coach's box in order to join a brawl or potential fight will not be tolerated.

EFFECT—The ejecting umpire shall immediately notify the head coach and the on-site administrator that the reason for the ejection is violation of Rule 13.5. Notice shall take place not later than at the conclusion of the game (if video review is not requested or available) or after video review by the umpires. This may be reviewed in-game if using video review or postgame per Rule 5.9.10.

The perpetrator shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring). For a second offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall serve a four-game suspension. For a third offense by an individual in the same season, the individual shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition (if applicable). For violations by ejected/suspended personnel, see Rule 13.13.

All conditions for the effect of an in-game behavioral ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1 EFFECT. In addition, as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident, the offending head coach is responsible for submitting an electronic Incident Report and the opposing coach may submit one as well. *Exception:* If a coach leaves a team area (that is, a dugout, bullpen) or coach's box to prevent their own players from joining a brawl or potential fight, Rule 13.5 shall not apply.

13.6 Ejection Prevents Play

13.6.1 When an ejection renders a team unable to field a team of eligible players to complete a game.

EFFECT—A forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team with sufficient players.

13.6.2 When the subsequent suspension of multiple players renders a team unable to field a team of eligible players for future competition.

EFFECT—The head coach may request the staggering of the suspensions. Requests shall be made to the team’s conference commissioner or, in the event the team is an independent, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

13.7 Equipment Misuse

13.7.1 No player or coach shall deliberately throw or kick a piece of equipment as a result of disgust or frustration.

EFFECT—The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual, unless the umpire judges the act to be so flagrant that the offender shall be ejected without warning. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. See Rule 13.2.1. For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.7.2 No player or coach shall use equipment in any way other than what is intended by the manufacturer (for example, heating bats in a dugout).

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending head coach. Subsequent violation shall result in the abused equipment being removed from the game (not returned to the dugout) and the ejection of the head coach (Behavioral ejection). All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply (see Rule 13.2.1). For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13. (See also Rule 3.4.1.2.)

13.8 Intentionally Pitching at a Batter or Umpire

A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter or umpire.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.14.1 for pitching at a batter and Rule 10.14.2 for pitching at an umpire.

13.9 Inciting the Crowd

No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach’s box, the playing field or elsewhere, incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators (e.g., reenacting the play, charging the umpire in a hostile and aggressive manner, jumping around or waving arms in disgust).

EFFECT—The offender shall be ejected with or without a warning. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. (Behavioral ejection, see Rule 13.2.1.) Umpires should request the assistance of the on-site administrator in dealing with the provoked spectators. For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.10 Calling Timeout when Ball is in Play

No member of the offense may call “Time” or employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act, while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher throw an illegal pitch.

EFFECT—If an illegal pitch is thrown, “No pitch” is declared. (See Rule 10.10.) Whether or not an illegal pitch is thrown, a team warning shall

be issued. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the offender(s) being ejected from the game. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. (Behavioral ejection, see Rule 13.2.1.) For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.11 Tobacco Use

13.11.1 The use of tobacco products by student-athletes, managers, coaches and medical personnel is prohibited while on site for practice and competition. For the purpose of this rule, all team areas and the press box (or official scorer's area) are considered to be on site.

EFFECT—Violator(s) who use tobacco products during practice or competition shall be ejected for the remainder of that practice or competition. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

Notes:

1. *During regular-season play, it is the responsibility of each institution to enforce the rule for its athletes and game personnel.*
2. *During postseason NCAA championship play, umpires shall enforce the tobacco rule. During pretournament meetings, the divisional softball committee shall remind all postseason participants that the rule and penalties (ejection) shall be enforced by game officials.*

13.11.2 Umpires, scorers and other game personnel are prohibited from using tobacco products from the commencement of pregame activities until they leave the competition site.

EFFECT—If observed by the umpire or on-site administrator, the offender shall be directed to immediately dispose of the tobacco product. Failure to comply when directed shall result in a behavioral ejection. (See Rule 13.2.1.) For violations by ejected personnel, see Rule 13.13.

13.12 Refusal to Play

Refusal to continue to play as noted in Rule 6.20.1 will not be tolerated.

EFFECT—The coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two previously scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring).

All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply. (Behavioral ejection; see Rule 13.2.1.) For violations by ejected/suspended personnel, see Rule 13.13. In addition, as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the incident, the offending head coach is responsible for submitting an electronic Incident Report and the opposing coach may submit one as well.

13.13 Ejected/Suspended Personnel Violations and

13.13.1 Ejected student-athletes may remain in the dugout, but shall not remain on the playing field or communicate with opponents or umpires. (See Rule 13.2 EFFECT.)

- 13.13.2 Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field, dugout and other team areas and be out of sight or sound until the umpires' jurisdiction ends. (See Rule 13.2 EFFECT.)
- 13.13.3 Suspended student-athletes shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area from the time umpires enter the field until after they leave the field, and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension. **Exception:** Suspended student-athletes may be restricted to the dugout if the suspension is to be served while the team is on the road and no other suitable supervisory options are available.
- 13.13.4 Suspended coaches and other nonplaying personnel shall not communicate with any umpire or be in the playing facility once pregame activities have started until the umpires leave the field of play at the conclusion of the game(s).

EFFECT—(Rules 13.13.1 to 13.13.4)—If an ejected or suspended student-athlete, coach or other nonplaying personnel violates the conditions of the ejection/suspension and it is discovered during the contest, the game will be forfeited (see Rule 6.20.1.9). If an ejected or suspended student-athlete or other nonplaying personnel violates the conditions of the ejection/suspension and it is discovered once the contest has ended, the suspension (1) for the student-athlete/nonplaying personnel is two games and (2) for the head coach is four games. If an ejected or suspended head coach violates the conditions of the ejection/suspension and it is discovered once the contest has ended, the suspension for the head coach is four games.

- 13.13.5 A postgame review of a suspension is permitted, and must:
- be filed electronically within 48 hours of the completion of the game through the Postgame Suspension Review Form (see Page 7);
 - be submitted by the conference office or conference coordinator of umpires; and
 - include video of the ejection.

RULE 14

Scoring

Note: Failure of an official scorer to adhere to Rule 14 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines and expectations for the official scorer.

14.1 Scoring Terms

- 14.1.1 **Assist:** Credit given to a defensive player when they handle or effectively deflect the ball during action that is connected with a putout.
- 14.1.2 **At-Bat:** A plate appearance that does not include sacrifices, hit by pitch, base on balls, gaining first base by interference, obstruction, or an incomplete turn at bat.
- 14.1.3 **Base Hit:** A batted ball that permits the batter to reach first base safely because of a fair hit; because a base runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball or because the umpire is hit by a batted ball (and the scorer judges it not to be a fielder's choice; see Rule 14.2.10); when a fielder attempts to put out a preceding base runner but is unsuccessful, although there is no fielding error and the official scorer believes the batter-runner would have reached first base with perfect fielding; or when a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that any fielder attempting to make a play has no opportunity to do so. A hit shall be scored even if the fielder deflects the ball from or cuts off another fielder who could have put out a base runner.
- 14.1.4 **Base on Balls (Walk):** An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during their time at bat, receives any combination of four pitches or awards that are declared balls.
- 14.1.5 **Batters Faced:** A statistic kept for each pitcher that indicates the number of opposing batters who make plate appearances.
- 14.1.6 **Caught Stealing:** Action of a base runner who is thrown out by the catcher as they attempt to steal a base.
- 14.1.7 **Defensive Indifference:** Scoring term to describe the lack of a defensive play on a runner running the bases after a batted ball, or a base runner attempting to steal a base after a pitch when the player's advance is perceived to have no bearing on which team wins the game.

Note: This can only apply to the bottom half of the last inning.

- 14.1.8 **Double Play:** A play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between the putouts.
- 14.1.9 **Error:** A misplay charged to a defensive player when it is judged by the official scorer to have prolonged the time at bat (causes one or more pitches

to be thrown) of an offensive player or contributed to an offensive player being declared safe.

14.1.10 **Extra-Base Hit:** A hit that allows the batter-runner to safely advance past first base in continuous action without an error or indifference by a defensive player. It may be a double, triple or home run.

14.1.11 **Fielder's Choice:** Charge a batter-runner with a fielder's choice when a defender fields a ground ball and attempts to put out a preceding base runner rather than the batter-runner at first base when a throw to first base would have put out the batter-runner. Advance a base runner by a fielder's choice when they advance safely while another runner is played on.

14.1.12 **Force Out:** A putout in which a runner, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder having and maintaining possession of the ball and touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance.

