



SOFTBALL

2012 AND 2013 RULES
AND INTERPRETATIONS



RESPECT.

It's the name of the game.

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 the website below: **www.NCAA.org**, then click on **"Student-Athlete Programs,"** then **"Sportsmanship"** and select the **"Resources/Best Practices"** tab.



**2012 and 2013
NCAA
SOFTBALL
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INTERPRETATIONS**

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



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Changes to the rules committee that occur after the book's publication will be reflected in the online roster available at NCAA.org (select sports, softball and Softball Rules Committee).

Points of Emphasis

While we strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with all the rule changes throughout the 2012-2013 NCAA Softball Rules and Interpretations book, several topics the NCAA Softball Rules Committee would specifically like to call to your attention are clarified in the Committee Report that follows and in this Points of Emphasis.

Change in Effect

There are several wording changes regarding the effects for rule violations; however, none will have as great an effect on the game as the fundamental change for a base runner leaving a base before the release of a pitch. Historically, and in all other major softball rule codes, the umpire called “Dead Ball, No Pitch,” the base runner was declared out, and other base runner(s) and the batter were returned to their positions before the pitch. But beginning with this season, the effect in the collegiate game will change to a delayed dead ball, which will allow play to proceed to conclusion. Once play has ended, the defensive coach shall have the option to take the results of the play OR the traditional penalty described above.

The intent of the change is to always advantage the offended (that is, the defensive) team. Under the traditional penalty, if with one out, the batter hit into a line drive double play, the play was negated because no play was allowed after the base runner was called out for leaving her base. So the team that got a hot hitter to line out to apparently end the inning had to allow the batter back in the box with only two outs.

This change creates a parallel penalty to the effect for an illegal pitch when the offended (that is, the offensive) team is always advantaged. But as simple as that seems, this becomes the first offensive violation that results in a delayed dead ball so there is now the possibility that there will be both an offensive and defensive rule violation resulting in delayed dead ball penalties that will have to be resolved once play ceases. When this is the case, the penalties will be applied in the order in which they occurred as determined by the umpire crew. So, for example, a play that includes both a base runner leaving early and an illegal pitch will be allowed to conclude; the umpires will determine which violation occurred first, enforce that effect and then apply the effect for the other violation. If the illegal pitch was called for stepping backward, it would be the first violation, but if the illegal pitch was for striding outside the pitching lane, it would be the second. If the defensive violation is anything other than illegal pitch (Rule 6.8), it would be enforced after the offensive violation.

Financial Implications

Although the Rules Committee is sensitive to the economic climate expected during the life of this rulebook, there are two new rules that will have financial implications for most institutions. The first is the requirement to pad wood, cement or brick backstops and fences. In the case of the backstop (Rule 2.1), padding is strongly recommended for now and required by the 2016 season. In the case of the fence (Rule 2.10), the committee recommends padding no higher

than one foot off the ground and extending to the top of the wood, cement or brick or six feet, whichever is shorter. In either case, the intent is to enhance student-athlete safety. The second rule change affecting the budget is the expansion of the number of game balls (Rule 3.2) supplied by the host. Previously, two new and three game quality balls were required at the start of each game. The rule change expands the number of game quality balls to 10 in addition to the two new balls. The intent of this change is to improve the flow of the game and eliminate waiting for balls to be retrieved from out-of-play. At first glance, this change appears to be an expensive one; however, for most institutions, it will simply be a reallocation of their existing resources, as used balls will be needed earlier in the season but will last longer because of their limited use.

Comportment

Finally, we would like to call your attention to one aspect of the game that the NCAA Softball Rules Committee believes must be improved, not through additional rules but by a stronger commitment to complying with or enforcing existing ones. Improved sportsmanship can result from adult role modeling of positive sporting behavior, demonstrating respect for both the game and the opponent, and increased knowledge of and compliance with the playing rules. We urge everyone involved in the game to examine their role and comport themselves in a manner appropriate to this educational pastime.

Softball Rules Committee Report

In the two-year cycle system, the meetings held in the even years allow the committee to focus on a variety of issues relevant to collegiate fastpitch. Last year, the expansion of the bat testing program was the most visible result of that focus. In the odd years, the bulk of the committee's time is spent on rule discussions but some time is always dedicated to additional topics. Two significant results of this summer's topics are the continued expansion of bat compliance testing and the use of electronics for enhanced coaching during a game.

Softball Bat Protocol

Even though the previous NCAA Rules and Interpretations book was published to be a two-year edition, emergency changes to bat protocols and the implementation of Barrel Compression Testing were published in a rules supplement before the 2011 season. Text from that supplement is now incorporated in the applicable rules and several new changes are detailed below.

One of the major changes is a reduction in the number to editions of Approved Softball Bat Lists used throughout the season. Last year, the committee anticipated there would be eight to 10 bat lists to accommodate correction of information provided by manufacturers, introduction of new models as the season progressed and the assessment of strikes for models with poor performance in bat compliance testing. In the end though, 20 lists were posted. So to minimize the difficulties encountered by the constant change in lists, the initial 2012 bat list has been finalized this summer and changes initiated by the manufacturers will only occur on the 15th of January, March, April and June. Bat models that fail compliance testing in the lab will still be immediately reported, so the committee anticipates a more manageable number of lists in 2012.

A second major change to the protocol is that the host will no longer be responsible for providing the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. That responsibility now rests with each team's coaches, who will present their list to the umpires for the bat check before every game. Coaches must highlight the models of bats that will be on the field or in their team areas and designate the number of bats of each model in the applicable column on the list. This new process will allow umpires to match the list and actual bats as well as know the number of bats available for use. As in the past, the protocol for determining the appropriateness of specific bats is detailed in a flow chart (now moved to Appendix C).

The NCAA will continue to expand its pre-competition bat testing with the use of Barrel Compression Testing designed to predict bat performance in the lab which, of course, predicts performance on the field. The BCT protocol is detailed in a flow chart (Appendix D) and will strongly resemble last year's processes. The most notable change is an increase in the frequency in testing during the NCAA postseason, but coaches might also experience additional testing using tournament and/or conference procedures.

Equipment Used for Scouting

This section has been reorganized and relocated (Rule 5.9) to better convey the intent of the committee that the use of technology for filming and biomechanical and statistical analysis be confined to areas outside the dugout and other team areas or at times other than during the game. Entering data, the use of unattended cameras, and, in general, uploading information to a remote file is not restricted. Enhancing coaching or student-athlete performance and downloading information during a game however is prohibited. While the committee cannot anticipate the technological advances that might occur during the term of this rules book, it does believe this framework will assist decision makers in determining what is and is not appropriate. As in the past, the focus of the umpires will continue to be on actions on the playing field so opposing coaches will need to bring violations of Rule 5.9 to the attention of the plate umpire for resolution.

Index to 2012 and 2013 Major Rules Changes

Listed below are references to rules that were significantly altered from the last edition of the NCAA playing rules. Rules changes are identified by a screened background.

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13.2	Suspended personnel restricted to dugout exception.....	161
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Index to Editorial Changes

Numerous editorial changes were made in the 2012-2013 edition of the NCAA Softball Rules Book. Only those changes that clarified the previous rule or provided interpretation are listed below. Those that are grammatical in nature are not listed.

2012-2013 Editorial Changes

<i>Rule</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Page(s)</i>
1.17	Blocked ball definition expanded	18
1.47	Fly ball definition enhanced.....	21
2.26	Warning track recommendation	34
5.1	Pregame practice correction to facility	51
6.11	Conferences	61
9.4.2	Fielder obstruction	89

Common Practice Updates

The NCAA Softball Rules Committee created this heading in 2007 to call your attention to new text in the book. Situations and effects that fall in this category are those that the committee feels have been common practice on the field but, for a variety of reasons, were never previously included in print. They are making their first appearance in text; however, they should not affect the game as the major and editorial changes might. For ease in identifying them, below are parts of the text that have been updated by the committee.

<i>Rule</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Page(s)</i>
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1.14	Batter-runner definition expanded.....	18
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2.4	Bases must be white reiterated.....	30
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Code 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 ideas at the Web site: www.NCAA.org/sportsmanship

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

Coaches

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

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

Umpires

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

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

The Rules

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

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

Rules 2.10 and 2.11

Rule 5.5;

Rules 6.15, 6.17 and 6.21.2; and

Rules 15.2, 15.3 and 15.4.

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

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RULE 1

Definitions

1.1 Altered Bat

An inappropriate bat that was a legal bat that has been intentionally changed from the specifications established in the ASA bat certification process and as required in Rule 3.3. *Exception:* Marking for identification on the knob, laser etching other than on the barrel and replacing the grip are legal.

1.2 Appeal

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

1.3 Approved Ruling (A.R.)

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

1.4 Backstop

A barrier behind home plate to stop a ball.

1.5 Ball

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

1.6 Base

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

1.7 Base Coaches

The two representatives of the team at bat who are stationed in the first or third base coaches' boxes to direct the offense. Not more than one representative may be in each box.

1.8 Base Path

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

1.9 Base Runner

An offensive player who is advancing to, touching or returning to a base other than the batter-runner.

1.10 Bat

The smooth, rounded stick used by the batter to contact the pitch. The bat must meet the bat specifications in Rule 3.3.

1.11 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.

1.12 Batter

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

1.13 Batter's Box

The area to which the batter is restricted when batting.

1.14 Batter-Runner

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

1.15 Batting Order

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

1.16 Batting Out of Order

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

1.17 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.

1.18 Bullpen

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

1.19 Bunt

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

1.20 Bunt Attempt

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

1.21 Called Game

A game that is ended by order of the umpire.

1.22 Catch

The act of a fielder who, with her hand(s) and/or glove/mitt, securely gains possession of a batted, pitched or thrown ball.

1.23 Catcher

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

1.24 Catcher's Box

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

1.25 Checked Swing

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

1.26 Coaches' Boxes

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

1.27 Conferences

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

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

1.28 Crow Hop (Pitcher)

An illegal act in which the pitcher's pivot foot leaves the pitcher's plate and re-contacts the ground before the release of the pitch.

1.29 Dead Ball

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

1.30 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.

1.31 Defense

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

1.32 Delayed Dead Ball

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.

1.33 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.

1.34 Dislodged Base

A base displaced from its proper position.

1.35 Doubleheader

Two regularly scheduled games played in succession.

1.36 Dugout (Bench)

The area in dead-ball territory reserved for team personnel engaged in the game.

1.37 Effect

The result or consequence of a rule application.

1.38 Ejection

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

1.39 Extra Inning

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

1.40 Fair Ball

A legally batted ball that:

1.40.1 Settles on or is touched on or over fair territory between home plate and first base, or between home plate and third base.

1.40.2 While on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire.

1.40.3 Touches first, second or third base, unless a fielder or base runner previously touched it while the ball was in foul territory.

1.40.4 Bounces over or past first base or third base regardless of where the ball hits after passing the base.

1.40.5 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).

1.40.6 While in flight, hits the foul pole or while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the home-run fence.

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

1.40.7 Is in fair territory when a base runner, who is in fair territory, interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.

1.41 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.

1.42 Fake Tag

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

1.43 Field of Play

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

1.44 Fielder

One of the nine players on the defensive team who takes a position on the field and attempts to stop the offensive team from scoring. It may be the pitcher, catcher,

first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder or right fielder.

1.45 Flagrant

An act that involves excessive force with an opponent.

1.46 Flex

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

1.47 Fly Ball

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

1.48 Force Out

A putout in which an offensive player, 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 base runner is being forced to advance. There cannot be a force out when the batter does not become a batter-runner, when a fly ball is caught, or after the batter-runner or a trailing base runner has been put out.

1.49 Force Play

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

1.50 Forfeited Game

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

1.51 Foul Ball

A legally batted ball that:

- 1.51.1 Touches the batter or touches the dirt or home plate and then hits the batter while she is still within the batter's box.
 - 1.51.2 Touches the bat or touches the dirt or home plate and then hits the bat a second time while it is still in the batter's possession and the batter is still within the batter's box.
 - 1.51.3 Settles on or is touched on or over foul territory between home plate and first base or home plate and third base.
 - 1.51.4 While on or over foul territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire or any object foreign to the natural playing surface.
 - 1.51.5 Bounces or rolls past first base or third base on or over foul territory.
 - 1.51.6 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).*
- 1.51.7 Is in foul territory when a base runner in foul territory interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field a batted ball.
 - 1.51.8 Goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than her hand or gloved hand.

1.51.9 Hits the pitcher's plate and rolls untouched to foul territory before reaching first or third base.

1.52 Foul Territory

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

1.53 Foul Tip

A batted 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. It is a strike, the ball is live and treated as a noncontacted pitch.

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

1.54 Ground Ball

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

1.55 Ground Rule

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

1.56 Halted Game

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

1.57 Helmet

The protective headwear most commonly worn by an offensive player. Players are required to wear helmets while batting or running the bases, when positioned in the on-deck circle or as base coaches in the coaches' boxes. Catchers are required to wear a protective helmet while receiving pitches in a game. Other defensive players may wear a helmet for safety reasons. See also Rule 3.8

1.58 Home Team

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

1.59 Illegal Bat

An inappropriate bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (that is, particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits) as set forth in Rule 3.3.

1.60 Illegal Pitch

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

1.61 Illegal Player

A player who competes in the game in a way in which she is not entitled to participate.

1.62 Illegal Re-entry

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

1.63 Illegally Batted Ball

A pitch contacted by the batter:

1.63.1 With an inappropriate bat (altered, illegal or nonapproved).

1.63.2 When any part of either foot is in contact with the plate at the time of bat-ball contact.

1.63.3 When one or both feet are on the ground and entirely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time of bat-ball contact.

1.64 Inaccurate Lineup Card

Incorrect listing of eligible starting players and substitutes. Inaccuracies could include incorrect or omitted first name, uniform number or position. (See Rule 8.3.2.)

Notes:

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

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

1.65 In Flight

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

1.66 In Jeopardy

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

1.67 Infield

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

1.68 Infield Fly Rule

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

1.69 Infielders

Fielders who defend the skinned portion of the field. They typically include the first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, pitcher and catcher.

1.70 Inning

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

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

1.70.3 Extra inning. One or more that extends the game in an attempt to break a tie score.

1.71 Intentional Base on Balls

"Ball four" purposely thrown to a batter.

1.72 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.

1.73 Leap (Pitcher)

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

1.74 Line Drive

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

1.75 Lineup Card

The card that contains the first and last names, uniform numbers and positions of all starting players, listed in the order in which they are to bat, and the first and last names and uniform numbers of all eligible substitutes. 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. Also see inaccurate lineup card definition. (See Rule 8.3.2.)