14.1.13 **Game-Winning Run Batted In:** The run batted in that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.

14.1.14 **Games Played:** Credit given to starting players and their substitutes reported in the game, as recorded on the umpire's official game lineup card.

14.1.15 **Games Started:** Statistical credit given to the players listed as starters on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game, whether or not they actually field or bat. Pitcher is only credited with a start if they throw the first pitch to the first opposing batter.

14.1.16 **Hit Batter by Pitch:** An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during their time at bat, was hit by a pitch, including a pitch that would have resulted in a base on balls. (See Rule 11.13.)

14.1.17 **Illegal Pitch:** Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.

14.1.18 **Intentional Base on Balls (Intentional Walk):** An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to a batter who, during their time at bat, received a fourth ball that the pitcher intentionally threw outside the strike zone. An intentional base on balls also is referred to as an intentional walk.

14.1.19 **Left Early:** Action of a base runner who is called out for leaving the base they occupied before the release of the pitch.

14.1.20 **Left on Base:** A base runner legally occupying a base at the end of a half-inning. This includes a batter-runner whose batted ball results in another base runner being the third out.

Note: Every player who completes a plate appearance must be put out, score a run or be left on base.

14.1.21 **Passed Ball:** A pitch that the catcher can reasonably be expected to catch but misses, resulting in a base runner advancing.

14.1.22 **Pick-Off:** An action initiated by the defense trying to retire a base runner at the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. The catcher is credited with a pick-off for a throw behind a base runner that catches that base runner off base and results in an out.

- 14.1.23 **Pitcher of Record:** The pitcher who is the player who will receive a decision (that is, a win or loss). (See Rules 14.29.6 and 14.29.7, respectively.)
- 14.1.24 **Plate Appearance:** Any time a batter completes a turn at bat.
Exception: When a batter leaves the game with two strikes and the substitute batter strikes out, the substitute receives credit for the game played but neither a plate appearance nor a time at bat. The first batter is credited with a game played, plate appearance, at-bat and strikeout.
- 14.1.25 **Putout:** Credit given to a defensive player for retiring a batter or runner.
- 14.1.26 **Run:** The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.
- 14.1.27 **Run Batted In:** Credit given to the batter for each run that scores as a result of a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded.
- 14.1.28 **Sacrifice:** Credit given to a batter who, with fewer than two outs, advances one or more base runners by bunting and is called out at first base; would have been called out had no error occurred; or is not called out because the defense plays on another base runner who advances safely.
- 14.1.29 **Sacrifice Fly:** A legally batted fly ball with fewer than two outs that results in a base runner scoring a run. If the fielder drops the ball but, in the scorer's opinion, the base runner would have scored had the fielder held the ball, the play shall be scored as a sacrifice fly, and an error shall be given to the defensive player.
- 14.1.30 **Stolen Base:** An action initiated by the offense when the base runner attempts to advance unaided on a pitch. The base runner is credited with a stolen base when they advance a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- 14.1.31 **Strikeout:** A putout that is credited to the catcher as a result of the batter being charged with three strikes in a single at-bat.
- 14.1.32 **Throw Out:** Credit given to the catcher for initiating the play on an attempted stolen base when an out results. It also is given to a catcher for throwing in front of a base runner who subsequently is put out in a rundown that does not involve a batted ball.
- 14.1.33 **Total Bases:** The sum of all bases a player earns in a game as a result of a hit(s).
- 14.1.34 **Triple Play:** A play by the defense in which three offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between putouts.
- 14.1.35 **Wild Pitch:** A pitch that the catcher misses and could not be expected to catch, resulting in a runner advancing.

Batting

14.2 Base Hit

A base hit is credited to a batter when they advance to a base safely:

- 14.2.1 On a fair ball that settles on the ground or clears or touches the home run fence before being touched by a fielder.
- 14.2.2 On a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that more than a routine play is required to put out the batter-runner.
 - 14.2.2.1 It should not be anticipated that an off-balance throw would retire a runner. A hit is credited to the batter even if the throw is wild.
 - 14.2.2.2 When a ground ball is fielded and no throw or a late throw is made, a hit is credited to the batter unless a throw was not made or was made late because of checking or holding a base runner on base.
 - 14.2.2.3 If a slowly hit ball or a hard-hit ball is deflected and eliminates a routine play for another fielder, a hit is credited to the batter.
- 14.2.3 When a fair-batted ball deflects off a fielder playing in front of first or third base, a hit is credited to the batter.
- 14.2.4 When a play is made on a lead base runner unsuccessfully and the batter would have been safe had a play been made on the batter. This includes bunts and running slaps.
- 14.2.5 When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder does not recover in time to gain good position.
- 14.2.6 On a fair ball that takes an unnatural bounce so that the ball cannot be handled with ordinary effort or that bounces off the pitching plate or any base (including home plate) before being touched by a fielder and at an angle such that it cannot be handled with ordinary effort.
- 14.2.7 On a ball that reaches the outfield untouched by an infielder, unless the ball should have been handled by an infielder with ordinary effort (for example, ball between the legs).
- 14.2.8 On a fair ball that might have touched a fielder but was blown by the wind, lost in the sun or lights, or falls to the ground because the fielder slips on the field or an object on the field (for example, catcher's mask, base, home plate, sprinkler).
- 14.2.9 On a fair line drive hit to the outfield that drops to the ground, if the outfielder is attempting to catch the ball on the run or if the outfielder had to cover considerable distance or make the catch running at a high rate of speed. A hit is credited even if the ball is touched.
- 14.2.10 On a fair batted ball not touched by a fielder that touches a base runner or umpire if the official scorer believes the batter earned a hit (rather than a fielder's choice).
- 14.2.11 On a fair batted ball that strikes a hat or glove thrown at it.
- 14.2.12 When no one covers the base or a fielder is late in covering the base.
- 14.2.13 If the official scorer judges the batter would have earned a base hit had runner interference not occurred.

14.2.14 If the ball is not touched because of confusion as to who should have fielded it.

14.2.15 When a fielder obstructs a preceding base runner.

Note: Always give the batter the benefit of the doubt and score a hit when exceptionally good fielding fails to result in a putout. When in doubt, scoring should always award base hits instead of charging errors.

14.3 Base Hit Not Credited

A hit is not credited to the batter in the following situations:

14.3.1 When a batter advances one or more bases while a fielder who handles a fair hit attempts to put out a preceding base runner.

14.3.2 When a batter misses first base and is then called out on an appeal.

14.3.3 When a batter hits safely and a preceding base runner misses the first base to which they were forced to advance. This is an appealed force out, and the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

14.3.4 When a base runner is called out due to contact with an infield fly ball.

14.3.5 When a runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.

14.3.6 When a fielder fails in an attempt to retire a preceding base runner and, in the official scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.

14.3.7 When the base runner interferes with a batted ball and the official scorer judges that the batter would have been put out but for the interference. In this case, the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

14.4 Extra-Base Hit

14.4.1 A batter is credited with an extra-base hit when they reach a base beyond first base solely because of their hit. It may be a double, triple or home run.

Exception: A batter never gets credit for a triple if a preceding base runner is out at home plate or would have been out had no error occurred. The same applies with receiving credit for a double.

Note: When the batter is tagged out after oversliding or overrunning second or third base, for scoring purposes, they are not credited with reaching such base unless they touched the base before oversliding or overrunning and are tagged out while attempting to return. When a batter misses a base, they get credit only for the bases touched before missing a base.

14.4.2 A batter is credited only with the base they would have reached had no play on a preceding base runner taken place. If they stop, see another play and then advance, they do not receive credit for that base.

14.4.3 If a fielder merely holds the ball too long, the batter gets credit for all the bases they take.

14.4.4 A batter is credited with a home run when any fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without being caught, touching the ground or going through the fence, even if the ball is deflected by a fielder. **Exception:** A batted ball that hits the fence, rebounds into the field and then caroms off a fielder over the home run fence is a ground-rule double. See Rule 12.12.3.5.

14.5 Game-Ending Hit

- 14.5.1 A hit that scores a winning run is credited with only as many bases as the scoring base runner traveled as long as the batter advances at least the same number of bases. **Exception:** On an out-of-the-park home run, ground-rule double or awarded bases, the batter is credited with the appropriate bases as long as all runners legally touch all bases. In these cases, the winning margin may be more than one run.
- 14.5.2 When the winning run scores on a home run, but a preceding base runner stops running before reaching home plate, the batter is credited with their last legally touched base.