Notes:

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

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

1.76 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.

1.77 No Contest

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

1.78 No Game

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

1.78.1 If the team last at bat is at bat in the last half of the fifth inning and equals, before the completion of that inning, the score of the side first at bat, the umpire shall declare the contest legally tied.

1.78.2 If the team last at bat shall have scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the team first at bat has scored in five completed innings, the umpire shall award the game to the team second at bat, and it shall count as a legal game.

1.78.3 If the teams have previously agreed to play by the halted-game rule. (See Rule 6.17.)

1.79 No Pitch

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

1.80 Nonapproved Bat

An inappropriate bat that does not bear the ASA 2004 certification seal or is not on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List.

1.81 Obstruction

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

1.82 Offense

Player or team at bat attempting to score runs.

1.83 On-Deck Batter

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

1.84 On-Deck Circle

A circular area with a 2-1/2 foot radius in which the on-deck batter is restricted for warm-up swings.

1.85 Out

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

1.86 Outfield

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

1.87 Outfielder

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

1.88 Overslide

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

1.89 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.

1.90 Pinch Hitter

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

1.91 Pinch Base Runner

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

1.92 Pitch

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

1.93 Pitcher

The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters.

1.94 Pitcher's Lane

The area to which the pitcher is restricted when delivering the pitch.

1.95 Pitcher's Pivot Foot

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

1.96 Pitcher's Stride Foot

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

1.97 Pitchout

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

1.98 Play

An attempt by a defensive player on a batted or thrown ball to retire a base runner or a batter-runner. A pitch is not a play except as it relates to an appeal play. (See Rule 7.1.)

1.99 "Play Ball"

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

1.100 Protest

The formal inquiry into the decision of an umpire.

1.101 Quick Pitch

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

1.102 Regulation Game

Seven innings constitutes a regulation game unless:

- 1.102.1 The home team scores more runs than the visiting team in six-and-one-half innings and/or before the third out in the bottom of the seventh inning or the eight-run rule applies.
- 1.102.2 The game is tied at the end of seven innings. Such a game shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the home team has scored more runs in the bottom half of the inning and before the third out is made.
- 1.102.3 The game is shortened (called). Forfeited, halted, protested, or tied games or games decided by the eight-run rule may or may not be regulation depending upon the circumstances. See Rule 6.16 for the criteria that must be met in order for a called game to be considered regulation.

1.103 Run

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

1.104 Runner

See Rule 1.9, Base runner.

1.105 Rundown

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

1.106 Safe

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

1.107 Slap Hit

A batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing.

1.108 Starter

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

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

1.109 Strike

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

1.110 Strike Zone

The area above home plate between the bottom of the batter's sternum and the top of her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. When the top of the ball is on or within the horizontal plane and either side of the ball is on or within the

vertical plane of the strike zone, a strike is called unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate.

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

1.111 Substitute

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

1.112 Suspension

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

1.113 Tag

The act of a defensive player during a live ball who:

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

1.114 Tagging Up

Action of a base runner returning to a base, or remaining on her base, before she can legally advance on a batted fly ball as it is first touched by a fielder.

1.115 Team Representative

The head coach and his or her designee.

1.116 "Time"

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

1.117 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.

1.118 Trapped Ball

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

1.119 Turn at Bat

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

1.120 Umpires

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

1.121 Unreported/Misreported Player

A player who has a legal right to change defensive position, enter or re-enter the game but has not been reported or has been misreported to the umpire before her participation.

1.122 Visiting Team

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

1.123 Warm-Up Pitch

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

1.124 Without Liability to be Put Out

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

RULE 2

Field of Play

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

2.1 Backstop

A backstop is required. It should be a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum distance of 30 feet from home plate. (See diagram.) It is recommended that the backstop be vertical and not extend over the playing field. When the backstop is wood, cement or brick, it is strongly recommended that it be padded from dugout to dugout beginning no 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. Padding is required by the 2016 season.

2.2 Base Distance

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

2.3 Baseline

The direct line between any two consecutive bases.

2.4 Bases—First, Second and Third

First, second and third bases shall be white canvas bags or suitable white rubberized material securely fastened to the ground. Each bag shall be 15 inches square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 1-1/2 to 3-1/2 inches. Bases may have tapered edges. A release-type base may be used. The double first base may not be used.

2.5 Batter's Boxes

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

2.6 Bullpen

It is highly recommended that all intercollegiate softball facilities have at least one regulation bullpen. It is recommended that there be separate bullpens for each team; however, if only one bullpen is available, it should be large enough to accommodate two pitchers at the same time (one pitcher from each team). In either case, the warm-up areas for the pitchers of the home team and the visiting team must be comparable. The bullpen(s) shall be equipped with regular-size

home plates and pitcher's plates placed at regulation distance apart. The pitching plates should be set in dirt, and the home plates shall have a backstop if outside the field of play. It is recommended that bullpens be set up so that pitchers will be throwing in the same direction in practice as when they throw in the game.

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

2.7 Catcher's Box

The catcher's 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.)

2.8 Coaches' Boxes

Each coach's box shall be marked by two lines. The first is a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first- and third-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.)

2.9 Dugouts

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

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

2.10 Fences

It is highly recommended that the playing field be enclosed completely by sideline fences and a permanent home-run fence in a smooth arc of not more than 235 feet from home plate. If constructed of wood, cement or brick, it is strongly recommended that it be padded beginning no 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. If a 6-foot fence, it is highly recommended to be a minimum of 190 feet in left and right fields and 220 in center field. If a 4-foot fence, it is highly recommended to be a minimum of 210 feet in left and right fields and 230 in center field. 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.

2.11 Foul Pole

The foul pole must be a pole that extends vertically upward from the foul line at the point it intersects the home-run fence. The pole and/or the line shall be visible connecting the ground to the top of the pole. The pole should extend at least 10 feet from the ground and shall be immediately adjacent to or attached to the outside of the home-run fence.

It is recommended that screening be attached to the fair side of the pole to enhance the visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the pole. The

screening width should be at least 6 inches and should extend from the top of the fence to the top of the pole. In addition, it is recommended that the color of the foul pole should contrast with the background so it will stand out, preferably white, yellow or optic orange.

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

2.12 Home Plate

Home plate must be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable white material. The sides shall be 8-1/2 inches long, and the edge facing the pitcher shall be 17 inches wide and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long. (See diagram.)

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

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

2.13 Infield

The infield shall be level, but to allow for natural surface drainage, it is recommended that the entire playing area be graded 1 percent from the edge of the pitcher's plate to the sideline boundaries of the field.

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

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

2.14 Layout

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

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

When constructing a softball diamond, first designate a point for the rear tip of home plate. Secondly, with the aid of the above guidelines, locate the desired direction of second base. Measure 84 feet 10-1/4 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.

2.15 Lines (Markings)

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

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

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

2.15.2 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.

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

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

2.15.4 A player shall not intentionally remove any lines on the field nor intentionally cover the pitcher's or home plate. A.R. 2.15.4: Deliberately covering a line with infield material is considered removing the line.

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

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

2.16 Nonregulation Field

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

Note: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the chalked 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.

2.17 On-Deck Circle

The on-deck circles shall be two circular areas with a 2-1/2-foot radius in which the on-deck batters are restricted for warm-up swings. They are located to the side and away from home plate. (See diagram.)

2.18 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. (See diagram.)

2.19 Pitcher's Lane

The area to which the pitcher is restricted when delivering the pitch. The pitcher's lane shall be 8 feet in length extending along the outer edges of the pitcher's plate toward the inside edges of the inside front corners of the batter's boxes.

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

2.21 Runner's Lane

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.) The runner's lane should be skinned.

2.22 Scoreboard

See Games Management Rule 5.15.

2.23 Sideline Territory

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

2.24 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.

2.25 Video, Audio, Matrix Boards

See Games Management Rule 5.16 and Appendix H.

2.26 Warning Track

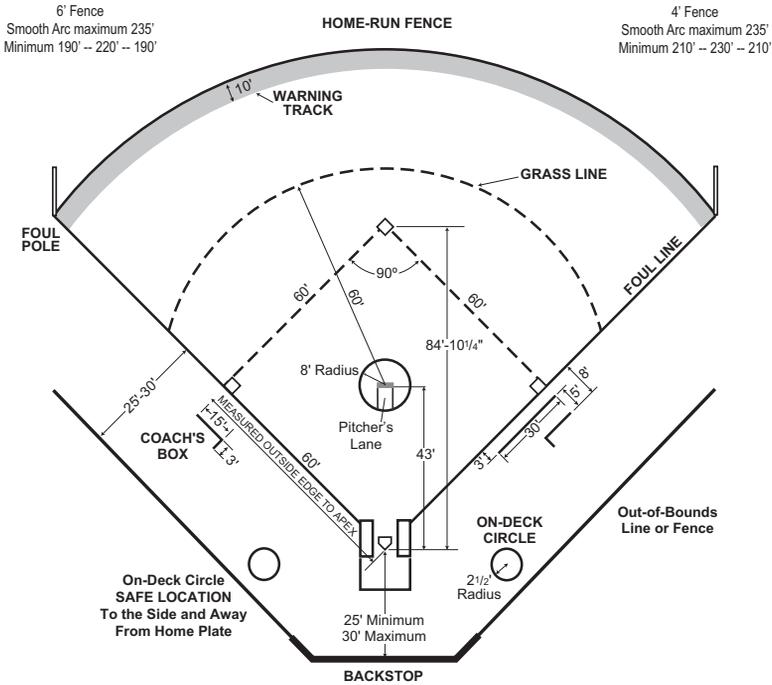
It is strongly recommended that a warning track be constructed in front of the home-run and sideline fences. The warning track should be at least 10 feet in width.

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
	4-foot fence -- 210 feet in right and left fields and 230 feet in center field
	6-foot fence -- 190 feet in right and left fields and 220 feet in center field
Foul pole*	Extend a minimum of 10 feet* above the ground; screening* attached to fair side at least 6 inches wide*
Home plate	Front edge 17 inches wide; sides are parallel to the inside lines of batter's boxes and are 8 ½ inches long; sides of the point facing the catcher are 12 inches long
Infield	Center of second base is one corner of 60-foot square and the measurement to first and third bases is to the back edge of each base; all measurements made from the apex or back point of home plate
Skinned portion*	60-foot* arc from the front center of the pitcher's plate
Lines (markings)	2 to 4 inches wide
On-deck circle	5 feet in diameter; 2½ feet in radius
Pitcher's circle	8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate
Pitcher's lane	8-foot lines drawn from the outer edges of the pitcher's plate toward the inside edges of the inside front corners of the batter's boxes
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*	A minimum of 10 feet wide*
*Recommended	

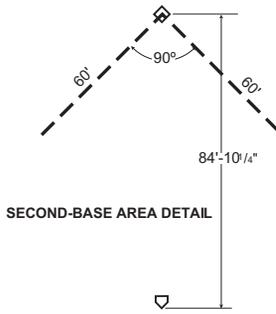
Note 1: The umpire should make every effort to obtain the correct playing-field dimensions.

Note 2: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the chalked 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.

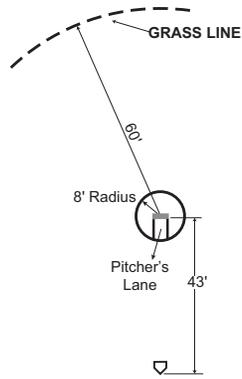
Note 3: It is recommended that a steel tape or other reliable form of measurement be used to measure distances.



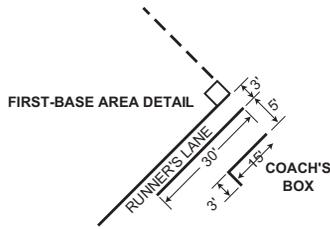
Field-marking lines must be drawn.



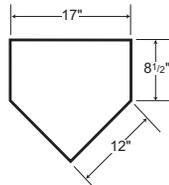
SECOND-BASE AREA DETAIL



CIRCLE AREA DETAIL



FIRST-BASE AREA DETAIL



HOME PLATE DETAIL

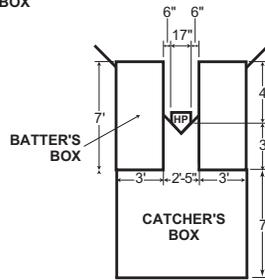


PLATE AREA DETAIL

Field-marking lines must be drawn.

RULE 3

Equipment and Uniforms

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

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

The committee reserves the right to intercede in order to maintain that integrity and to ensure a player's performance is more a product of her individual skill than of her equipment. To that end, the NCAA began conducting post-competition bat compliance testing in 2007 in an effort to gain valuable laboratory information to supplement its field study and the anecdotal information gained during play. Since that time, that program has been transformed from a narrow focus of information gathering and research orientation to a broader program, which also includes pre-competition data collection and associated consequences for noncompliance with the applicable standards.

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

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 incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident. The offending head coach may also 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.

3.2 Ball

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

Minimum circumference: 11-7/8 inches; maximum circumference: 12-1/4 inches

Minimum weight: 6-1/2 ounces; maximum weight: 7 ounces

Maximum COR (coefficient of restitution): .47

Maximum compression: 350 ±50.

Maximum dynamic stiffness: 7,500 pounds per square inch.

3.2.2 The host team shall be responsible for providing a minimum of 12 game softballs of the same specifications and manufacturer. Each game shall begin with two new game balls (one rubbed by each team, so the manufacturer's gloss is removed) and 10 additional (new or game-quality) balls.

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—No contest shall be declared. Games shall not be played with softballs that do not meet the required specifications.

Notes:

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

2. *The official game ball for the NCAA Divisions I, II and III Softball Championships is the Worth NC12L through the 2013 championships.*

3.3 Bats—Game

3.3.1 The official bat shall meet the following standards:

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

3.3.1.2 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 rattles, dents, burrs and cracks and not be altered from their certification

specifications. In regard to dents on the barrel, if the bat ring goes over the bat, it should be considered a legal bat.

- 3.3.1.4 Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read because of wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.
- 3.3.1.5 Bats shall bear the permanent ASA 2004 certification seal and be on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List as maintained on the NCAA and the SUP (www.sup.arbitersports.com) websites indicating compliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.
- 3.3.1.6 Shall not be more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight.
- 3.3.1.7 Shall not be more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/32 inch is permitted to allow for expansion.
- 3.3.1.8 Shall consist of five functional parts: knob, handle, taper, barrel and end cap.
 - 3.3.1.8.1 There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the end cap or end cap area.
 - 3.3.1.8.2 The bat shall have a safety knob of a minimum of 1/4 inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A “flare” or “cone” grip attached to the bat will be considered altered. The knob may be taped or marked for identification as long as there is no violation of this section.
 - 3.3.1.8.3 The handle is the area between the knob and taper that is covered by the grip. It must be tubular and shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The safety grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the knob. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the safety grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only. It may not exceed two layers. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral but need not be a solid layer.
 - 3.3.1.8.4 The taper is the transition area that connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. Its length and material can vary, and the taper has the fewest rule specifications. Like the barrel, it must be free of rattles, dents, burrs and cracks.
 - 3.3.1.8.5 The barrel is the intended contact area for the pitch and shall be round and smooth. If the barrel end has a knurled finish, the maximum surface roughness shall not be more than 250 micro-inches if measured by a profilometer or 4/1,000 if measured by a spectrograph.
 - 3.3.1.8.6 The end cap is a rubber, vinyl, plastic or other approved material inserted firmly, secured and permanently affixed at the barrel end of the bat so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer, without replacing, damaging or destroying it. A bat made of one-piece construction might not have an end cap.

EFFECT—(3.3.1.1 to 3.3.1.8)—See Appendix C. If a batter enters the batter’s box with an illegal bat, the bat shall be removed from the game (not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be

declared out, and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters the batter's box with an altered or nonapproved bat, or has completed her turn at bat using that bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed in addition to the batter being ejected from the game. If a nonapproved bat is detected at any time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire. *Exception:* In all cases, advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

Any bat discovered through NCAA bat compliance testing to exceed the ASA bat performance standard shall be excluded from use, and the player/team may be subject to penalties imposed by the NCAA (not umpire).

In all cases regarding possession or use of an inappropriate bat, the plate umpire shall file an incident report (See Appendix E), with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

- 3.3.2 Upon arrival to the field, each coach shall provide a printed copy of the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List available on the NCAA and SUP ArbiterSports websites as amended through communication from the NCAA relating to bats added to or scratched from the list. The list provided for each game shall indicate, via highlighting, each model bat available for play. In addition, the coach shall have entered the number of bats of each model that will be on the field or in a team area. Before the game, all discrepancies must be reconciled 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.

EFFECT—The game may not be started until the appropriate lists are presented.

- 3.3.3 The umpires shall inspect all bats listed on the team's highlighted list for legal specifications and an ASA 2004 certification seal. Bats with the seal are legal if listed on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. Bats without the ASA 2004 seal or not on the approved list shall not be legal for use.
- 3.3.4 Bats deemed inappropriate (altered, illegal or nonapproved) (pregame or during play) shall be removed from the team's possession and secured by the plate umpire from either team for the duration of the game.

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

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

In all cases, the head coach is ejected from that game. The umpire crew shall remove the bat for the game, doubleheader or tournament and file an incident report (See Appendix E) with the

NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The bat should be returned at the conclusion of the game(s).

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

A.R. 3.3.5: A dugout heater or electric blankets are used to keep the players warm. Before going on deck, each batter uses the heater to warm herself and her bat. **RULING:** Artificially warming the bats by use of the heater is illegal. Players can warm themselves without placing the bat where it could be warmed. Coaches and players are expected to abide by the rules and umpires to enforce them when they detect the violation or it is brought to their attention by the opposing team.

EFFECT—The batter (or now batter-runner if the turn at bat is completed) shall be declared out and ejected, and advance by base runners shall be nullified. In addition, the umpire crew shall remove the bat for the remainder of the game or doubleheader, return it to the coach at the conclusion of play, and file an incident report (See Appendix E) with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

3.4 Bats—Warm-Up

Nonaltered, one piece, wooden baseball or softball bats may be used in pregame warm-ups or in the on-deck circle in addition to suitable 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 (illegal, nonapproved or altered) bat or an inappropriate number of bats in the on-deck circle shall result in the equipment's removal from the game (not returned to the dugout), and the player shall be warned. Should the illegal, nonapproved or altered bat reappear in the on-deck circle, the on-deck batter shall be ejected.

3.5 Casts/Braces/Splints/Prostheses

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

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

3.6 Catcher's Equipment

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

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

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

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

3.7 Gloves/Mitts

3.7.1 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: 7.25 inches; thumb top to bottom edge: 9.25 inches; highest finger top to bottom edge: 14 inches.

The catcher may wear a leather glove or leather mitt of any dimension. Gloves/mitts worn by players may not be the color of the ball but may be any combination of other colors. The pitcher's glove and its lacing shall be tan, brown, gray, white or black, or any combination of those colors. The manufacturer's logos are not considered a glove color.

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

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

EFFECT—(3.7.1 to 3.7.2)—If noticed before a play, the umpire shall direct the fielder to remove the glove/mitt. Should the illegal glove/mitt reappear, the offending player shall be ejected.

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

3.8 Helmets

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

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

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

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

3.8.3 **Defense.** A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets must be the same color. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a nonglossy finish.

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

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

3.8.5 **Face mask.** An offensive player may wear a helmet with a commercially manufactured protective face mask attached. The face mask should meet the NOCSAE standard for the mask and helmet combination and must be permanently attached by the manufacturer or attached by a procedure approved by the manufacturer. In addition, any defensive player may wear a face mask, whether attached to a helmet or not.

3.9 Shoes

Shoes are considered equipment and are therefore not subject to the uniform logo rule. (See Rule 3.10.7.) All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats or rectangular metal spikes. Spikes must not extend in excess of 3/4-inch from the sole and may not be round. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

3.10 Uniforms

All eligible players shall be attired with uniforms (jersey, pants, shorts and socks) of the same style, color and trim. Uniform accessories (namely, foul-weather apparel, head gear, knee/shin pads, undershirts and undershorts) are optional parts of the uniform and may be of mixed styles. Uniforms, all accessories and protective equipment must be worn properly and as designed. *Exception:* A uniform part that must be changed because of saturation of blood shall not cause the player to be penalized.

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

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

- 3.10.3 **Headgear.** Visors and caps are uniform accessories, may be mixed, and must be of the same predominant color and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Plastic visors, bandannas and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear even if covered or worn under a cap or helmet. *Exception:* The catcher's headgear may be of a different color than other defenders' headgear.
- 3.10.4 **Insignias and Numbers.** Commemorative or any other special insignia/patches may be worn on the uniform as long as all teammates' uniforms are identical and embedded numbers are no larger than 1 inch. All uniform jerseys must have a whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back. The number(s) or its outline shall be of a contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. It is recommended that new 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.
- A.R. 3.10.4:** 0 and 00 are considered the same number.
- 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.
- A.R. 3.10.5:** Securing sleeves to simulate a sleeveless jersey is considered wearing the uniform improperly.
- Note: For NCAA championship play, the respective NCAA divisional softball committees may elect to create a different method to select contrasting jersey colors, provided it is formally declared before the start of the championship round.*
- 3.10.6 **Knee/shin pads.** Knee, sliding or shin pads, if worn, must all be the same color.
- 3.10.7 **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:
- 3.10.7.1 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.
- 3.10.7.2 The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including socks, warm-ups) and all other uniform accessories (for example, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors or hats) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 2-1/4 square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (for example, a patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo.
- 3.10.7.8 **Pants/shorts.** The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, but all players on the same team must be attired the same way.
- 3.10.7.9 **Undershirts/undershorts (sliders).** It is not required that players wear undershirts or undershorts, but if more than one player wears one, the apparel must be the same in color. Shirt style and sleeve length may vary.

Visible undergarments must be in solid colors and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn or slit).

EFFECT—(3.10.1-3.10.9) The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not complying with the uniform rule. Any player not correcting the uniform violation shall be ejected.

RULE 4

Game Personnel

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 his or her duties.

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, 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 (for example, media, field attendants), the ball remains live. It is not interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming.

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 No nongame personnel may intentionally interfere with a live batted or thrown ball (that is, kick or push the ball) or with a defender attempting to field a live batted ball or receive a thrown ball.

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

4.2.2 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. This excludes the batter, the on-deck batter, base runner(s), base coaches and the nine defensive players.

4.3 Base Coach

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

Notes:

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

2. *Student-athletes, unlike other base coaches, must wear a NOCSAE approved protective helmet while in the coaches' boxes. (See Rule 3.8.4.)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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; and

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

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

4.5 Medical Personnel

If, during a game, a student-athlete, coach or umpire is injured and requires medical attention, on-site medical personnel shall be responsible for treating the injured party appropriately. If he/she can be treated without undue delay, play shall be suspended until the injured party has received appropriate medical care. If the injury to a student-athlete requires extensive treatment and she can be safely removed from the playing field, an eligible substitute shall replace the injured player and play shall be resumed. In the event of either a serious injury

or an injury of unknown severity, the injured party should remain on the field until medical personnel can arrange for transportation that will not compromise the injury.

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

4.6 Official Scorer

The host team or games management director of a tournament shall designate an official scorer before each game and identify him/her to the umpires and opposing coaches. It is recommended that the official scorer be seated in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout) whenever possible. The official scorer shall rule on all scoring within the game and ensure that the home team's and visitor's scorebooks concur. For a complete listing of the official scorer's duties, see Rule 14.1.

4.7 On-Site Administrator

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

- 4.7.1.1 Determining within one hour of game time and with the assistance of participating coaches, the fitness of the field in the event of unsatisfactory weather or facility conditions;
- 4.7.1.2 Ensuring the existence of proper sporting conditions and behavior of spectators throughout competition;
- 4.7.1.3 Informing the umpire crew of severe weather conditions and providing spectators with appropriate information;
- 4.7.1.4 Making him/herself known to umpires and opposing coaches before the contest but not later than the pregame meeting;
- 4.7.1.5 Ensuring the umpires have safe passage between the field and their dressing room and/or vehicles between and after games;
- 4.7.1.6 Assisting umpires with ejections by escorting the ejected person(s) to an allowable area; (See Rule 13.1.)
- 4.7.1.7 Providing facility or dangerous situation information to umpires that leads to their consideration of calling a game; and (See Rule 6.16.3.)
- 4.7.1.8 Monitoring the audio and video board operations and abiding by the intent of these guidelines and policies, including between-inning entertainment. (See Appendix H, B5.)

EFFECT—(4.7.1.1 to 4.7.1.8)—The game should not progress until an on-site administrator is identified. The plate umpire is responsible for filing an incident report with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor if any of these duties are not carried out appropriately.

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

4.8 Public-Address Announcer

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

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

4.9 Spectators

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

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

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

4.10 Team Manager

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

4.11 Umpires

4.11.1 Game officials shall be the plate umpire and one, two or three base umpires.

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

RULE 5

Games Management and Pregame Procedures

5.1 Pregame Practice

5.1.1 **Batting.** If batting practice is desired and conditions allow, the visiting team must be allowed 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 host team. Whether the game field or alternate facilities are used, the visiting team shall be given equal access to these areas (for example, batting cages, field space) along with the use of such pitching machine(s) and machine balls, screens and tees as are available to the home team.

5.1.2 **Fielding.** If conditions allow, each team will be permitted a maximum of eight minutes of defensive warm-up on the game field. The host team shall determine which team will take pregame infield/outfield first.

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

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

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

5.2 Fitness of the Field

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

5.2.2 Should bad weather or unfit conditions exist during a game, the plate umpire shall be the final judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play. The on-site administrator shall inform the umpire crew of severe weather

conditions and provide spectators with appropriate information. See also Safety Guidelines in Appendix G.

- 5.2.3 The plate umpire of the first game shall be the final judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of the second game of a doubleheader.
- 5.2.4 Maintenance of the field before and during games shall be the responsibility of the home management. In-game field maintenance shall be at the direction of the umpire(s).
- 5.2.5 It is recommended that the home management provide a tarp for the entire infield.

5.3 Game Balls

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

5.4 Umpires' Duties

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

- 5.4.1 Before each game, the umpires shall match each bat on the field and in team areas with the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List provided by the coach, inspect the bats for grip, size, current ASA 2004 certification seal and any obvious damage. Umpires should make certain that dented, bent, altered or illegal bats are not available for use during the game (that is, not allowed in the dugout). To determine whether a bat with a dent(s) or a flat spot is legal, a bat ring must slide over the barrel without significant force.

EFFECT—See Rule 3.3 for illegal, altered or nonapproved bats.

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

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

5.5 Pregame Suggested Protocol

It is recommended that the following protocol be used:

- 5.5.1 Submit lineup;
- 5.5.2 Team infields and/or shuttle balls;
- 5.5.3 Pregame meeting;
- 5.5.4 Introductions;
- 5.5.5 National anthem (if applicable);
- 5.5.6 Pregame announcement; and
- 5.5.7 Play.

5.6 Lineup

Each team must submit a complete lineup card to the official scorer and opponent 20 minutes before game time and to the plate umpire at the pregame meeting. The following information shall be recorded on the lineup card: first and last names,

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

Notes:

- 1. Players not listed on the official lineup card are not eligible to play.*
- 2. All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*
- 3. The umpire may ask for the lineup card to be corrected before accepting it as official.*

A.R. 5.6: First names may be omitted from the written lineup as long as they are printed on the card's roster.

Exception: A team playing consecutive games on the same day shall deliver a lineup card for the succeeding game to the opposing coach and umpire not later than the pregame meeting.

5.7 Pregame Meeting

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

- 5.7.1 Identify the official scorer and his or her location, and the on-site administrator (if not previously introduced to opposing coaches and umpires).
- 5.7.2 Receive from the home team and visiting team their respective batting orders on a lineup card. The umpire shall review each team's lineup card with its coach to be sure it is complete and shall provide one last opportunity for changes without the changes being charged as substitutions. Once returned to the umpire, each team's lineup is official. In the event of a subsequent change, the plate umpire shall report the substitution(s) to the opposing team, official scorer and public-address announcer. See also Rule 5.6.

EFFECT—If the name, number or position of a player is incorrect, it is handled as an appeal play. (See Rule 7.1.1 for process and Rule 8.3 for effect.)

- 5.7.3 Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail, if agreeable with the visiting team. If the coaches do not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the umpire crew.
- 5.7.4 Review special game rules (for example, halted game, tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules or required departure time if applicable for a flight [See Rule 6.14.4 and 6.19.1.2]).
- 5.7.5 Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.
- 5.7.6 Collect a minimum of 12 game softballs, including one new ball rubbed up by each team and 10 additional balls from the host team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play.

5.8 Pregame Announcement

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

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

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

“Please be alert for batted or thrown balls that may cause injury to participants or spectators or damage to personal property. The NCAA, (home school name) and (visiting school name) thank you for your cooperation.”