14.6 Fielder's Choice

A fielder's choice is credited in the following situations:

14.6.1 To a batter:

- 14.6.1.1 When a ground ball is put in play and any preceding base runner is out on the hit or would have been out had no error occurred.
- 14.6.1.2 When a ground ball is put in play and the lead base runner is safe, but the batter would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.
- 14.6.1.3 When a ground ball is put in play and any preceding base runner, who is forced to advance, is called out on an appeal for missing the first base to which they were advancing.
- 14.6.1.4 When a base runner is checked and no throw or a late throw is made, but the base runner would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.
- 14.6.1.5 When the base runner interferes with a batted ball and the official scorer judges that the batter would have been put out but for the interference.

14.6.2 To the base runner:

- 14.6.2.1 When, after reaching base safely, a batter earns extra bases because of a play on a preceding base runner.
- 14.6.2.2 When other base runners advance while the catcher makes a play on the batter on a dropped third strike.
- 14.6.2.3 When a fielder makes a play on a base they thought the base runner was advancing to, but was wrong, and the batter-runner would have been out if the fielder had made a play on them at first base.
- 14.6.2.4 When a runner safely advances and another runner is:
- 14.6.2.4.1 Put out in a rundown;
 - 14.6.2.4.2 Safe because of an error; or
 - 14.6.2.4.3 Credited with a stolen base.
- 14.6.2.5 When a base is gained by a runner who is allowed to advance because of defensive indifference. (See Rule 14.1.7.) **Exception:** See Rule 14.14 for first and third situations.

14.7 Sacrifice

A sacrifice is credited to the batter in the following situations:

14.7.1 When a plate appearance meets the following four criteria: (1) there are fewer than two outs, (2) the batter advances one or more base runners by bunting, (3) the ball must be bunted (that is, not swung at, not slapped at, not chopped at), and (4) the batter is called out at first base or would have been out had no error occurred.

Note: Just as the official scorer should award base hits instead of charging errors in cases involving doubt, a play that meets all four criteria for a sacrifice should be scored as such instead of simply awarding a putout and assist (if applicable).

14.7.2 When, with fewer than two outs, the defense (without error) fails to get the lead base runner out on any type of bunt.

Note: If the lead base runner is tagged out in an attempt to advance more than one base, it is scored a fielder's choice. If the batter is obviously bunting for a hit in a situation in which a sacrifice is not normally used, credit the batter with an at-bat.

14.7.3 When, with fewer than two outs, the lead base runner advances by means of a bunt even though a trailing runner is out.

14.7.4 When, with fewer than two outs and base runners at first and third bases, the pitcher fields a bunt, holds the base runner at third base, throws the base runner out at first base and the base runner at first advances safely to second base.

14.8 Sacrifice Not Credited

No sacrifice is credited in the following situations:

14.8.1 When a lead base runner advances on a bunt because of a dropped good throw.

14.8.2 When a batter inadvertently taps the ball into fair territory and it results in a base runner advancing and the batter being retired. The intent to sacrifice bunt must exist.

Note: Scoring for the left-handed running slapper should be the same as for a traditional left- or right-handed batter. If the running slapper clearly shows the intent to advance a base runner by bunting, credit a sacrifice. If the running slapper slaps or swings, charge an at-bat, even if a base runner advances.

14.8.3 When a play made on the lead base runner is successful and they are put out, charge the batter with an at-bat and fielder's choice.

14.9 Sacrifice Fly

A sacrifice fly is credited to the batter in the following situations:

14.9.1 When a plate appearance meets the following four criteria: (1) there are fewer than two outs, (2) the batter hits a fly ball or line drive that scores a base runner, regardless of where the ball is caught (in fair or foul territory), as long as it is in play, (3) a run must score, and (4) a run batted in must be credited to the batter.

14.9.2 When a fair ball is dropped and an error charged, credit the batter with a sacrifice fly if the base runner would have scored with the catch.

Notes:

1. *Although the batter in this case reaches base by virtue of an error when a sacrifice fly is not caught, they are not charged with an at-bat but is credited with a sacrifice fly, and the fielder is charged with the error.*
2. *Just as the official scorer should award base hits instead of charging errors in cases involving doubt, a sacrifice that meets all four criteria for a sacrifice fly should be scored as such instead of simply awarding a putout.*
3. *If the catcher clearly has the ball in their possession before the runner arrives but drops the ball as the runner attempts to score, the catcher is charged with an error, and a sacrifice fly and run batted in are not credited to the batter.*
4. *Unlike scoring for a sacrifice (bunt/hit), the batter's intentions are irrelevant for a sacrifice fly.*

14.10 Run Batted In (RBI)

A run batted in is credited to the batter for each run that scores as a result of a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded (whether caused by ball four or an illegal pitch), a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded. A game-winning run batted in is the RBI that gives the team a lead that is never tied or lost.

Notes:

1. *On a play involving an error, an RBI is credited to the batter only if the base runner would have scored without the error. In addition, an RBI is credited when, with fewer than two outs, an infielder makes an error on a play made to a base other than home plate. On a third out, when the base runner crosses the plate before the third out is made on another runner, credit an RBI.*
2. *No RBI is credited when a) a runner rounds third base, stops, notices a misplay and then advances safely to home plate, or b) on a base award such as catch and carry or a thrown ball that goes out of play.*

14.11 Appeal Plays

- 14.11.1 **Improper Batter.** When an improper batter (for example, batting out of order, unreported or misreported batter) is reported after they are retired and before the next pitch is thrown, the player who should have batted is out and the play is scored as if they had been the correct batter. If the improper batter becomes a batter-runner and is then reported out of order, the proper batter is out and the putout is credited to the catcher. If a pitch has been thrown, all play is legal and the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who batted out of order. If more than one batter bats out of order, score all play as it stands and skip the turn at bat of those who missed their turns.
- 14.11.2 **Inaccurate Lineup Card.** If submitting an inaccurate lineup card results in a base runner being removed from a base and declared out, the results of their at-bat are nullified, and the putout is credited to the catcher.
- 14.11.3 In all other appeals, credit the fielder closest to the misplay with the putout.
- 14.11.4 If an out is made on the bases in addition to an out on a properly appealed checked swing, the checked-swing out is assessed before the out on the bases.

14.12 Strikeout

The batter is charged with a strikeout in the following situations:

- 14.12.1 When their third strike is caught by the catcher before striking the dirt.
- 14.12.2 On a dropped third strike, whether or not the batter-runner is safe at first base.
- 14.12.3 When, with first base occupied and fewer than two outs in the inning, they are put out on a dropped third strike because they cannot legally advance to first base.
- 14.12.4 When the catcher catches a foul tip directly from the bat to the glove/mitt on a third strike.
- 14.12.5 When a foul bunt on the third strike is not caught in the air.
- 14.12.6 When, with two strikes, the batter violates the time-between-pitches rule.
- 14.12.7 When the batter receives two strikes, a substitute batter is inserted and the substitute batter strikes out. Both the plate appearance and the strikeout are charged to the first batter and not the substitute batter. When after sharing a turn at bat with more than one other batter, none of whom received more than one strike, the final batter receives the strikeout.

14.13 Stolen Base

As a general rule, a stolen base is not credited to a runner unless they were in jeopardy of being charged with a caught stealing if they were unsuccessful. A stolen base is credited:

- 14.13.1 To a base runner who advances to a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- 14.13.2 To a base runner, if the base runner starts for the next base on the release, and the pitch results in what would otherwise be scored a passed ball or wild pitch. If the base runner advances another base because of the wild pitch or passed ball, only the initial base is stolen.
- 14.13.3 To a base runner, regardless of the accuracy of the throw and whether an accurate throw would have resulted in a sure putout. No error is charged unless another base is gained due to the wild throw.
- 14.13.4 To a base runner who gets caught in a rundown attempting to steal and advances to the next base safely, only if the next base was unoccupied and no error is made. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
- 14.13.5 To a base runner awarded a base due to obstruction during an attempted steal.
- 14.13.6 To a base runner who advances to a base because of a pick-off play on another base runner, provided the base runner broke for the next base before the release of the catcher's throw.
- 14.13.7 To each base runner who successfully advances in a double- or triple-steal attempt, whether played on or not, as long as no other runner is put out. If a base runner is played on and they are safe without the aid of an error, they are credited with a stolen base as are any other base runners who safely advance. If a base runner is played on and they are safe by virtue of an error, charge the error to the fielder, and any other base runner who advances

is safe on a fielder's choice. If a base runner is played on and they are put out, they are charged with a caught stealing and any other base runner who advances is safe on a fielder's choice. If the lead base runner fails to advance but is instead safe at the base they occupied at the time of the pitch (and no error occurred), credit the trailing base runner who successfully advances with a stolen base.