5.9 Electronic Equipment Used for Scouting

5.9.1 A team may film or videotape only contests that it is playing, but may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game that is or will be televised.

5.9.2 Only nonuniformed team personnel (including players) may be outside team areas for the purpose of videotaping 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 Videotaping done by any team personnel may not be done from the team’s dugout or bullpen; however, unattended cameras may be positioned in these team areas.

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

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

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

Notes:

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

- 5.9.6 Scouting information obtained from outside the dugout involving current opponents shall not be relayed or given to anyone on the playing field, in team areas or to team personnel during the contest.
- 5.9.7 Statistical information may be entered into electronic equipment (for example, cell and smart phones, tablets, laptops) but may not be accessed or retrieved during the game.
- 5.9.8 Cell phones and pagers are not allowed on the field but may be used in team areas for purposes other than coaching or scouting except as noted in Rule 5.9.7 above. Use of a cell phone camera in a team area is prohibited from the start of the pregame meeting until the game's conclusion.

EFFECT—(5.9.1 to 5.9.8)—When brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected (if within the facility). If the head coach is not within the facility, the violator shall be ejected. In all cases, the plate umpire is responsible for filing an incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident.

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. In addition, the host shall ensure that the public-address announcement regarding sportsmanship is read, at a minimum, between the national anthem and the first pitch. (See Rule 5.8.)

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

5.11 Artificial Noisemakers Use

- 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 games management personnel. Any subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection.

- 5.11.2 The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers is prohibited while on site for competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site.

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual. Any subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection. If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning.

5.12 Authorized Personnel

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

5.13 Media

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

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

5.14 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.

5.15 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.

5.16 Video, Audio, Matrix Boards

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

EFFECT—Should any policies in Appendix H be violated, umpires have the authority to stop the game to have the matter corrected by the on-site administrator. In this case, umpires must file an incident report (Appendix E or downloaded from the NCAA website), in writing, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

RULE 6

The Game

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

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

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

6.1 Scoring of Runs

6.1.1 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.

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

A.R. 6.1.2: Bases loaded, two outs, batter earns a base on balls. Base runner from third base dawdles on her way home while the base runner from second base aggressively advances to third base, rounds the base and is tagged out. The out at third base happens before the base runner from third base touches home. **RULING:** Score the run on the live-ball award.

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

6.1.3.1 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.

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

6.1.3.3 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.

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

6.2 Game Winner

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

- 6.2.1 The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team has scored an equal number or more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- 6.2.2 The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.
- 6.2.3 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.

6.3 Starting the Game

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

6.4 Positions of the Offensive Team

The offensive team:

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

EFFECT—(6.4.3 to 6.4.5)—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject him or her. If she is an ejected player, she may remain in the dugout but may not communicate with opponents or umpires. Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field and dugout but may occupy space beyond the home-run fence or leave the facility.

6.5 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.

- 6.5.1 **Pitcher.** The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when with her hands apart, she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's plate and

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

- 6.5.2 **Catcher.** The catcher must be within the catcher's box from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. No part of the catcher's feet may be outside the lines until the pitch is released. *Exceptions:*
1. When time is granted by the umpire (no effect);
 2. When the catcher violates the time between pitches rule (See Rule 10.18);
 3. 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.
- 6.5.3 **Infielders/Outfielders.** All infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. If a fielder's feet are touching the line or are in fair territory, she is considered in the field of play.

EFFECT—(6.5.1 to 6.5.3)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

- 6.5.4 A player should not be considered to have changed defensive positions if she does not exchange her fielding position with another player but only temporarily stations herself at a different location on the field (for example, a fourth outfielder or fifth infielder).
- 6.5.5 All personnel, except the nine defensive players on the field, must remain in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is in play.

EFFECT—The umpire shall warn the violator, and if the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject him/her. If she is an ejected player, she may remain in the dugout but may not communicate with opponents or umpires. Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field and dugout but may occupy space beyond the home-run fence or leave the facility.

- 6.5.6 At the start of the game and between half innings and during pitching changes, warm-ups shall be limited to:
- 6.5.6.1 Pitching from the pitcher's circle to home plate for no more than five continuous pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base or any combination that is limited to five throws from the pitcher in a continuous manner.

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

- 6.5.6.2 Throwing and catching with one ball among not more than four players and the pitcher in the infield;
- 6.5.6.3 Throwing and catching among any number of players in the outfield; and
- 6.5.6.4 Warm-up running in the foul-territory portion of the outfield.

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

EFFECT—(6.5.6.2-6.5.6.4)—The umpire shall warn the violator and her coach for the first offense in the game. For a second offense in the same game, a ball is awarded to the batter. For a third offense in the same game, the head coach is ejected. The ejected coach must leave the playing field and dugout but may occupy space beyond the home-run fence or leave the facility.

6.6 Team First in Field

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

6.7 Live Ball

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

6.8 Delayed Dead Ball

A delayed dead ball is called under the following circumstances:

- 6.8.1 An illegal pitch (Rule 10.8).
- 6.8.2 Catcher obstruction (Rule 9.4.1).
- 6.8.3 Fielder obstruction (Rule 9.4.2).
- 6.8.4 Plate umpire interference (Rule 9.6).
- 6.8.5 Detached equipment interferes with a batted, pitched or thrown ball (Rule 9.7).
- 6.8.6 Base runner leaving a base before the release of the pitch (Rule 12.20.2).
- 6.8.7 Thrown bat endangering an umpire or player not making a play on the ball (Rule 11.22.5.3).

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

6.10 Suspension and Resumption of Play

- 6.10.1 “Time” shall be called and signaled for the purpose of suspending play. (See Rule 15.10.) The umpire holds up a hand instructing the pitcher not to pitch until the batter, catcher and umpire are ready. The ball is dead, and no

other play shall be allowed until the umpire lowers his or her hand, signifying “Play ball.”

6.10.1.1 Players and coaches will not be granted “Time” when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.

6.10.1.2 The umpire shall not call “Time” until a play has been completed.

6.10.1.3 After a base on balls, the umpire shall not call “Time” until the batter-runner has stopped at first base and each other base runner forced to advance has stopped at her next base.

6.10.2 “No pitch” shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire is suspending play.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.11 Conferences

During a charged conference, the game is delayed to allow one or more team representatives to confer with players.

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

6.11.2 If the umpire suspends play to allow team personnel to tend to an injured player, both teams may hold uncharged conferences, including with base runners, who are no longer restricted to their bases.

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

6.11.3 **Charged defensive conference.**

6.11.3.1 In the half inning, the defense is entitled to one conference. Once it is used, one additional conference is allowed for each pitcher entered into the pitching position who has not yet pitched in that inning.

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

6.11.3.3 A charged defensive conference begins when the team representative(s) delays the game or suspends play to deliver a message to the defense, and ends when the team representative(s) enters dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The umpire shall not permit more than the allowable number of defensive conferences per inning. The team representative(s) or player(s) who holds another charged conference shall be immediately ejected.

Exception: The following are not charged defensive conferences:

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

6.11.3.3.2 Requesting a suspension of play in order:

(a) To remove the pitcher from the pitching position or to make a defensive substitution, provided the umpire is informed of the change before the representative steps over the foul line or consults with any player(s) and provided the team is ready to resume play when the umpire has completed recording and announcing the substitution or, in the case of a pitching change, the pitcher has completed her warm-up pitches.

(b) To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.

(c) To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.

(d) For a defensive player to make an equipment change.

6.11.4 Charged offensive conference.

6.11.4.1 There may be only one charged offensive conference per inning.

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

6.11.4.3 A charged offensive conference begins when the team representative(s) delays the game or suspends play to deliver a message to the offense (player or coach), and ends when the team representative(s) returns to the coach's box or dead-ball territory.

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

Exception: The following are not charged offensive conferences:

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

6.11.4.3.2 Requesting a suspension of play in order:

(a) To make an offensive lineup change, provided the umpire is informed that a change will be made before any consultation with a player(s) or team personnel, and provided that the team is ready to resume play when the umpire has completed recording and announcing the substitution.

(b) To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.

(c) To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.

(d) For a batter or base runner to make an equipment change.

(e) For a base runner to put on a jacket/sweat shirt.

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

Notes:

1. If either team is charged with a conference, base runners are no longer restricted to the area near 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 inning, the head coach is ejected.

6.12 Regulation Game

6.12.1 A regulation game shall be seven innings unless:

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

6.12.1.2 The game is shortened because:

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

6.12.1.2.2 The umpire calls the game (See Rule 6.16.); or

6.12.1.2.3 The eight-run rule is invoked. (See Rule 6.13.)

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

6.12.2 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.

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

6.13 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. Any hit that results in an eight-run lead by the home team (after 4-1/2 innings) is treated as a game-ending hit. (See Rule 14.6.) 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, 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.

6.14 Tie Game (Regulation)

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

Notes:

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

6.15 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:

- 6.15.1 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.
- 6.15.2 Whether the tiebreaker procedure will be used, and when it shall be invoked, must be determined at the pregame meeting. Use of the tiebreaker also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.

6.16 Called Game

- 6.16.1 A regulation called game shall be declared by the plate umpire if, after five or more innings have been completed, he/she terminates play (for reasons such as lightning, darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the spectators or players in danger). The score shall be that of the last equal inning played, except that in the following circumstances, the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:
 - 6.16.1.1 If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in its five offensive half-innings.
 - 6.16.1.2 If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.
 - 6.16.1.3 If the home team is at bat when the game is called and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs or more runs than the visiting team scored in its half inning.
 - 6.16.1.4 If a team is ahead by eight or more runs after five innings, or if the home team is at least eight runs ahead after four and one-half innings.
- 6.16.2 The record of all individual or team actions up to the moment the game ends shall be recorded. If the scoring in an incomplete inning has no bearing on the outcome of the contest, all individual and team statistics shall be included.
- 6.16.3 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.

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

- 6.16.4 A travel policy that allows a game to conclude before its actual completion may be established by conference or tournament policy or agreed upon by opposing coaches.
- 6.16.4.1 In the event that team air travel conflicts with continued play in any game, a forfeit shall not be declared as long as a drop-dead time is communicated not later than the pregame meeting. The head coaches are required to agree on the mandatory drop-dead time and communicate it to the umpires, on-site administrator and tournament personnel if applicable.
- 6.16.4.2 The game could be a “Called Game” (See Rule 6.16), a “Halted Game” (See Rule 6.17) or “No Game” (See Rule 6.18).

6.17 Halted Game

- 6.17.1 A halted game shall be declared by the plate umpire if play must be temporarily suspended with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. Before the restart of a halted game, the plate umpire shall conduct a pregame meeting to verify the lineup information remains correct (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 halted. The lineups and batting orders of both teams must be exactly the same as they were, subject to the rules of substitution, and any player who played or was announced as a substitute before the game was halted, must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game. Every effort should be made to continue the game with the plate umpire’s lineup cards.
- 6.17.2 Whether the halted-game rule will be used must be determined at the pregame meeting. Use of the halted-game rule also can be determined by conference ruling or tournament policy.
- 6.17.3 During the regular season, if a game is both halted and regulation, regulation will take precedence assuming the reasonable efforts made to complete the game have failed.

Notes:

- 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 6.12 and 6.14) or no game (Rule 6.18), not a halted game, and may not be resumed.*
- 2. See Appendix G for Lightning Safety Standards.*

6.18 No Game

“No game” shall be declared by the umpire if he/she terminates play before five innings have been completed by each team.

Exceptions:

- 6.18.1 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.

6.18.2 Teams previously have agreed to resume a halted game.

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

6.19 Forfeited Game

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

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

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

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

Note: For Rules 6.19.1.1 to 6.19.1.3, in addition, the head coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution’s next two scheduled and played contests in the traditional season (spring).

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

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

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

6.19.1.7 If, because of the removal of players from the game by the umpire crew or for any cause, there are fewer than nine players on either team.

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

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

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

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

Notes:

1. All game umpires must concur in order to declare a game forfeited.

2. If the umpire crew declares the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game.

3. When a game is forfeited under postgame administrative actions, neither the outcome nor the statistics in any completed contest are reversible. The actual results of the game and the statistics shall be entered as such in both teams’ all-time records, the coaches’ records and in individual statistics.

4. Games later forfeited shall be denoted by an asterisk and a footnote. If such a forfeit is declared while a game is in progress, all statistics (other than won-lost records and coaches' records) are voided, unless the game has progressed to a "reasonable point of conclusion" (five innings), in which case all statistics shall count and shall be reflected in all records. The team's won-lost record shall include the forfeit, but if the statistics are voided, all averages in future rankings shall be computed without inclusion of the forfeited game.

6.20 No Contest (per NCAA Statistics Policies)

6.20.1 When a team does not appear, a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered as "no contest."

6.20.2 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.

6.21 Doubleheaders

6.21.1 The first game of a doubleheader must be completed before the second game may start.

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

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

RULE 7

Appeals and Protests

7.1 Appeals

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

7.1.1.1 Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at or overrunning first base. (See Rule 12.8.1.)

7.1.1.1.1 Must be a live-ball appeal.

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

7.1.1.2 Missing a base. (See Rules 12.22 and 12.29.)

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, whether legal or illegal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.1.1.2.7 If a base runner forced to advance (because the batter became a batter-runner) misses the base to which she was forced, that appeal is a

force out. If a base runner misses a base to which she was not forced, it is a timing play. (see Rule 7.1.5)

7.1.1.3 Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (See Rules 12.10.3 and 12.28.)

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, whether legal or illegal.

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

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

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

7.1.1.4.1 Must be a dead-ball appeal.

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

7.1.1.5 Switching base runners on occupied bases. (See Rule 12.10.5.)

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.

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

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

7.1.2.1 Live-ball appeal:

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

7.1.2.1.2 Base runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play.

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

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

7.1.2.2 Dead-ball appeal:

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

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

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

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

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

7.1.3 Appeals may be made after the third out.

A.R. 7.1.3.1: The base runner misses second base by a step but just touches the corner of third base. Even though an appeal is made at third base (the umpire called the base runner safe), an appeal may be made at second base on the same base runner.

A.R. 7.1.3.2: Bottom of the seventh inning, two outs, tie score. The batter in the sixth spot in the batting order (average hitter but slow base runner) is scheduled to bat, but the coach sends the batter in the ninth spot (fastest base runner on the team) to the plate with instructions to strike out for the third out. The defensive coach notices batting out of order, but waits to see the result of her turn at bat. **RULING:** Even though the defense got the strikeout as the third out, the team may appeal batting out of order to correct the batting order for the eighth inning when the tiebreaker was to begin.

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

7.1.4.1 She has left the field of play.

7.1.4.2 A following base runner has scored.

7.1.4.3 She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed or left before a fly ball was first touched, and “Time” has been called by the umpire.

7.1.4.4 The ball becomes dead.

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

7.1.5 With regard to the scoring of runs:

7.1.5.1 If there are sufficient outs before the appeal on a base runner so that the appeal becomes the third out, no succeeding base runner(s) shall score.

7.1.5.2 If the appeal is at a base to which the base runner was forced to advance at the time of the infraction and is the third out, no runs can score on the play.

7.1.5.3. If the appeal is the third out, and is successfully made on a base runner not forced to advance at the time of the infraction, all runs scored by base runners before the legal appeal was made, would count. *Note: If a base runner leaves a base before a fly ball is first touched and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a timing play and not a force out.*

7.1.5.4 An appeal may be made after the third out that could nullify a run.

7.1.5.5 No run is scored if a proper appeal is made on a base runner who has apparently scored if that base runner missed a base or left too soon on a caught fly ball.

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

A.R. 7.1.5.6: With one out and base runners on first and third bases, the batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each base runner leaves her base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defensive team then makes an appeal at third base before the infielders leave the infield. **RULING:** The base runner on third base will then be declared out also, and the run will not count.

7.2 Protests

7.2.1 Protests shall be allowed in the following cases:

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

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

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

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

7.2.2.1 Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.

7.2.2.2 Whether a base runner was safe or out.

7.2.2.3 Whether a pitched ball was a ball or strike.

7.2.2.4 Whether a pitch was legal or illegal.

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

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

7.2.2.7 Whether a fly was or was not caught legally.

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

7.2.2.9 Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 notify the plate umpire of his or her intent to protest before the next pitch. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:

- 7.2.5.1 After input from one coach of each team, the umpire crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site by requiring the protesting coach to identify the alleged rule violation. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rules book.
- 7.2.5.2 The protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and submit a written protest to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor or her designee.
- 7.2.5.3 If the protesting coach decides to continue the game under protest:
- 7.2.5.3.1 The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach and scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer that 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:
- The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
 - The names and contact information of the umpires and official scorer.
 - The rule and section of the official rules, or a copy of the ground rule, under which the protest is made.
 - The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.
- 7.2.5.3.3 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 72 hours, the plate umpire and the protesting coach must each complete an official protest form (See Appendix E or NCAA website) and send it to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The opposing coach may also choose to complete and send the official protest form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.
- 7.2.5.3.4 The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:
- The protest is considered to be invalid, and the game score stands as played.
 - 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.”

Notes:

1. *It is the responsibility of each conference to determine if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared “no contest.” It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*

2. *For nonconference games, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to determine if the games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared “no contest.” It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.*

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

- The same lineup card shall be used when the game is resumed, a pregame meeting shall be held to verify accuracy (such as changed

jersey numbers), and substitutions may be placed legally into the lineups at this time.

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

Note: If the ejection results in suspension, the player shall serve the suspension during the first scheduled and played game(s) after the ejection, regardless of the length of time taken to rule on the protest.

7.2.6 During play that determines an NCAA qualifier and during NCAA championship play itself, the coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his or her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:

7.2.6.1 After input from one coach of each team, the umpire crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site by requiring the protesting coach to identify the alleged rule violation. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rules book.

7.2.6.2 The protesting coach has the right to submit a written protest to a protest committee comprising the "off" umpire, the umpire in chief (if not involved with the call) and an additional member (chair) who is:

7.2.6.2.1 Predetermined by the conference for a conference championship;

7.2.6.2.2 The NCAA representative for regional play; or

7.2.6.2.3 A designated member of the softball championship committee for the NCAA national championship.

7.2.6.3 If the protesting coach proceeds with the protest:

7.2.6.3.1 The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game is being suspended pending the results of the protest.

7.2.6.3.2 The protesting coach must complete the appropriate protest form (provided in Appendix E, on the NCAA website or in the championship handbook) and state the rule in question at the time of the action or incident that caused the protest.

7.2.6.3.3 All protests must be ruled upon immediately by the protest committee. The committee shall confer with the umpires (and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, if available) before making its decision, and the protest committee chair shall make a written report to the chair of the respective softball committee and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

RULE 8

Players and Substitutes

8.1 Players on a Team

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

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

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

8.1.1.2 With a designated player—10 positions: pitcher (1), catcher (2), first baseman (3), second baseman (4), third baseman (5), shortstop (6), left fielder (7), center fielder (8), right fielder (9), designated player (DP).

EFFECT—(8.1.1.1 to 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 team of at least nine players.

8.1.2 A defensive player is entitled to change to a different defensive position at any time. The plate umpire shall report the change to the official scorer, team scorekeepers, and to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, before the next pitch.

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

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

8.2 Designated Player/Flex

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

DP (Designated Player)

8.2.1 Lineup Card

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

Flex

8.2.1 Lineup Card

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

DP (Designated Player)

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

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

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

8.2.2 Primary Role

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

8.2.3 Uncharged Substitution

The DP may go in and out of the game for any player (including the flex), at any defensive position, any time and any number of times without it counting as a substitution for anyone except the flex. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation. (See Rule 8.3.3.)

8.2.4 Charged Substitution

8.2.4.1 The DP and all players, except the flex, are charged with a substitution only when they leave the batting order. Their movement on and off the field defensively does not count but must be reported to the plate umpire.

Flex

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

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

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

8.2.2 Primary Role

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

8.2.3 Uncharged Substitution

The flex may go in and out of the DP's position in the batting order any time and any number of times. This action counts as a substitution for the DP. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation. (See Rule 8.3.3.)

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

8.2.4 Charged Substitution

8.2.4.1 The flex is charged with a substitution only when she is taken out of the defensive lineup. Movement in and out of the DP's position in the batting order does not count but must be reported to the plate umpire.

DP (Designated Player)

8.2.4.2 The DP may be substituted for at any time, either by the flex or by a pinch hitter/pinch runner off the bench. If replaced by the flex, the number of players in the game is reduced from 10 to nine. If the DP does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.

8.2.5 Re-entry

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

8.2.5.2 If the flex re-enters to play defense and the DP was playing in the field for her, the DP can:

8.2.5.2.1 Return to just playing offense for the flex;

8.2.5.2.2 Play offense for the flex and defense for another batter in the order; or

8.2.5.2.3 Leave the game and let a player come off the bench to become a substitute DP. If the flex re-enters to play offense and defense, the DP must leave the game.

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

Flex

8.2.4.2 The flex may be substituted for at any time, either by the DP or by a player off the bench. If replaced by the DP, the number of players in the game is reduced from 10 to nine. If the flex does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.

8.2.5 Re-entry

8.2.5.1 If the DP re-enters and the flex was batting in her spot, the flex can:

8.2.5.1.1 Return to the 10th position in the lineup and play defense only, anywhere on the field;

8.2.5.1.2 Leave the game and let the DP play defense for her; or

8.2.5.1.3 Leave the game and let a player come off the bench to become a substitute flex.

8.2.5.2 The starting flex, once replaced defensively, may re-enter one time. She may return to the 10th position in the lineup and play defense only, anywhere on the field; or she may assume the position in the batting order occupied by the DP or a substitute flex, and play both offense and defense.

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

DP (Designated Player)**8.2.6 Options**

- 8.2.6.1 The DP may play offense only (for the flex).
- 8.2.6.2 The DP may play both offense and defense for the flex.
- 8.2.6.2.1 The flex must leave the game, and it counts as a substitution for the flex.
- 8.2.6.2.2 It does not count as a substitution for the DP.
- 8.2.6.2.3 The number of players in the game is reduced to nine, and if the flex does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.
- 8.2.6.3 The DP may play offense for the flex and defense for another player in the batting order.
- 8.2.6.3.1 The player for whom the DP plays defense just bats/runs and is not considered to have left the game because she remains in the batting order.
- (a) The DP is now playing offense for the flex and defense for the position player.
- (b) The position player is just playing offense.
- (c) The flex is still just playing defense (batted for by the DP).
- 8.2.6.3.2 No one is charged with a substitution as no offensive player has left the batting order and the flex has not left the defensive lineup.

Flex**8.2.6 Options**

- 8.2.6.1 The flex may play defense only.
- 8.2.6.2 The flex may play both offense and defense for the DP.
- 8.2.6.2.1 The DP must leave the game, and it counts as a substitution for the DP.
- 8.2.6.2.2 It does not count as a substitution for the flex.
- 8.2.6.2.3 The number of players in the game is reduced to nine, and if the DP does not re-enter, the game may legally end with nine players.
- 8.2.6.2.4 The flex must leave the 10th position in the lineup and assume the DP's spot in the batting order.
- 8.2.6.3 The flex may play defense only, and both the DP and the flex may play defense at the same time.

DP (Designated Player)**8.2.7 Limitations**

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

Flex**8.2.7 Limitations**

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

8.3 Improper Player

8.3.1 **Batting Out of Order.** (See Rule 11.11.)

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

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

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

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

- (1) Nullify the play.** The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the infraction was reported and continues her turn at bat. Each 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 she has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:

- (1) The offending player shall be called out.
- (2) 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 she has completed her turn at bat and a pitch has been delivered to the following batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory:

- (1) The turn at bat is legal.
- (2) All runs scored and bases run shall be legal.
- (3) The lineup card shall be corrected.

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

- (1) The offending player shall be called out.
- (2) Any advance by other 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. (See also Appendix B.) The following regulations govern unreported/misreported substitutions, players, defensive changes and re-entries:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared. The unreported/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 (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory, or it is the last play of the game, and the umpires have not yet left the field.

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

misreported player with each base runner returning to the base legally occupied at the time of the last pitch.

8.3.3.5.2 The unreported/misreported player has made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) 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 (legal or illegal) has been thrown.

EFFECT—(8.3.3.5.2 to 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, delivering a pitch is considered making a play.*

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

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

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

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

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

8.3.4.1.4 A player rendered ineligible under Rule 13.1.

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

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

8.3.4.1.7 An ejected player entering or re-entering the game.

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

8.3.4.2 The following regulations govern illegal players:

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

EFFECT—The illegal player is ejected. 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 (legal or illegal).

EFFECT—The illegal player is ejected.

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

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

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

EFFECT—[8.3.4.2.3 (a) to 8.3.4.2.3 (b)]—The illegal player is called out and ejected. Any advance by the batter-runner or base runners on the pitch (legal or illegal) immediately before the report shall be nullified. Any advance on previous pitches shall be legal.

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

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

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

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

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

- (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. Any advance by other base runners is nullified.

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

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

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 (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, or the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.

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

- (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 she had before the report of the illegal player and each base runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.
- (b) The illegal player has made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown in the half inning.

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

EFFECT—[8.3.4.2.4 (b) to 8.3.4.2.4 (c)]—The player is ejected, and all play will stand.

Notes:

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

8.4 Starting Player

- 8.4.1 Once the lineup card has been reviewed and submitted to the umpire, it becomes official.
- 8.4.2 Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter the game one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order. *Exception:* The flex may re-enter either in the designated player's position in the batting order or in her original (10th, nonbatting) position in the lineup.

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 A coach of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game. Projected re-entries are not allowed.
 - 8.5.1.3 The plate umpire shall record any substitutions on the lineup card and announce immediately, or cause to be announced, any such substitutions.
 - 8.5.1.4 The plate umpire shall report the change to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, the official scorer and the public-address announcer (if applicable) before the next pitch.
 - 8.5.1.5 The substitute must take the place of the replaced player on the team's lineup card.
 - 8.5.1.6 When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game simultaneously, the coach shall immediately designate to the plate umpire the position of each in the team's batting order.
 - 8.5.1.7 The batter may be removed before having received a pitch, whether or not she has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
 - 8.5.1.8 Substitutes shall be considered officially in the game when the substitution is reported to and accepted by the plate umpire, recorded on the official lineup card and announced to the opposing coach, scorekeepers, the official scorer and the public-address announcer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.6 Re-entry

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

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

Notes:

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

RULE 9

Defense

9.1 Catch

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

For a legal catch:

- 9.1.1 A fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before stepping, touching or falling into a dead-ball area.
- 9.1.2 A fielder who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch.
- 9.1.3 A fielder does not need to re-establish herself in live-ball territory after contacting dead-ball territory before contact with the ball as long as she maintained contact with live-ball territory and is no longer in contact with dead-ball territory.

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

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

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

9.2 No Catch

A catch shall not be credited when:

- 9.2.1 A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than her hand(s) or a properly worn glove/mitt.
- 9.2.2 Immediately after a catch, the fielder collides with another player, umpire or fence, or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If equipment interferes with a batted fair ball or with a batted foul ball that, in the opinion

of the umpire, might become fair, the batter-runner and each other base runner is awarded three bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9.3 Obstruction

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

Notes:

1. *The defensive player must be in the process of catching the ball and not merely positioning, waiting for a throw to arrive.*
2. *The act may be intentional or unintentional.*
3. *Base awards should be made even after the third out of an inning and if an obstructed base runner would have scored before the third out, the run would score on the base award.*

A.R. 9.3.1: Two outs with a base runner on second base on a base hit to the outfield. The base runner is obstructed rounding third base. The ball is thrown home (even though there was no play) and on the throw, the batter-runner attempts to advance to second base but is thrown out for the third out of the inning. **RULING:** The base runner is awarded home and the run scores if the umpires judge she would have scored but for the obstruction.

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

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

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

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

Notes:

1. *If other base runners are advancing and an umpire calls “Time” after an out on an obstructed base runner (who did not reach the base she would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had she not been obstructed), the other base 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 base runner is obstructed while a batted ball is fair but subsequently becomes a foul ball, obstruction is nullified.*

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

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

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

9.3.3.2 When another violation is being played upon.

A.R. 9.3.3.2: A base runner who leaves second base too soon on a touched fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second and third bases.

RULING: If the base runner would not have returned safely to second base before the throw arrived, she would remain out.

9.3.3.3 The obstructed base runner commits an act of interference.

9.3.3.4 The obstructed base runner passes another base runner.

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

9.3.3.6 A proper appeal is made for missing a base.

A.R. 9.3.3.6: A base runner who misses a base or leaves a base before a fly ball is first touched and is obstructed while advancing would not be protected when returning to the base missed or left too soon.

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

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

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

A.R. 9.3.5.1: With R1 on first base, the batter singles to right, and the base runner attempts to advance to third base. F9 fields the ball quickly and R1, realizing she will not be safe at third base, stops and gets in a rundown. During the rundown, the batter-runner advances to second base, while R1 remains in a rundown and is eventually obstructed diving back into second base, where she is apparently tagged out. **RULING:** R1 is awarded second base on obstruction and the batter-runner first base, crediting her with a base hit.