14.13.8 To a base runner who advances on a bobbled (not dropped) pitch, even if the base runner decides to advance after seeing the bobble.

14.13.9 To a base runner who advances a base when the defense leaves a base undefended in mid-play. Statistically, a stolen base shall be charged to the catcher if they were involved in the play and charged to the "defensive team" if the catcher was not involved in the play.

Note: When electronic scoring is used, "defensive team" is entered into the program as a pitcher. In the event a stolen base is charged to the "defensive team" or a run is scored by the base runner placed on second base in the tie breaker, it is recorded against "defensive team" and not any other player.

14.14 Stolen Base Not Credited

14.14.1 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner who advances to a base with the aid of a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference, obstruction, or defensive indifference.

14.14.2 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner as a result of defensive indifference when no play is made on a base runner because the player's advance is perceived to have no bearing on the outcome of the game. (See Rule 14.1.7.) The base runner's advance is scored as a fielder's choice. (See Rule 14.14.3 for first and third situations.)

14.14.3 A stolen base is not credited to any base runner when any other base runner is thrown out on an attempted double or triple steal. **Exceptions:** (1) On a double-steal attempt, with base runners on first and third bases, credit the base runner from first base with a stolen base if they advance on an unsuccessful but legitimate attempt made to put them out at second base, and the base runner at third base is thrown out at home plate on a continuous play. (2) With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to second base even if the initial throw is not to second base. The base runner must show the intent to steal. (3) With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to home plate even if the initial throw is not to third base. The base runner must show the intent to steal. (4) With a base runner on third base, credit a stolen base to the batter-runner, who after touching first base, successfully advances to second base if no throw is made even if the advance was immediately after a base on balls, unless defensive indifference applies. (See Rule 14.1.7.)

14.14.4 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner if another base runner is put out in a rundown or an error allows the base runner to be safe. In these cases, the base runner not in the rundown who safely advances does so on a fielder's choice.

14.15 Caught Stealing

As a general rule, a caught stealing is not charged to a runner unless they had an opportunity to be credited with a stolen base if they were unsuccessful. Caught stealing is charged:

14.15.1 To a base runner who is put out or would have been put out had no error occurred on their attempt to steal a base.

14.15.2 To a base runner who, after a throw, immediately attempts to advance to the next base and is thrown out.

14.15.3 To a base runner who attempts to advance after a pick-off throw and is subsequently called out on the play.

14.15.1.4 To a base runner who attempts to steal a base but is tagged out while oversliding or overrunning the base.

Note: When in question, give the benefit of the doubt to the base runner.

14.16 Throw Outs

The catcher is credited with a throw out when they throw in front of the base runner, resulting in a rundown that does not involve a batted ball, regardless of the base at which the putout occurs. If the catcher initiates the play on an attempted stolen base and an out results, they also are credited with a throw out.

14.17 Pick-Off

The catcher is credited with a pick-off when a throw behind the base runner results in a putout regardless of whether the putout is made at the base occupied at the time of the pitch or the base runner attempts to advance and is put out. In either case, it is tallied as caught stealing in the box score.

Fielding

14.18 Putout

14.18.1 Credit a putout to a fielder who catches a fly ball or line drive, tags out a runner or tags the base to force out the runner.

14.18.2 Credit a putout to the catcher in the following instances:

14.18.2.1 A legally caught third strike.

14.18.2.2 The batter is called out for an illegally batted ball.

14.18.2.3 A batter is out on a third strike foul bunt.

14.18.2.4 A batter is out for being touched by their own fair batted ball while one or both feet are completely out of the batter's box or for stepping on home plate.

14.18.2.5 A batter is out for intentionally interfering with their own foul batted ball.

14.18.2.6 A batter interferes with the catcher.

14.18.2.7 A batter who batted out of order becomes a batter-runner and a proper appeal is made.

14.18.2.8 A batter-runner fails to touch first base after a base on balls.

14.18.2.9 A catcher steps on the plate with the ball in their possession with the bases loaded. This includes a dropped third strike.

- 14.18.2.10 A runner is out for not advancing legally to home plate for the game-winning run.
- 14.18.2.11 A runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return. The catcher properly appeals, and the runner is called out.
- 14.18.3 Credit a putout to the nearest fielder in the following instances:
- 14.18.3.1 A batter is out on an infield fly that is not caught.
- 14.18.3.2 A base runner is out when the traditional penalty for a base runner leaving a base early is enforced.
- 14.18.3.3 A base runner is out for being hit by a fair batted ball.
- 14.18.3.4 A runner is called out for being out of the baseline in order to avoid a tag.
- 14.18.3.5 A batter-runner steps backward in the first-base line to avoid a tag.
- 14.18.3.6 A runner is out for passing another base runner or removing their helmet while the ball is in play.
- 14.18.3.7 A runner is out for running the bases in reverse order.
- 14.18.3.8 A runner is out for interfering with a fielder. If the interference is a deliberate attempt to impede another play, a second runner also may be declared out.
- Note: If the fielder was in the act of throwing or fielding a ground ball, the fielder is credited with an assist, but the putout is credited to the fielder for whom the throw was intended.*
- 14.18.3.9 A runner is out when a proper appeal is made on a missed base or home plate.
- 14.18.3.10 An unreported player or an illegal player is declared out.
- 14.18.3.11 A proper appeal is made on a batter who batted out of order but was put out. The proper batter is out and the play scored as if they had batted.

14.19 Assist

An assist is credited to a fielder in the following situations:

- 14.19.1 A fielder deflects a batted or thrown ball that results in a putout.
- 14.19.2 A fielder throws a ball that results in a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders. A fielder may receive a putout in addition to an assist as long as at least one other fielder touches the ball between the assist and the putout.
- 14.19.3 A fielder throws or deflects a ball that results in a runner being called out for interference or running out of the baseline.
- 14.19.4 A fielder makes a wild throw and, after the throw, the runner is tagged out before reaching the next base. If the runner reaches the next base safely and, in an attempt to advance to another base, is tagged out, charge the initial fielder with an error.

Note: Do not credit the pitcher with an assist on a strikeout or when after a pitch, the catcher tags out or throws out a runner.

14.20 Error

14.20.1 An error is charged against any fielder for each misplay (that is, fielding, wild throws, missed catches on good throws) that prolongs the life of a batter (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) or a base runner or permits a base runner to advance. This includes a dropped foul ball (unless it was allowed to drop intentionally to prevent a base runner from advancing), whether or not the batter subsequently is put out.

14.20.2 A single error is charged for each miscue even if more than one base is gained by a runner or more than one runner advances as a result of the play.

Note: An error is charged when a wild throw allows a runner to be safe only if the runner would have been put out had the throw not been wild. Exception: See Rule 14.21.13.

14.20.3 An error shall be charged against any fielder when they catch a thrown ball or field a ground ball in time to put out any runner on a force play and fail to tag the base or the runner, including a batter-runner on a play at first base.

14.20.4 An error shall be charged against any fielder whose throw takes an unnatural bounce, touches a base or the pitcher's plate, or touches a runner, a fielder or an umpire, thereby permitting any runner to advance. Apply this rule even when it appears to be an injustice to a fielder whose throw was accurate. The scorer must account for every base advanced by a runner.

14.20.5 When a throw is made to a base and more than one fielder could have received the throw but neither did, an error is charged to the fielder who should have received the throw.

14.20.6 An error is charged to a fielder (including the catcher) committing obstruction when an additional base is gained as a result of the obstruction.

14.20.7 An error is charged to a defensive player who collides with a fielder making the initial catch on a fly ball that is dropped.

14.20.8 An error is charged when an unnecessary throw allows a runner to advance.

Note: This does not include a throw made to play on a different runner.

14.20.9 An error is charged to the thrower when an otherwise good throw hits a runner, umpire or discarded bat.

14.20.10 An error is charged to a fielder if a catch and carry applies (see Rule 9.4) but the fielder could have legally caught the ball with ordinary effort and remained in live-ball territory.

14.21 No Error Is Charged

No error is charged to a fielder in the following situations:

14.21.1 When a ball is misplayed because it is lost in the sun or lights, blown by the wind, or the fielder slips and falls — even if contact is made with the ball.