A.R. 9.3.5.2: With R1 on first base, the batter hits a line drive that goes through the infield but R1, thinking the line drive will be caught by an infielder, attempts to dive back into first base and is obstructed. **RULING:** Award R1 second base and the batter-runner first base, crediting her with a base hit.

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

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

9.4 Types of Obstruction

Obstruction includes:

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

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

(b) If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* If the catcher steps on or in front of home plate or touches the batter or her bat while a pitched ball 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 the plate, if the catcher prevents the batter from having a reasonable opportunity to contact the pitch, the ball is dead, and the batter and all base runners 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 call "Time" and not obstruction. The pitch or swing should not be allowed since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected. Catcher's obstruction involving a batter should be called only on the batter's attempt to make contact with the pitch.

2. If an umpire requests a catcher to move farther away from the batter to avoid injury or obstruction, the catcher must comply.

9.4.2 Fielder Obstruction.

9.4.2.1 A fielder who is not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown or pitched ball, shall not impede the batter, batter-runner or base runner.

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

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

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

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

EFFECT—(9.4.2.1 to 9.4.2.5)—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

If the obstructed player safely reaches the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction or she is put out at a base

beyond the base she should have reached had there been no obstruction, no further action occurs.

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

If the obstructed player is put out before reaching the base she should have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she/they should have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other base runner forced to advance. Also see Collisions (Rule 12.14).

9.4.2.6 A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a base runner rounding or returning to a base.

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

EFFECT—(9.4.2.6-9.4.2.7)—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation of the same rule by the same individual shall result in a one-base award to the obstructed base runner and each other base runner forced to advance. The awards shall be to the base beyond the base where obstruction occurred unless the base runner safely advances farther on her own, in which case no award is given.

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other base runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, all action as a result of the batted ball stands. Once a base runner has passed a

base, she is considered to have reached that base, even if she missed it.

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

The pitch does not have to be released.

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

9.4.2.10 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).

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

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled.

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

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

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

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

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

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

9.5 Team (Offensive) Interference

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

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

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

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

9.5.3 Offensive team personnel, other than base coaches and base runner(s), shall not touch a batter or base runner(s) who is legally running the bases on a dead-ball award until the player(s) contacts home plate.

EFFECT—For a first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending team. For a second offense, the ball is dead, and the player is out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of interference.

A.R. 9.5.3: In the bottom of the seventh inning of a tie game with a base runner on second base, the batter grounds the ball to the shortstop, who throws the ball over the first baseman's head and out of play. As the base runner is rounding third base, for the walk-off winning run, the dugout clears and players slap high fives along the third-base line.

RULING: Issue a warning to the offending team.

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

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

9.6 Umpire Interference

9.6.1 Umpire interference occurs:

9.6.1.1 When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), or after passing an infielder (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 person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

EFFECT (9.6.1.1 to 9.6.1.2)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: It is not interference and the ball remains in play, if the ball:

(1) hits the umpire after passing a fielder, other than the pitcher, and no other infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play; or (2) hits the umpire after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

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

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

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

Note: It is not interference if a pitched or thrown ball strikes an umpire or if there's contact between an umpire and a fielder playing a batted ball. The ball is live, and each base 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 the head of an offensive or defensive player during the course of play.

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

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

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

EFFECT—The ball is live until it is judged by the umpire to no longer be playable, at which time it is declared dead.

A.R. 9.7.3: With two outs and base runners on first and second bases, the batter hits a hard one-hopper to the shortstop. The ball lodges in the web of the glove. **RULING:** If the glove with the ball can be tossed to the second or third baseman for a possible out, the ball is live and play allowed. If there is no play, the ball is declared dead, and base awards apply.

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

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

Notes:

1. *Calling a base runner out for removing her helmet does not affect force-play situations.*

2. *When a removed batting helmet is accidentally hit with a live ball, the ball remains in play.*

9.8 Foul Batted Blocked Ball

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

EFFECT—The ball is dead. A foul ball is called. 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 offensive equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

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

9.9.2 When it contacts loose equipment belonging to the defense.

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

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

EFFECT—(9.9.2 to 9.9.4)—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and credited with a two-base hit (double). Each runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

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.

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

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

Notes:

1. *The direction that a base runner is headed when an overthrow occurs has no bearing on the award. (A.R. 9.10.1: When an overthrow is made on a base runner returning to a base, she is awarded two bases from that base. If she was returning to first base and the throw was from the outfield, and it left the outfielder's hand before the base runner got back to first base, the base runner would be awarded third base.)*

2. *When a base runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.*

3. *If two base runners are between the same bases when an overthrown ball leaves the fielder's hand, the award is based on the position of the lead base runner (that is, two base runners between first and second bases will be awarded second and third bases; however, if two base runners are between second and third bases, both will be awarded home).*

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

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

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

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

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

9.11 Pitched Blocked Ball

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

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

9.12 Catch and Carry Blocked Ball

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

EFFECT—See Rule 12.13.

9.13 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).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RULE 10

Pitching

10.1 Defensive Positioning Required for a Legal Pitch

- 10.1.1 The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when with her hands apart, she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's plate, and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- 10.1.2 The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without being in possession of the ball, and she may not simulate the pitching position with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.
- 10.1.3 The catcher must be within the catcher's box from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. No part of the catcher's feet may be outside the lines until the pitch is released.

Exceptions:

1. When time is granted by the umpire (no effect);
 2. When the catcher violates the time between pitches rule (See Rule 10.18);
 3. 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.
- 10.1.4 All other infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released. If a fielder's feet are touching the line or are in fair territory, she is considered in the field of play.

EFFECT—(10.1.1-10.1.4)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

Pitching Procedure

10.2 Taking the Signal from the Catcher

- 10.2.1 Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following:
- 10.2.1.1 Both feet must be on the ground in contact with the pitcher's plate and a portion of the pivot foot must be on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. Any part of each foot in contact with the ground or pitcher's plate must be completely within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
 - 10.2.1.2 Hands must be separated.
 - 10.2.1.3 The ball must be held and remain in one hand, either bare or gloved.

Notes:

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

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

10.2.2 While in this position, the pitcher must take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.

EFFECT—(10.2.1 to 10.2.2)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8).

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

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

EFFECT—A ball is awarded to the batter.

10.3 Start of the Pitch

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

Pitching

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

10.4 Step/Stride

10.4.1 In the act of delivering the pitch, the pitcher must move toward home plate by pushing off the pivot foot from the pitcher's plate, taking one step/stride forward toward home plate and landing on or within the lines of the pitcher's lane.

10.4.2 A portion of the nonpivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times before beginning the forward step.

Note: If the pitcher has toed the pitcher's plate and, without stepping or sliding backward, simply drops her heel that forces her to lose contact with the pitcher's plate, there is no violation.

10.4.3 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:

10.4.3.1 The pivot foot is considered to be pushing off the pitcher's plate when the pitcher, while still in contact with the pitcher's plate, turns, twists or bends her pivot foot.

10.4.3.2 If the pivot foot has not reduced the distance to home plate.

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

10.4.4 Leaping is not allowed. The pitcher may not become airborne on the initial drive from the pitcher's plate. The pivot foot must slide/drag on the ground.

10.4.5 Crow hopping is not allowed. The pitcher may not replant, gain a second starting point and push off her pivot foot. Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may trail on the ground but may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.

EFFECT—(10.4.1 to 10.4.5)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.5 The Windup

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

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

EFFECT—(10.5.1 to 10.5.3)—Illegal pitch. (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 1-1/2 revolutions of the pitching arm may occur.
- 10.6.2 The step/stride and delivery of the ball to the batter must take place simultaneously.
- 10.6.3 The pitched ball must be released underhand.
 - 10.6.3.1 The hand must be below the hip.
 - 10.6.3.2 The wrist must not be farther from the hip than the elbow.
- 10.6.4 The release of the ball and follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- 10.6.5 The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.

EFFECT—(10.6.1 to 10.6.5)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

The Pitch

10.7 Dropped During Pitch

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

- 10.7.1 When the ball is dropped by the pitcher before her hands have come together and then separated.

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

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

EFFECT—If the batter does not have a reasonable opportunity to hit the ball, 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 ball 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—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.8 Illegal Pitch

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

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

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

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

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

(3) If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each base runner advances one base.

(4) If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each base runner advances one base.

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

10.9 Quick Pitch

A quick pitch, intended to catch the batter by surprise, shall be ruled to be “No pitch.”

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

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 A base runner is called out for leaving her base before the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.

10.10.5 The batter is hit by a pitch out of the batter’s box, assuming she did not swing or attempt to bunt.

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

10.10.6 A 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.

Regulations Governing Pitching Situations

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

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

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

EFFECT—(10.11.1 to 10.11.2)—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.12 Ball Rotation

10.12.1 A minimum of two new game balls (one rubbed up by each team, so the manufacturer’s gloss is removed) and 10 additional (new or game quality) balls are required at the start of a game. Once the game has started, additional balls must be furnished (as needed) by a host team or tournament representative. All game balls must be of the same specifications and manufacturer and meet the specifications of Rule 3.2.

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

10.12.2.1 If the pitcher does not like the ball she has, she must return it to the plate umpire before receiving a different ball.

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

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

10.13 Foreign Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher

10.13.1 Under the supervision and within view of the umpire, a resin (any drying agent) may be used on the pitcher’s hand/fingers. If foreign substances (including resin) are applied, the pitcher’s hands and fingers must be wiped off to avoid defacing the ball or transferring substances to the ball.

10.13.2 No player or other team personnel may apply moisture or a foreign substance to the ball or do anything else to deface the ball.

EFFECT—(10.13.1 to 10.13.2)—For the first offense, an illegal pitch shall be called as soon as the foreign substance touches the ball. (See Rule 10.8.) On the second offense, the pitcher shall be ejected.

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

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

10.13.5 Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard must be properly padded. In addition, any such device must be neutral in color so as not to be distracting and must function in a way that does not alter the natural motion of the pitching arm.

EFFECT—(10.13.3 to 10.13.5)—The pitcher shall remove the item upon request of the umpire or be ejected from the game.

10.14 Intentionally Pitching at a Batter or Umpire

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

EFFECT—If, in the umpire's judgment, such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall warn the pitcher, catcher and the head coach that future violations by any pitcher from his/her team will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher, catcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher and catcher without warning. The head coach of the offending team may also 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 (see Rules 13.1 and 13.5).

10.15 Intentional Base on Balls

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

EFFECT—Not delivering each pitch legally to the catcher is an illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.) Exception: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each base 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 a checked swing is appealed on a third strike.
6. When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.

7. An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

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

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

10.17 Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher's Plate

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

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

EFFECT—Illegal pitch. (See Rule 10.8.)

10.18 Time Allowed Between Pitches

The pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate and the batter in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." After both the pitcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has 10 seconds to bring her hands together. The pitcher has not more than five seconds to deliver the pitch.

EFFECT—If the batter is in violation of the timing, a strike is assessed. If the pitcher is in violation of any part of the timing sequence, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. If two minutes have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire crew in favor of the team at bat.

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

A.R. 10.18.1: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, the catcher stands up and starts out to the circle to talk to the pitcher. **RULING:** Since the umpire did not grant time, the umpire should continue the 10-second count and award a ball to the batter if the count expires.

A.R. 10.18.2: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, the pitcher steps backward off the pitcher's plate. **RULING:** Since the umpire did not grant time, the umpire should continue the 10-second count and award a ball to the batter if the count expires.

A.R. 10.18.3: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, the batter leaves the batter's box. **RULING:** Since the umpire did not grant time, the umpire should continue the 10-second count and charge a strike to the batter if the count expires.

A.R. 10.18.4: The pitcher, catcher and batter all assume their respective positions in preparation for play. For no apparent reason, one of the three aborts her position and her opponent reacts by aborting her position. **RULING:** Even though the umpire did not

originally grant time, the umpire should call “No Pitch” and direct all three to take their respective position and then restart the count.

10.19 Warm-Up Pitches Allowed

10.19.1 At the start of the game and beginning of each half-inning, the pitcher of record may throw not more than five pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base or any combination that is limited to five throws from the pitcher in a continuous manner. Play shall be suspended during this time.

10.19.2 After a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw not more than five pitches or four pitches and one throw to first base or any combination that is limited to five throws from the pitcher in a continuous manner. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher shall not be allowed warm-up pitches if returning to pitch in the same half-inning.

EFFECT—(10.19.1 to 10.19.2)—A ball shall be awarded to the next batter(s) faced for each excessive warm-up pitch/throw.

10.19.3 A player other than the pitcher of record throws a warm-up pitch.

EFFECT—For a first violation, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending coach. Subsequent violation by the same team shall result in ejection of the head coach.

10.19.4 After injury to a pitcher, the relief pitcher must be allowed adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.

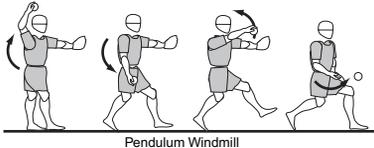
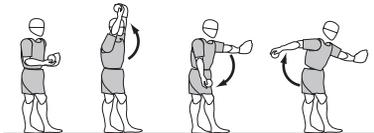
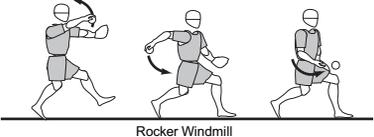
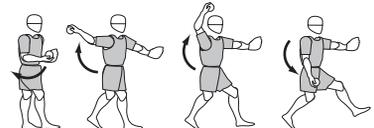
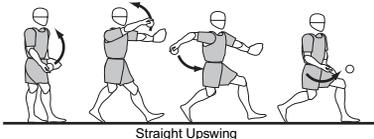
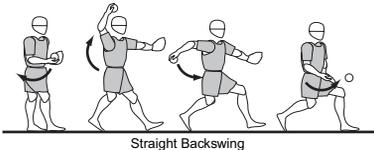
10.19.5 The pitcher shall be given adequate time to warm up after any substantial delay caused by inclement weather, injury or delayed play by the umpire.

10.20 Covering Pitcher’s Plate

A team representative or player shall not intentionally cover the pitcher’s plate or erase a line of the pitcher’s lane.

EFFECT—For a first violation in a game, a ball shall be awarded to the batter. Subsequent violation by the same team shall result in the violator’s ejection.

Legal Pitching Motions



RULE 11

Batting

Batter

The batter is entitled to one unobstructed swing at each pitch from the time it leaves the pitcher's hand until it is contacted by the catcher.