14.21.2 When there is a mental mistake. Throwing to the wrong base is considered a mental mistake.

14.21.3 When a catcher attempts a pick-off, unless the base runner advances an additional base.

- 14.21.4 When a base runner returns safely to their original base on a rundown.
- 14.21.5 When a runner beats a wild throw or dropped catch (unless an additional base is gained or a good throw would not have led to a different result).
- Note: A dropped ball by the receiver is an error if the runner would have been out.*
- 14.21.6 When a trailing runner beats a wild throw or is not out on a tag attempt for what would be the second out of a double play or third out of a triple play.
- 14.21.7 When a ball is hit with such force, so slowly or with erratic spin that it would require more than ordinary effort to play the ball.
- 14.21.8 When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder cannot recover in time to make the play.
- 14.21.9 When a fielder drops a ball after running a considerable distance or if they fail in their attempt to catch the ball while running at a high rate of speed.
- 14.21.10 When a fielder drops a line drive after moving more than a few steps to catch the ball.
- 14.21.11 When a catch is made with extraordinary effort but the fielder could not complete the catch without entering dead-ball territory or the fielder could not remain in live-ball territory immediately after a completed catch. In general, fielders making extraordinary plays resulting in putouts are not expected to obtain additional outs or prevent other runners from advancing. See Rule 9.3.
- 14.21.12 As a result of an illegal pitch, wild pitch, passed ball or hit batter, even if more than one base is gained from the initial misplay.
- 14.21.13 When a base runner advances on a dropped third strike. In such a case, a wild pitch or passed ball shall be charged; however, if an accurate throw or proper catch would have resulted in an out, an error shall be charged to the appropriate player.
- 14.21.14 When a pitcher mishandles a sharply batted ball. Wild throws and the mishandling of routine ground balls and bunts are reason for charging the pitcher with an error.
- 14.21.15 When a wild throw is made in an effort to prevent a base runner from stealing, no error is charged even if a good throw would have resulted in a putout, unless the base runner advances at least one additional base.
- 14.21.16 When a fielder intentionally does not catch a foul fly ball to prevent a base runner from advancing.
- 14.21.17 When the scorer charges the pitcher with a wild pitch or the catcher with a passed ball.
- 14.21.18 When a batter advances on a dropped third strike that is also a wild pitch or passed ball. In this case, the batter is charged with a strikeout and the pitcher or catcher with a wild pitch or passed ball, respectively.

14.22 Double Play/Triple Play

- 14.22.1 A double or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time the pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is in the possession of the pitcher in their pitching position. Play must be continuous. If an error occurs between

putouts, no double or triple play is credited. In addition, a double or triple play is credited when an appeal play results in a second or third out after the pitcher has the ball in their possession but before the next pitch is thrown.

- 14.22.2 The second part of a double play never should be assumed. If an overthrow is made, no error is recorded unless the runner advances to another base. If the second throw is catchable and is dropped, an error is charged to the person receiving the throw.

Pitching

14.23 Earned/Unearned Run

- 14.23.1 Earned runs are runs for which the pitcher is statistically accountable and the offense deserves to have scored (earned). An earned run shall be charged against the pitcher when a runner scores as a result of a base on balls, a fielder's choice, a hit, a putout, a batter hit by a pitch, an illegal pitch, a sacrifice bunt, a sacrifice fly, a stolen base and a wild pitch (including a third strike wild pitch). Earned runs are determined by reconstructing the inning as if there were no errors or passed balls. The pitcher should be given the benefit of the doubt in determining the advancement of runners had the defensive team been errorless.

Note: A batter who gets on base as a result of a fielder's choice can score an earned run only if the base runner that was out as a result of the fielder's choice was a potential earned run.

- 14.23.2 When a base runner who began the inning on second base during the tiebreaker scores and the pitcher is held accountable for all bases gained, score the run as earned but charge it to the team total and not to the individual. (See Rule 14.30 for information on the tiebreaker rule.)
- 14.23.3 Unearned runs are runs directly attributed to the defense's miscues (including those made by the pitcher in their role as a fielder) and the offense did not deserve on its own merit to have scored (unearned). After the defensive team has had an opportunity to record three outs employing only ordinary effort, any subsequent runs that score shall be unearned. A run is always unearned if the runner who scores reached first base by error or had prolonged life because of a dropped foul fly or obstruction.

14.24 Runs Charged to Starting Pitcher

A starting pitcher who is replaced while leaving base runners is charged with every run that scores up to and including the number of runners they left on base minus one for each of those inherited runners who are out caught stealing, picked off base, or called out for interference when the batter-runner does not reach first base safely.

14.25 Runs Charged to Relief Pitcher

- 14.25.1 A relief pitcher is charged with every run that scores when the batter has reached base while they were pitching. **Exception:** If a batter reaches base on a fielder's choice that puts out an inherited base runner and the batter subsequently scores, the run is charged to the previous pitcher, not the relief pitcher.

14.25.2 When a relief pitcher enters the game to pitch to a batter in mid-count and the batter gets on base and scores, charge the first pitcher with the run if the batter has a count of two or three balls and fewer than two strikes, or if the count is full, and in either case, the batter walks. Charge the relief pitcher with any other action of the batter (including a strikeout).

14.25.3 A relief pitcher does not receive the benefit of previous chances of outs when reconstructing the inning to determine earned and unearned runs charged to her. The original pitcher does. Thus, a relief pitcher could be charged with an earned run that does not appear in the team's totals.

14.26 Strikeout

14.26.1 The pitcher who throws the third strike to a batter is credited with the strikeout, even if the batter reaches first base on a dropped third strike.

14.26.2 The official scorer determines whether it is scored as a strikeout-passed ball or strikeout-wild pitch.

14.26.3 For all circumstances scored as strikeouts, see Rule 14.12.

14.27 Wild Pitch

A wild pitch is charged to a pitcher when the pitch is so high, wide or low that the catcher cannot handle the ball with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Any pitch in the dirt is wild. Only one wild pitch is recorded regardless of the number of base runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher because it was wild, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a wild pitch and a strikeout. No wild pitch is charged if a base runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A wild pitch is not an error.

14.28 Passed Ball

A passed ball is charged to the catcher when they fail to stop or control a pitch with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Only one passed ball is recorded regardless of the number of base runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher that could have been handled with ordinary effort, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a passed ball and a strikeout. No passed ball is charged if a base runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A passed ball is not an error.

Statistics

14.29 Pitching Statistics

14.29.1 Credit a pitcher with a complete game, no-hitter, shutout, etc., if they pitch the first pitch and every subsequent pitch of a new game. For statistical purposes, they are considered the starting pitcher; however, they do not have the substitution rights of a starting player unless they are listed on the lineup card in one of the nine or 10 starting spots.

14.29.2 The flex player is charged with a game played in terms of eligibility, but not statistically (unless they participate in the game as a pitcher), if they are replaced in the lineup before the first pitch.

- 14.29.3 If a pitcher is removed from the game offensively by a batter or a base runner, all runs scored by their team during the remainder of that half inning are credited to their benefit in determining when their team is in the lead.
- 14.29.4 A shutout is recorded if the starting pitcher pitches scoreless ball for the entire game or if a relief pitcher pitches scoreless ball after relieving in the first inning before any outs or score. If two or more pitchers combine for a shutout, it shall be noted in the game summary as a combined shutout.
- 14.29.5 A pitcher is credited with a perfect game when they face the minimum number of batters required for the number of innings played, none of whom reaches any base safely.

Note: The tiebreaker does not change this requirement.

14.29.6 Winning Pitcher.

- 14.29.6.1 The winning pitcher is the pitcher on the lineup card at the moment their team takes the lead and keeps it. (See Rule 14.29.3.)
- 14.29.6.2 The starting pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
- 14.29.6.2.1 They have pitched at least four total innings (cumulative, not necessarily consecutive) of a game of six or more innings, their team is ahead when they are replaced, and their team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
- 14.29.6.2.2 They have pitched a total of three innings (cumulative, not necessarily consecutive) when a regulation game is called after five innings, their team is ahead when they are replaced, and their team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
- 14.29.6.2.3 They have pitched the required (as noted above) number of innings, their team is ahead or tied when they are replaced, they reenter the game with their team behind, and their team subsequently recaptures the lead.

Note: A pitcher cannot receive credit for a save if they receive the win.

- 14.29.6.3 The relief pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
- 14.29.6.3.1 The starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, or their team fell behind.
- 14.29.6.3.2 The relief pitcher who pitches most effectively after the starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, more than one relief pitcher was used and the lead was never lost.
- 14.29.6.3.3 The relief pitcher was the pitcher of record when their team gained the lead and stayed in the lead.
- 14.29.6.3.4 A relief pitcher left the pitching position while the score was tied or their team was behind, and they reentered as the pitcher and regained the lead.

14.29.7 Losing Pitcher.

14.29.7.1 Each pitcher is responsible for the scoring of a run if they were the pitcher of record when the batter reached base, except if they reached by virtue of a fielder's choice, regardless of who was the pitcher of record at the time of the score. Account for all base runners left on base in determining if their team is ahead, tied or behind at the time they are replaced.

14.29.7.2 A starting pitcher receives the loss if they are relieved while:

14.29.7.2.1 Their team is behind and their team remains behind for the remainder of the game, regardless of the number of innings pitched.

14.29.7.2.2 Their team is tied but they have responsibility for base runner(s) who score and their team remains behind for the remainder of the game.

14.29.7.3 A relief pitcher receives the loss if they are the pitcher of record when the opponent goes ahead and stays ahead for the remainder of the game.

14.29.8 **Save.** A pitcher must meet all three of the following conditions to be credited with a save:

14.29.8.1 They are the last pitcher in the win.

14.29.8.2 They are not the winning pitcher.

14.29.8.3 They meet one of the following conditions:

14.29.8.3.1 They enter or reenter the game to pitch with a lead of not more than three runs and pitch for at least one inning.

14.29.8.3.2 They pitch effectively for at least three innings.

14.29.8.3.3 They enter or reenter the game to pitch with the potential tying run on base, at bat or on-deck.

Note: Not more than one save may be credited in a game.

14.30 Tiebreaker Rule

14.30.1 A run scored by the player starting as a base runner at second base shall be charged to the "defensive team" and not the pitcher. Whether a run scored by any other player shall be charged to the pitcher is up to the judgment of the official scorer.

14.30.2 If action by a subsequent batter, such as a fielder's choice, causes the tiebreaker runner to be put out, the first run scored that inning may be charged to the "defensive team." (Example: If a batter-runner reaches first base safely on a fielder's choice as a result of a first-to-third putout, this new runner still is charged to the "defensive team.")

14.30.3 If the tiebreaker runner at second base is put out without action by the batter (for example, caught stealing, picked off or leaving the base early), then no run scored in that half-inning is charged to the "defensive team."

Notes:

1. A run charged to the "defensive team" is neither earned nor unearned because there is no actual person to whom the run is to be charged. It is technically

impossible for the “defensive team” to have an earned-run average because the “defensive team” will always have zero innings pitched.

2. *In the statistical pitching summary for a game using the tiebreaker rule, “defensive team” is listed as a pitcher. The only statistic recorded for “defensive team” is total runs allowed. The total runs allowed by a team may exceed the sum total of earned and unearned runs. The box score will not prove as it normally does since there is usually an extra base runner left on base for each inning in which the rule is in effect.*
3. *The respective pitchers of record receive the win and loss.*
4. *See Rule 6.16 for an explanation of the tiebreaker rule.*

14.31 Cumulative Performance Records

- 14.31.1 A consecutive-at-bat hitting streak continues with a hit or if all the plate appearances result in a base on balls, hit batter, obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly ends a streak even though it is not counted as an official at-bat.
- 14.31.2 A consecutive-games hitting streak continues without a hit when all plate appearances result in either a base on balls, hit batter, obstruction, interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly, as well as no other hit, ends the streak.
- 14.31.3 A consecutive-games playing streak continues by playing one half of an inning on defense (three outs) or by completing one turn at bat. Pinch running does not continue the streak.
- 14.31.4 If a player is ejected from a game before an official at-bat and before meeting any of the above requirements, a streak continues.
- 14.31.5 For purposes of a streak, all performances in the completion of a halted game are considered as occurring on the date when the game officially began.

14.32 Called, Forfeited and Protested Games

- 14.32.1 **Called Game.** If a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is called, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game ends (as specified in Rule 6.17) shall be recorded. If the scoring in an incomplete inning has no bearing on which team wins the contest, include all individual and team statistics. If a called game is a tie, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.
- 14.32.2 **Forfeited Game.** When a regulation game (five or more complete innings) is forfeited, the record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game is forfeited shall be recorded. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault. **Exception:** If the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score shall stand and be credited as played.

If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall be designated. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or the score is tied at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, no statistics shall be recorded. Refer to the NCAA Statistics Policies as listed on www.ncaa.org for more information concerning statistics from forfeited games.

14.32.3 Protested Game. When a protest is ruled valid but the game is not replayed to conclusion, it shall be declared “No contest.” The record of all individual and team actions shall be recorded; however, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.

14.33 Proving the Box Score

To prove a box score, the total of the team’s plate appearances (times at bat, bases on balls, hit batters, sacrifice hits, sacrifice flies and batters awarded first base because of interference or obstruction) and the international tiebreaker runner must equal the total of the team’s runs, players left on base and the opposing team’s putouts.

Table of Symbols

Symbol	Definition	Symbol	Definition
A	assist	L	loss
AB	at-bat	LE	left early
BA	batting average	LOB	left on base
BB	base on balls (walk)	O	outs made (offense)
BF	batters faced	OB	obstruction (defensive)
BIP	balls in play	PA	plate appearance
BT	bases touched	PB	passed ball
CG	complete games pitched	PKO	pick-off
CS	caught stealing	PO	putout
DP	double play	R	run scored
E	error	RBI	run batted in
ER	earned runs	SAC/SH	sacrifice
ERA	earned-run average	SB	stolen base
GP	games played	SBA	stolen base attempt
GS	games started	SF	sacrifice fly
GWRBI	game-winning run batted in	SHO	shutout
H	base hit	SO	strikeout
HBP	hit by pitch	SV	save
HR	home run	TB	total bases on safe hits
IBB	intentional base on balls	TO	throw-out
ILP	illegal pitches thrown	TOA	throw-out attempt
INT	interference (offensive)	TP	triple play
IP	innings pitched	W	win
K	strikeout (swinging)	2B	double
X	strikeout (called)	3B	triple

Percentage Table

Includes calculations for several Sabermetrics used in electronic scoring.

BABIP:	$\frac{\text{hits}}{\text{balls in play}}$	$\frac{H}{BIP}$
Batting average (BA):	$\frac{\text{hits}}{\text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{H}{AB}$
Earned-run average (ERA):	$\frac{\text{earned runs} \times 7.0}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{ER \times 7.0}{IP}$
Fielding percentage (F%):	$\frac{\text{putouts} + \text{assists}}{\text{putouts} + \text{assists} + \text{errors}}$	$\frac{PO+A}{PO+A+E}$
On-base percentage (OB%):	$\frac{\text{walks} + \text{hit by pitch} + \text{hits}}{\text{walks} + \text{hit by pitch} + \text{sacrifice flies} + \text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{BB+HBP+H}{BB+HBP+SF+AB}$
On-base plus Slugging (OPS)	on-base percentage + slugging percentage	OB% + S%
Reached-base percentage (RB%):	$\frac{\text{any possible way batter reached base safely}}{\text{plate appearances minus sacrifice bunts}}$	$\frac{\text{total on-base}}{PA-SAC/SH}$
Slugging percentage (S%):	$\frac{\text{total bases earned by hits}}{\text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{TB}{AB}$
Stolen-base percentage (SB%):	$\frac{\text{stolen bases}}{\text{stolen-base attempts}}$	$\frac{SB}{SBA}$
Strikeout ratio (SR):	$\frac{\text{strikeouts} \times 7.0}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{SO \times 7.0}{IP}$
Throw-out percentage (TO%):	$\frac{\text{throw-outs}}{\text{throw-out attempts}}$	$\frac{TO}{TOA}$
Total Average (TA)	$\frac{\text{each base touched}}{\text{outs made}}$	$\frac{BT}{O}$
Total Bases (TB)	(home runs x 4) + (triples x 3) + (doubles x 2) + (singles x 1)	$(4 \times HR) + (3 \times 3B) + (2 \times 2B) + 1B$
WHIP	$\frac{\text{walks} + \text{hits} + \text{hit batters allowed}}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{W+H+HBP}{IP}$
Winning percentage (W%):	$\frac{\text{games won} + .5 \text{ games tied}}{\text{games won} + \text{games lost} + \text{games tied}}$	$\frac{W + .5 T}{W+L+T}$

Appendix A

Feet and Lines Chart

Feet and Lines Chart

(See also Rule 2.20.)

Action	Line In Question	Permissible Position
Catcher in box	Catcher's box	within
Fielder (other than catcher) before pitch	Foul line	in/on
Legal catch	Dead ball	in/on
Pitcher on plate taking signal	Width of plate	within
Pitcher's stride	Pitcher's lane	in/on
Batter position in box	Batter's box	within
Batter at bat/ball contact	Batter's box	within
Look-back rule	Pitcher's circle	in/on

Lines (foul lines, pitcher's lane and circle, dead-ball areas, and coaches', batter's and catcher's boxes) denote spaces to which players or coaches are restricted.