A.R. 11.0: The batter swings and misses the pitch; however, on her follow through, the pitch contacts the bat and rolls into fair territory. **RULING:** Dead ball strike. Base runners must return to their bases at the time of the pitch. If contact is intentional, the batter is declared out.

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

11.1 On-Deck Batter

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

11.1.2 The on-deck batter may have not more than two bats in the on-deck circle. The on-deck batter may loosen up with one or two official softball bats; one approved warm-up bat; or one official softball bat and one approved warm-up bat.

11.1.3 The warm-up bat used by the on-deck batter must meet the specifications of Rule 3.4.

11.1.4 The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle to take her turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

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

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

Batting

11.2 Legal Position in the Batter's Box

11.2.1 The batter must be in the batter's box and the pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch or after the umpire calls, "Play ball." After both the

pitcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has 10 seconds to bring her hands together. The pitcher has not more than five seconds to deliver the pitch.

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

11.2.2 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 call "Time" and direct the batter to get into the box. If the batter fails to comply within 10 seconds, a strike is called. No pitch has to be thrown. The ball is dead.

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

EFFECT—A strike shall be called on the batter.

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, "No pitch" is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

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

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

Notes:

1. *The batter's hands may leave the bat before bat-ball contact.*

2. In cases in which there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

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 her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. The top of the ball must be on or within the horizontal plane, and either side of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate. (See diagram at the end of this chapter.)

11.3.1.1 The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher.

11.3.1.2 The pitch shall be judged a strike or a ball in relation to the batter's natural position as the pitch crosses home plate.

11.3.2 **Called ball.** A ball is awarded to the batter:

11.3.2.1 When a legal pitch that is not struck at by the batter does not enter the strike zone on the fly, touches the ground before reaching home plate or touches home plate.

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

EFFECT—(11.3.1 to 11.3.2)—The ball is live, and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 10.8 (Illegal Pitch).

11.3.2.3 When an illegal pitch is called and either the pitch is not contacted or, if hit, the team does not elect to take the results of the play.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 10.18.

11.3.2.5 For each excessive warm-up pitch.

EFFECT—See Rule 10.19.

11.3.2.6 When the catcher fails to 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 a checked swing is appealed on a third strike.
6. When the batter is not entitled to first base but runs anyway.
7. An errant throw intended for the pitcher.

EFFECT—A ball shall be awarded to the batter, the ball is dead, and the base runner(s) may not advance. On the first offense, the offending player shall be warned. On subsequent offenses, the offender shall be ejected from the game. *Exception:* Intentionally

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

11.3.2.7 When a member of the defense intentionally removes a line.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown.

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

11.3.3.1 For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground. The top of the ball must be on and within the horizontal plane, and either side of the ball must be on or within the vertical plane of the strike zone to be a strike.

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 pitched ball that touches any part of the batter's person as she swings and misses.

11.3.3.7 For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter's person or clothing when she is in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.

11.3.3.8 For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.

EFFECT—(11.3.3.6 to 11.3.3.8)—The ball is dead, and base runners may not advance. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

11.3.3.10 When an offensive player intentionally removes a line.

EFFECT—(11.3.3.9 to 11.3.3.10)—The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown. Each base runner must remain on the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.4 Fair Ball

A fair batted ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted. (See Rule 1.40.)

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

11.5 Foul Ball

A foul fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted. (See Rule 1.51.)

11.6 Foul Tip

11.6.1 A batted ball that travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher. (See Rule 1.53.)

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

11.6.2 A base runner may advance on a foul tip without tagging. The foul tip is treated as a noncontacted pitch.

EFFECT—(11.6.1 to 11.6.2)—A strike is charged to the batter, 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.

A.R. 11.6: A ball travels directly from the bat, in a straight line, to the glove or bare hand and is deflected straight up into the air. **RULING:** If the catcher then legally catches the ball, it is a foul tip. If it is not caught by the catcher or the initial rebound is off a body part other than the catcher's glove or bare hand, it is a foul ball, not a foul tip.

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 she legally hits a fair ball.

11.7.1.3 The ball is live.

11.7.1.4 The batter is liable to be put out.

11.7.1.5 Base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

11.7.1.6 If a fair-hit ball should touch a base runner or umpire while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.

11.7.2 **Bunt.** A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat.

11.7.2.1 Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn — pulled backward away from the ball.

11.7.2.2 On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third-strike rule applies.

11.7.2.3 If, with fewer than two strikes, the batter's attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike, and the ball is dead. With two strikes, the batter is declared out, and the ball is dead.

11.7.2.4 A bunt that is caught in the air remains live and in play, regardless of the number of strikes on the batter, and whether it is fair or foul.

11.7.3 **Slap.** A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

Regulations Governing Batting

11.8 Bat

11.8.1 **Altered bat.** A batter shall not take an altered bat into the batter's box. (See Rules 1.1 and 3.3.)

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

11.8.2 **Broken bat.** When the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a base runner or a fielder, the ball remains live. It is not interference. If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

11.8.3 **Illegal bat.** A batter shall not take an illegal bat into the batter's box. (See Rules 1.59 and 3.3.)

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out, and each base runner shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (that is, not returned to the dugout). Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

11.8.4 **Nonapproved bat.** A batter shall not take a nonapproved bat into the batter's box. (See Rules 1.80 and 3.3.)

EFFECT—The ball is dead. If the batter is in the batter's box or has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and base runners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (that is, not returned to the dugout). If the nonapproved bat is discovered any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire.

Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

11.9 Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing

The effect for a batted ball that hits the batter (including her clothing and attached equipment) or hits the dirt or home plate, and then hits the batter (including her clothing and attached equipment) varies depending on the location of the batter.

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

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

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

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

11.10 Batting Order

The batting order that is delivered to the plate umpire must be followed throughout the game, except that a starting player may be replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the starting player in the batting order.

In addition, the flex may replace the designated player on offense. The first batter listed on each team's lineup card shall lead off her respective team's half of the first inning. After the first inning, the first (lead-off) batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed her full turn at bat in the preceding inning. If the third out in an inning is made before a batter completes her turn at bat, she shall be the first batter in the next inning, and she shall start with a 0-0 count.

11.11 Batting Out of Order (See also Appendix B and Rule 8.3.)

- 11.11.1 A player is batting out of order when she fails to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.
- 11.11.2 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 legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
- 11.11.3 The effect for batting out of order varies depending upon when the infraction is reported to the plate umpire.

EFFECT—(11.11.1 to 11.11.3)—If the error is reported while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter may take her place and legally assume any balls and strikes. Any runs scored or bases advanced while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal.

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

If the error is reported after the incorrect batter has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the following batter, or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory: (a) the player who should have batted is out; (b) 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 who would have come to bat had the player been put out; 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 legal or illegal pitch to the next batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory: (a) the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal; (b) all runs scored and bases run are legal; and (c) the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who batted out of order.

Notes:

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

11.12 Batting Practice

See Rule 5.1 (Pregame Practice) for specifications on batting practice.

11.13 Checked Swing

- 11.13.1 A pitched ball should be called a strike when it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.
- 11.13.2 A checked swing is ruled when the batter attempts to contact any pitch not in the strike zone but successfully aborts her attempt. If the batter is attempting to avoid being hit by a pitch rather than attempting to contact it, checked swing does not apply.
- 11.13.3 A pitched ball should be called a ball when the plate umpire is in doubt or blocked out, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.
- 11.13.4 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.

A.R. 11.13.4 With two outs and two strikes on the batter, the base runner on first base is thrown out attempting to steal second base. The defense properly appeals the checked swing so the batter is declared out on strikes. The batter becomes the third out for both scoring purposes and establishing the next batter.
- 11.13.5 If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help, the plate umpire must ask for help. If anyone else (on either offense or defense) asks for help, the umpire may (but not shall) ask for help.

Note: As a general rule, there are four factors when attempting to determine if a batter has swung at the ball or checked the swing: (1) Did she roll her wrists? (2) Did she swing through the ball and bring the bat back or draw the bat back before the pitch arrived? (3) Was the bat out in front of her body? (4) Did she make an attempt to hit/bunt/slap the pitch?

11.14 Dropped Third-Strike Rule

A dropped third strike is called;

11.14.1 When with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground.

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

11.14.2 When with two outs or fewer than two outs and first base unoccupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground.

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.

11.14.3 When the batter is entitled to attempt first base on a dropped third strike and the pitch rebounds off the catcher and rolls against the discarded bat.

EFFECT— The ball is live. The batter-runner and base runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out.

11.15 Hitting Ball a Second Time

11.15.1 The batter may not, after contacting a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

EFFECT—If the bat is still in the batter’s hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time and the batter is within the batter’s box, the ball is dead, a foul ball is ruled, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the bat is still in the batter’s hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time and the batter is out of the batter’s box, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the bat is out of the batter’s hand(s) (on the ground), the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the umpire’s judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball. If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball regardless.

If the bat is out of the batter’s hand(s) (dropped or thrown) and it hits the ball in fair territory, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each 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
Out of box	In hands	Foul (intentional)	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Fair	Live
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Foul	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Fair	Batter out

In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (intentional)	Batter out

11.15.2 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.

11.15.3 The batter may not swing and miss a pitched ball and then accidentally hit it on the follow-through or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a strike. The batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike; otherwise, she remains at bat. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

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

11.16 Hit Batter (by Pitch)

11.16.1 A batter is awarded first base when a pitched ball is entirely within the batter's box and it strikes the batter or her clothing. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required however the batter may not obviously try to get hit by the pitch (See Rule 11.16.3.1).

11.16.2 A batter is awarded first base when a pitched ball neither swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box, except as noted in Rule 11.16.3 that follows.

EFFECT— (11.16.1-11.16.2)— The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Base runners may not advance unless forced.

Notes:

- 1. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.*
- 2. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.*
- 3. If a batter swings and the ball hits her hands sending it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter. If it is strike three, the batter is out.*

11.16.3 The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:

- 11.16.3.1 The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch (which is not entirely in the batter's box) or she obviously tried to get hit by the pitch (regardless of its location).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a ball or strike (depending on its location), and the batter remains at bat, except the batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike or the batter is awarded first base if the pitch was "Ball four." Base runners advance if forced.

Note: The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter and could include a batter freezing and unable to move due to the unusual movement or speed of the pitch.

11.16.3.2 The batter is hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a strike. The batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike; otherwise, she remains at bat. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.16.3.3 The pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person as she swings and misses for a third strike.

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

11.16.3.4 The batter is hit by a pitch out of the front of the batter's box, assuming she did not swing or attempt to bunt.

EFFECT—“No Pitch.”

11.16.4 The pitcher shall not intentionally attempt to hit the batter or umpire with a pitch.

EFFECT—The umpire shall warn the pitcher, catcher, and her head coach that future violations by any pitcher from his/her team will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher, catcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher and catcher without warning. The head coach of the offending team may also be ejected at this time if the umpire believes it is appropriate. A warning may be issued to one or both teams at any time during a game if the umpire believes it to be appropriate.

11.17 Illegally Batted Ball

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter contacts the pitch and:

11.17.1 Either one or both of the batter's feet are in contact with the ground entirely outside the lines of the batter's box.

Note: In cases in which there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

11.17.2 Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate, even though she may be touching the lines of the batter's box.

EFFECT—(11.17.1 to 11.17.2)—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out immediately, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.17.3 An altered bat or nonapproved bat is used.

EFFECT—The batter shall be declared out and ejected from the game for use of an altered bat or if a nonapproved bat is detected in the batter's box or after the batter has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter. Base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game. *Exception:* Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four. If the

nonapproved bat is discovered at any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire.”

11.17.4 An illegal bat is used.

EFFECT—The batter shall be declared out. Base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game. *Exception:* Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four

11.18 Infield Fly Rule

The infield fly rule is in effect when immediately declared by the umpire because the batter hits a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second base or all three bases are occupied, and there are fewer than two outs.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if the batted ball is fair. Each 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, and the batter-runner is out, which removes all force plays, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. A base runner need not retouch her base(s).

Notes:

1. *If the ball is near the foul line, the umpire shall declare, “Infield fly, the batter is out if fair.”*
2. *The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches its highest point and based on the position of the closest infielder, regardless of who makes the play.*
3. *Any defensive player who positions herself in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule.*
4. *An outfielder may catch an infield fly in the outfield provided an infielder could have caught the ball with ordinary effort.*
5. *If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.*

11.19 Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball

11.19.1 An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball. A ball that is trapped shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

11.19.2 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 base.

EFFECT—(11.19.1 to 11.19.2)—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 11.18.) If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

11.20 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, and by the offensive team as a whole or by loose equipment that belongs to them.

As a general rule, when batter, batter-runner, on-deck batter, base runner or coach interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes dead, (2) the violator is called out, 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.

11.21 Interference by On-Deck Batter

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

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

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

11.22 Interference by Batter

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

11.22.1 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—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.

11.22.2 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 the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, 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. The ball is dead.
2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner, the base runner also is out. The ball is dead.
3. If the catcher is not making a play on a base runner but the batter or umpire interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the base runner advances safely, the umpire should call time 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 the plate.
2. If the catcher or her throw to a base hits the batter or her bat while the batter is in the batter's box, the ball is live and there is no interference unless the contact is intentional and initiated by the batter.

11.22.3 The batter, after being declared out, may not interfere with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another base runner.

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

A.R. 11.22.3: With base runners on first and third bases, the catcher attempts to pick off the base runner on first base following a called third strike. The batter, although not entitled to run, runs to first base in fair territory and prevents the first baseman from catching the throw. **RULING:** The batter is out on strikes, the base runner on third base is declared out and the base runner from first base is returned there.

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

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

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

11.22.5 The batter may not release the bat in such a manner that it:

- 11.22.5.1 Hits the catcher and prevents her from making a play.

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

- 11.22.5.2 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—(11.22.5.1-11.22.5.2)—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, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a double play, two outs may be declared.

11.22.5.3 Is thrown into fair or foul territory, whether intentional or not, and it endangers an umpire or a defensive player who is not making a play on the ball; interference shall be called.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. For a first violation, the offending team is warned. For any subsequent violation by the same team, the offended coach is given the option of 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.

11.23 Stepping Out of the Box

11.23.1 The batter shall not step from one batter’s box to the other while the pitcher is in the pitching position.

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

11.23.2 The batter shall not leave her position in the batter’s box when the pitcher is in pitching position on the pitcher’s plate unless permission is granted by the umpire.

EFFECT—The batter leaves the batter’s box at the risk of having a strike delivered, unless she requests and is granted “Time” from the plate umpire. If the plate umpire does not suspend play as requested by the batter and the pitcher legally delivers the pitch, it shall be called a ball or strike, depending upon the location of the pitch. The ball remains live.