The outermost edge of each line is the restricting boundary and shall meet the dimensions defined in the rules.

To be considered "within" the space, the player or coach must not have any part of the foot that is in contact with the ground extend beyond the outermost edge of the line.

To be considered "in" the space or "on the line," the foot of the player or the coach may extend beyond the outermost edge of the line as long as at least part of the foot remains in contact with the line or with the ground inside the space.

In either case, a player or coach may not have an entire foot or entire portion of the foot that is in contact with that the ground be completely outside the line that defines the space.

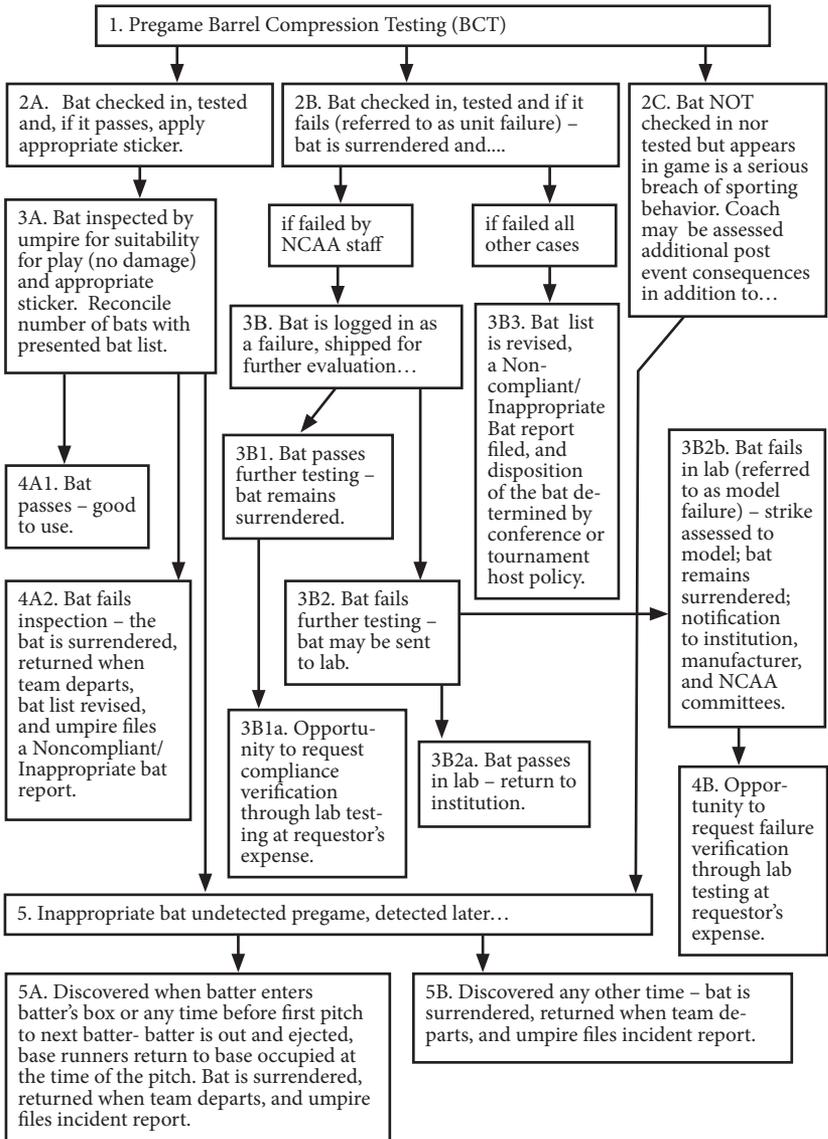
Appendix B

Improper Player Chart

Issue	Batting Out of Order	Inaccurate Lineup	Unreported/Misreported Player	Illegal Player
1. Offending Team Corrects Own Mistake (Offense or Defense)	Rule 11.9 Not recommended, but if coach insists, same penalty as if reported by opponent	Rule 8.3.2 No penalty to correct name or number as long as player was listed on lineup card	Rule 8.3.3 No penalty; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Rule 8.3.4 Offending player is ejected; all play stands
2. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire While Offender Is At Bat	No penalty; correct batter steps in; all advances are legal	All play stands; correct lineup	Before pitch: No penalty; declared officially in the game. After pitch: Offending player is out; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Before pitch: Offending player is ejected. After pitch: Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
3. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Immediately After Turn At Bat But Before Next Pitch	Missed batter is out; nullify all advances; next batter is one who follows missed batter	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out; all advances as a result of offender becoming a batter/runner are nullified; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
4. Defensive Team Alerts The Umpire After Turn At Bat And After A Pitch	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; next batter is one who follows improper batter	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; all advances are legal
5. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiebreaker Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	"No Pitch" declared; offending player is out; nullify all advances; declared officially in game	"No Pitch" declared; offending player is out and ejected; nullify all advances
6. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiebreaker Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced And After Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out (if on base) and ejected; all advances are legal
7. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After They Make A Play But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; correct lineup	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; declared officially in game	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch with each base runner advancing one base, or take results of play; offending player is ejected
8. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After They Make A Play And After Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	All play stands; declared officially in game	All play stands; offending player is ejected

Appendix C

Barrel Compression Testing



Appendix D

Umpire Signals



Out

Raise right arm straight up. Bring forearm slightly forward while clenching into a fist. Verbalize "Out."



**Safe/No Catch/No Tag/
No Infraction**

Extend arms straight out with palms down. Verbalize call.



Strike

Verbalize "Strike" while set. Stand, raise right arm up and forward into a fist.



Foul Tip

Optional. Brush fingers with upward motion, chest high or higher. Follow with strike signal. No verbal call.



Fair Ball

Point toward fair territory with hand closest to infield. No verbal call.



**Foul Ball/
Dead Ball/No Pitch**

Raise both arms up, palms forward angled out from the body. Verbalize the call.



Infield Fly

Raise right arm above head with index finger extended. Verbally call "Infield Fly."



Double

Raise right arm above head showing two fingers. Verbally call "Two Bases."



Play Ball

Raise arm toward pitcher with palm facing body. Bring arm toward body while verbalizing "Play Ball."



Home Run

Raise right arm above head with index finger extended. Circle arm in clockwise motion.



Time

Raise both arms above head, palms forward, with arms at a slight angle from the body. Verbally call "Time."



Do Not Pitch

With palm up, raise hand toward pitcher.



Delayed Dead Ball

Extend left arm straight out in a fist with fingers facing out.



Count

Raise both arms shoulder high or higher in front of the body. Indicate strikes with fingers on right and balls on the left hand.



Point

Extend arm with index finger extended. Keep other arm close to body.



Ejection

Hold up right arm with palm open and forward. Draw the hand back to the ear and redirect arm skyward at a 45-degree angle away from the body with the index finger extended.



The Run Scores

Point at plate while emphatically verbalizing "The Run Scores."



The Run Does Not Score

Cross both arms back and forth above the head with palms forward. Verbalize "No Run."

Appendix E

Lightning Policy



The NCAA provides detailed guidance on lightning (and other environmental hazards) in the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook. Please consult the latest version of this handbook, which is available at www.ncaa.org.

Appendix F

Video, Audio or Matrix Boards

A. Scoreboards and Video.

1. Scoreboards (and monitors) must not be used to “show up” an umpire or visiting team members, incite the crowd, or distract a player. The following situations may not be shown:
 - a. Replays showing balls or strikes;
 - b. Brushback pitches;
 - c. Arguments or disputes between umpires, players or coaches;
 - d. Any episode or event that would embarrass or denigrate an umpire, visiting team member, visiting team representative or the official scorer;
 - e. The likeness of an umpire or an umpire’s name that could be used to embarrass an umpire; and
 - f. Fans or other unauthorized personnel running onto the field.
2. Exciting plays such as spectacular catches or players circling the bases after home runs may be shown more than once.
3. Replays may not delay the game. The next batter is expected to immediately step into the batter’s box.
4. Any instance in which an umpire has made a judgment call may be replayed only one time at regular speed.
5. No live game action may be displayed. Close-ups of the batter in the on-deck circle are permitted, but once a player steps into the batter’s box, all live action must stop. A still shot, statistics or other non-moving pictures must remain on the screen until the batter finishes the plate appearance.
6. Live shots of fans are permitted during dead-ball periods, but good judgment must be used to avoid unacceptable behavior, signs or clothing.

B. Audio and Matrix Boards.

1. All music, chants or crowd-cuing messages must stop when the batter steps into the batter’s box. Use of Matrix boards should also stop when the batter steps into the batter’s box.
2. Music, noise, cheers and Matrix boards may be used during the following times:
 - a. Before the start of the game;
 - b. Between half innings;
 - c. During pitching changes or extended treatment for an injury;

- d. As the batter is heading toward the batter's box (Exception: At the discretion of conferences or a championship committee, this "walk-up" music may be prohibited); and
 - e. Between games in a doubleheader or after the game.
3. Matrix boards may be operated during a lengthy stoppage in play, but their operation must cease when the umpire calls "Play." Teams are to exhibit good judgment when using messages that encourage fans to cheer or make noise.
 4. Audio (music, organists, etc.) may not be played in a manner that may incite spectators to react in a negative fashion to umpires' decisions or to visiting players.
 5. It is the on-site administrator's responsibility to monitor its video and audio operations and abide by the intent of these guidelines and policies, including between-inning entertainment.
 6. Should any of the policies in this section be violated by a team, umpires have the authority to stop the game to have the matter corrected by the on-site administrator. In this case, umpires must submit an electronic Incident Report to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after the game. The offending institution's director of athletics and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Appendix G

Video Review

Video review of designated plays is allowed as listed below. In games using video review, each head coach has two challenges to initiate a review of the plays designated below for the entirety of the game. The challenge must be indicated before the next pitch, before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding position and left fair territory, or before the umpires have left the field of play. Additionally, the crew chief may initiate a review of these plays at their discretion beginning with the sixth inning in any game. **Exception:** The crew chief may not initiate a review of runners leaving early on a pitch.

Plays subject to review:

1. Regarding batted balls (any ball higher than the top of the foul pole when it leaves the field cannot have that aspect reviewed):
 - a. Deciding if a batted ball called fair is fair or foul.
 - b. Deciding if a batted ball called foul should be a ground-rule double, home run, or hit-by-pitch.
 - c. Deciding if a batted ball is or is not a home run.
2. Regarding pitched balls at the plate:
 - a. Deciding if a pitch ruled a dropped third strike was caught before the ball touched the ground.
 - b. Deciding whether a live or dead ball should be changed to a foul ball.
 - c. Deciding whether a foul ball should be changed to a foul tip only with no base runners, or if it would result in a third out.
 - d. Deciding whether a batter is entitled to an award of first base per Hit Batter (by Pitch) - whether the ball hit the batter, whether the ball was entirely in the batter's box, whether the batter made an attempt to get out of the way of the pitch when required, and/or whether the batter intentionally tried to get hit by the pitch (see Rule 11.13).
3. Spectator interference.
4. Obstruction and interference (including collisions).
5. Deciding if malicious/flagrant contact occurred. Umpires may initiate this review without requiring a coach's challenge at any point in the game to ensure student-athlete safety.
6. Timing plays (deciding whether a third out is made before the lead base runner touches home plate).
7. Force/Tag Play Calls: Plays involving all runners acquiring the base before the defensive player's attempt to put the runner out at any base.

8. Blocked or dead ball/Placement of Runners: Deciding whether a ball not ruled blocked should be ruled blocked, and the proper placement of runners (per the rules/case book) after any blocked or dead ball call.
9. A catch or no catch in any situation.
10. Runners leaving the base prior to the touch on a fly ball (tagging up), runners missing a base and runners leaving early on a pitch.
Note: The crew chief may not initiate a review of runners leaving early on a pitch. This review is only allowed by a coach's challenge.
11. Any of the listed reviewable items if the action on the field results in a dead ball.

Criteria for using video review:

1. All equipment should be tested by appropriate personnel before each game.
2. A ruling on the field will only be changed if there is indisputable video evidence to reverse the call. Absent that evidence, the original ruling on the field will stand.
3. A review must be verbally or visually indicated before the next pitch, before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding position and left fair territory, or the umpires leave the field of play.
4. Coaches have 30 seconds to verbally or visually lodge a challenge.
5. The video review may be conducted on-site by the crew chief or by an off-field official at a centralized video review location.
6. If video review is conducted on-site by the crew chief, the video review area shall not require an umpire to walk through spectators or dugouts to view the coverage. At least one umpire must remain on the field.
7. During the video review, the defensive team shall maintain their position on the field and may warm-up if desired. Offensive base runners and the on-deck hitter shall maintain their position. Other personnel shall remain in the dugout. Any defensive or offensive conferences will be charged as during any other part of the game.
8. Once the review is completed, the crew chief will communicate the ruling to both head coaches and the official scorer using the following criteria. This should also be communicated to the broadcasting booth, if applicable, via the umpire who has a microphone.
 - a. Ruling on the field is upheld; or
 - b. Ruling on the field is changed.
9. If the reversing of a call results in the need for decisions on the placement of base runners, the crew chief shall use their best judgment and/or the appropriate rule to determine where to place the runners as if the call had been made correctly.
10. The final decision may not be argued by either coach. A coach who argues the final decision shall be immediately ejected.

Appendix H

Concussions

Revised April 2023

Sport-related concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct blow to the head, neck or body resulting in an impulsive force being transmitted to the brain that occurs in sports and exercise-related activities.

Game officials are often in the best position to observe student-athletes after they have had a blow to the head or body, and may be the first to notice the behaviors that indicate a concussion may be present. An official may observe the following behaviors by a student-athlete with a suspected concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Appears confused or incoherent.
- Shakes head.
- Stumbles; has to be physically supported by teammates.
- Moves clumsily or awkwardly.
- Shows behavior or personality changes.

Student-athletes with a suspected concussion must be removed from competition so that a medical examination can be conducted by the primary athletics healthcare provider (i.e., athletic trainer or team physician).

Importantly, a game official is not expected to evaluate a student-athlete. Instead, if an official notices any behavior that suggests a concussion, the official should stop play immediately and call an injury timeout so that an appropriate medical examination can be conducted. A simple guide to the official's role is: "When in doubt, call an injury timeout."

A student-athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, must be removed from practice or competition and may not return to sport activity on that day. The athlete must undergo medical evaluation and follow a return-to-learn/return-to-sport protocol under the supervision of the team physician, and may not return to sport until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that student-athletes can receive appropriate medical evaluation.

IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:

1. **Remove the student-athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of concussion if the student-athlete has experienced a blow to the head. Do not allow the student-athlete to just "shake it off." Each student-athlete will respond to concussions differently.

2. **Ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated immediately by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury. Call an injury timeout to ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated by one of the primary athletics healthcare providers.
3. **Allow the student-athlete to return to play only if the primary athletics healthcare provider has determined that the student-athlete did not suffer a concussion.** Allow athletics medical staff to rely on their clinical skills and protocols in evaluating the student-athlete to establish the appropriate management.



Additional information and details regarding concussions can be found at [ncaa.org/sport-science-institute](https://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute).

Appendix I

Accommodations for Student-Athletes with Disabilities

The NCAA encourages participation by student-athletes with disabilities (physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full extent of their interests and abilities. An NCAA member institution will have the right to seek, on behalf of any student-athlete with a disability participating on the member's team, a reasonable modification or accommodation of a playing rule, provided that the modification or accommodation would not:

1. Compromise the safety of, or increase the risk of injury to, the student-athlete with a disability or any other student-athlete;
2. Change an essential element that would fundamentally alter the nature of the game; or
3. Provide the student-athlete an unfair advantage over the other competitors.

To request any such modification or accommodation, the member's director of athletics, or their designee, must submit a rule waiver request, in writing, to the secretary-rules editor. Such written request should describe:

- a. The playing rule from which relief is sought;
- b. The nature of the proposed modification or accommodation;
- c. The nature of the student-athlete's disability and basis for modification or accommodation; and
- d. The proposed duration of the requested modification or accommodation.

Additionally, each request should be accompanied by documentation evidencing the student-athlete's disability (e.g., a medical professional's letter). Upon receipt of a complete waiver request, the secretary-rules editor will consult with NCAA staff, the applicable sport/rules committee, other sport governing bodies, and/ or outside experts, to conduct an individual inquiry as to whether the requested modification or accommodation can be made. In making this assessment, the NCAA may request additional information from the member institution. The secretary-rules editor will communicate the decision in writing (which may be via email) to the requesting member institution. If the request is granted, the member institution should be prepared to provide the written decision to the officiating staff, opposing coach(es), and tournament director (if applicable) for each competition in which the student-athlete will participate. NCAA members are directed to consult Guideline 2P of the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook for further considerations regarding participation by student-athletes with impairment.

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