11.23.3 Once the pitcher has taken the sign and started her windup (brought her hands together and separated them), she must deliver the pitch, and the batter shall not leave her position in the batter’s box.

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

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

If the umpire judges the batter’s action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, “No pitch” is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the warned team shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

11.23.4 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 the plate) while standing within the batter’s box.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, 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. The ball is dead.
2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher’s attempt to throw out a base runner, the base runner also is out. The ball is dead.
3. If the catcher is not making a play on a base runner but the batter or umpire interferes with the catcher’s return throw to the pitcher and the base runner advances safely, the umpire should call time and return the base runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

11.24 Batter is Out

The batter is out when:

11.24.1 The on-deck batter or any other member of the team at bat interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball.

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

11.24.2 The batter enters the batter’s box with or is discovered using an altered bat.

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

11.24.3 The batter enters the batter’s box with or is discovered using an illegal bat.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out, and each base runner shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (that is, not returned to the dugout.). *Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.*

11.24.4 The batter enters the batter’s box with or is discovered using a non-approved bat.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. If a batter enters the batter’s box or has completed her turn at bat and it is before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and base runners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (that is, not returned to the dugout.). If the nonapproved bat is discovered any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire. *Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.*

11.24.5 The offense bats out of order, and the defense challenges the action after the incorrect batter has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the incorrect batter or because of the incorrect batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, a walk, a dropped third strike or a base hit, shall be nullified. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.

11.24.6 The batter's entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box at the moment of bat-ball contact, whether the ball is fair or foul.

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

Note: In cases in which there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

11.24.7 Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate at the moment of bat-ball contact, whether the ball is fair or foul.

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

11.24.8 The batter throws the whole bat into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two base runners may be declared out.

11.24.9 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.

11.24.10 The batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory. (See Rule 11.15.)

EFFECT—If the batter is out of the batter's box and the bat is still in the batter's hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time, the ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception:* If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hand(s), a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.

If the bat is out of the batter's hand(s) (dropped or thrown) and it hits (lands on) the ball in fair territory, the ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Note: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out, and the ball is live, in play, and ruled fair or foul depending on where it comes to rest or is first touched.

11.24.11 The batter swings and misses a pitched ball and then intentionally hits it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

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

11.24.12 The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

EFFECT—If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. Base runners may tag and advance with liability to be put out.

If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

11.24.13 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.

11.24.14 A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher.

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

11.24.15 The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is occupied.

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

11.24.16 A pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person, including her hands, as she swings and misses for a third strike.

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

11.24.17 The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

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

11.24.18 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—The ball is dead, 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. The ball is dead.**

2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner, the base runner also is out. The ball is dead.
3. If the catcher is not making a play on a base runner but the batter or umpire interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and the base runner advances safely, the umpire should call time and return the base runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

11.24.19 The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

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



RULE 12

Base Running

Batter-Runner

12.1 Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner

The batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out:

12.1.1 When with two outs or fewer than two outs and first base unoccupied, the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground. (See Rule 11.14.)

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base is occupied, the batter is automatically out, the ball is live, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.1.2 After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.

12.1.3 When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).

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

12.1.4 When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner or an umpire after passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.1.1 to 12.1.4)—The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

12.1.5 When awarded a base.

EFFECT—See Rule 12.3.

12.2 Interference by Batter-Runner

12.2.1 The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory. For example:

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

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

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

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

Exceptions:

1. If the bat is out of the batter's hands (on the ground), the ball rolls against the bat, and in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live, no one is out for interference, and base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.
 - (a) If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, it remains live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball.
 - (b) If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
2. If the batter, after contacting a fair ball, is still holding the bat in her hand(s) and is still within the batter's box when she contacts the ball a second time in fair territory, a foul ball is ruled, the ball is dead, and each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.2.1.3 The batter may not throw the whole bat into fair territory and thereby interfere with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

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

Notes:

1. If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a base runner or a fielder, the ball remains live, and there is no interference.
2. If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
3. If the batter simply drops her bat and the catcher trips over it, no interference is called.

12.2.2 The batter-runner shall not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. For example:

12.2.2.1 The batter-runner may not make contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base.

12.2.2.2 The batter-runner may not intentionally make contact with a ball in foul territory.

12.2.2.3 The batter-runner may not make contact with a foul ball that, in the umpire's judgment, might become fair.

12.2.3 The batter-runner may not interfere with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike.

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

A.R. 12.2.3: The batter-runner unintentionally kicks the ball that had deflected off the catcher who attempted to field a dropped third strike. **RULING:** Live ball, no interference.

12.2.4 The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder's attempt to throw or to receive a thrown ball. For example:

12.2.4.1 The batter-runner may not slide into first base to interfere with the play whether on her or another base runner.

12.2.4.2 The batter-runner may not run outside the base runner's lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. *Exception:* The batter-runner may run outside the base runner's lane: (a) if she has not yet reached the start of the runner's lane; (b) to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball; or (c) if she leaves the lane on her last stride in order to touch first base.

Note:

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 completely outside either line and in contact with the ground.*

12.2.5 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—(12.2.2 to 12.2.5)—The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and each base runner must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

12.2.6 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 the plate are both out. Each other base runner must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.3 Base Awards

In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for a base-running violation.

12.3.1 Offensive team personnel, other than base coaches and base runners, shall not touch a batter or base runner(s) legally running the bases on a dead-ball base award until the player(s) contacts home plate.

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

A.R. 12.3.1 In the bottom of the seventh inning of a tie game with a base runner on second base, the batter grounds the ball to the shortstop, who throws the ball over the first baseman's head and out of play. As the base runner is rounding third base for the walk-off winning run, the dugout clears and players slap high fives along the third-base line. **RULING:** For a first offense in a game, the umpire shall issue a warning to the

offending team. For a second offense, the ball is dead, and the player is out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.3.2 **First base.** The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

12.3.2.1 After “Ball four.”

EFFECT—The ball is live unless blocked. The batter may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.3.2.2 After catcher obstruction. (See Rule 9.4.1 for details and effect.)

12.3.2.3 After being hit by a pitch. (See Rule 11.16 for details and effect.)

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

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

EFFECT—(12.3.2.4 to 12.3.2.5)—The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.3.2.6 When a base runner intentionally kicks the ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and the base runner is out. Each other base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.3.2.7 When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher) who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.3.2.8 When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.3.2.7 to 12.3.2.8)—In general, the ball is dead, and the batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.

If off base when struck by a fair ball, the base runner is out, and each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base she legally touched at the time of the interference. If forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. The ball is dead.

If on base when struck by a fair ball, the base runner is not out. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder

closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is live. If the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If unforced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.3.3 **Second base.** The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:

12.3.3.1 When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.

12.3.3.2 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.

12.3.3.3 When a fair batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.

12.3.3.4 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.

12.3.3.5 When a fair batted ball deflects off a fence and then off a fielder before going over the home-run fence.

EFFECT—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.

12.3.4 **Third base.** The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:

12.3.4.1 When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

12.3.4.2 When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, might become fair.

EFFECT—(12.3.4.1 to 12.3.4.2)—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.

12.3.5 **Home plate.** The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:

12.3.5.1 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 even if the ball is deflected by a fielder.

12.3.5.2 When a fair batted fly ball is deflected by a fielder or fielders over the home-run fence in fair territory.

12.3.5.3 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—(12.3.4.5.1 to 12.3.4.5.3)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.

12.3.6 Judged bases. A batter, batter-runner or base runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:

12.3.6.1 When a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes her.

EFFECT—See Rule 9.4.2 and 12.16.

12.3.6.2 When a spectator reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator, except that a fielder may reach into the stands or over a fence to attempt to catch a batted fly ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 4.9.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 9.7.2.

12.3.6.4. When an umpire suspends play to protect a player who was seriously injured.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter, batter-runner and base runners are awarded the appropriate bases.

12.3.7 Two bases. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

12.4 Batter-Runner Is Out

The batter-runner is out:

12.4.1 When she hits a fair ball and is legally put out before reaching first base.

EFFECT—The ball is live. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.

12.4.2 When she hits a fair or foul ball, other than a foul tip, and it is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

12.4.3 When she is legally put out before reaching first base when the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.

Note: When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base is occupied, the batter is automatically out.

EFFECT—(12.4.2 to 12.4.3)—The ball is live. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.4.4 When she does not proceed to first base after a fair batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.4.5 When she does not proceed to first base after:

12.4.5.1 A base on balls.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.4.5.2 Being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary medical treatment.) Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.4.5.3 Catcher obstruction. (See Rule 9.4.1.)

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each base runner may advance only if forced.

12.4.6 When, after reaching a base safely, a batter-runner or base runner(s) abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout (for example, believing she was put out), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—The ball is live, the batter-runner or base runner(s) is out, and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.4.7 When she hits an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect. (See infield fly rule, Rule 11.18.)

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if the batted ball is fair. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out after the ball is caught. Each base runner may tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (before it is caught), the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is dropped intentionally or allowed to fall untouched, the ball is live, the batter-runner is out, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out. A base runner need not retouch her base(s).

12.4.8 When either of her feet is completely outside the runner's lane, in contact with the ground, and, in the judgment of the umpire, she interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. *Exception:* She may run outside the runner's lane: (a) if she has not yet reached the start of the runner's lane; (b) to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball; (c) or if she leaves the lane on her last stride in order to touch first base.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.4.9 When with fewer than two outs and first base, first and second bases, first and third bases, or first, second and third bases occupied, an infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive that could have been caught with ordinary effort.

Note: An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped. A ball that has been guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: The batter is not out when the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it takes precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

12.4.10 When she runs the bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

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

12.4.11 When she steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the pitch.

12.4.12 When she interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out.

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

12.4.13 When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box, makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base or interferes with a dropped third strike.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the base runner being played on also shall be called out.

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

12.4.14 When the immediate preceding base runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play.

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

12.4.15 When, after hitting a home run, providing her team previously was warned for a first offense, the individual is touched by any member of the offensive team other than the base coaches, before touching home plate.

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

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

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

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

Base Runner(s)

12.5 Base Runner May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out

A base runner may advance with liability to be put out:

12.5.1 When a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand (whether pitched or dropped).

12.5.2 After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.

12.5.3 After a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).

12.5.4 After a fair batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a base runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

12.5.5 When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.

12.5.6 When a pitched or thrown ball hits an umpire.

12.5.7 When a pitched or thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.

12.5.8 When a foul tip is legally caught.

Note: No tag-up is necessary.

12.5.9 When a base runner is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.

12.5.10 When a ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.

EFFECT—(12.5.1 to 12.5.10)—The ball is live.

12.6 Interference During Award

Offensive team personnel, other than base coaches and base runners, shall not touch a batter or base runner(s) who is legally running the bases on a dead-ball base award until the player(s) contacts home plate.

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

A.R. 12.6: In the bottom of the seventh inning of a tie game with a base runner on second base, the batter grounds the ball to the shortstop, who throws the ball over the first baseman's head and out of play. As the base runner is rounding third base, for the walk-off winning run, the dugout clears and players slap high fives along the third-base line. Earlier in the game, the team was warned for the same offense although it was following an out-of-the-park home run. **RULING:** The base runner is out and credited with having attained third base. The batter-runner is awarded second base on the error.

12.7 Awards

In general, an offensive player who is entitled to advance because of a base award is not in jeopardy of being put out. However, upon proper appeal by the defense, she may be called out for base-running violations.

In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

12.7.1 One base. A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:

12.7.1.1 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.

12.7.1.2 When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, provided the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Each base runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is awarded a ball. If the pitch is “Ball four” or the batter is hit by the illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base.

12.7.1.3 When a pitched ball is blocked (that is, it lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball. Each base runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.7.1.4 When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory (“catch and carry”).

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.

12.7.1.5 When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters dead-ball territory or becomes blocked.

12.7.1.6 When a fielder legally catches the ball but it falls into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—(12.7.1.5-12.7.1.6)—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked.

12.7.2 **Two bases.** A base runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

12.7.2.1 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.

12.7.2.2 When a fair ball deflects off a defensive player and enters dead-ball territory.

12.7.2.3 When a fair ball deflects off a base runner or umpire and enters dead-ball territory after having passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), provided no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.7.2.2 to 12.7.2.3)—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.

12.7.2.4 When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two base runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead base runner.

Exceptions:

1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters dead-ball territory or becomes blocked, each base runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball became blocked.

Note: If a base runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.

2. If the ball becomes blocked because of offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead, and each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, the base runner being played on is called out. (If this player has scored before the blocked ball was ruled, the base runner closest to home is called out.)

12.7.2.5 If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. Each base runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.

12.7.3 **Two or three bases.** (See Rule 9.4.3 for details and effect.)

12.7.4 **Home plate.** A base runner is entitled to advance to home plate with no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three- or four-base award to the batter.

12.7.5 **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or base runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:

12.7.5.1 When a fielder not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or impedes her.

EFFECT—See Rule 9.4.2 and 12.16.

Notes:

1. *Base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.*

2. *An obstructed base runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed. For exceptions, see Rule 9.3.3.*

12.7.5.2 When a spectator(s) reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator, except that a fielder may reach into the stands or over a fence to attempt to catch a batted fly ball.

EFFECT—See Rule 4.9.

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

EFFECT—See Rule 9.7.2.

12.7.5.4 When an umpire suspends play to protect a player who was seriously injured.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter, batter-runner and base runners are awarded the appropriate bases.

12.8 Base Runner Forfeits Exemption From Liability to Be Put Out

A base runner forfeits exemption from liability to be out:

12.8.1 If, after making the turn at or overrunning first base, the batter-runner feints or attempts to continue to second base.

12.8.2 If, after dislodging a base, the base runner attempts to reach the next base.

12.8.3 If, while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the base runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base. If the base runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other base runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out. A base runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if she is standing on a base beyond the base she missed or left too soon when “Time” has been called.

Note: If the base runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base missed or left too soon, she can continue.

- 12.8.4 If the ball is live and a base runner, after reaching an awarded base, attempts to advance farther.
- 12.8.5 If the ball is live and a base runner, after reaching base safely, abandons her base (for example, obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another batter-runner was put out to end the inning).

12.9 Base Runner Is Out

The base runner is out:

- 12.9.1 When, on a force play, a fielder:
- 12.9.1.1 Contacts the base while having and maintaining possession of the ball;
 - 12.9.1.2 Touches the ball to the base; or
 - 12.9.1.3 Tags the base runner before she reaches the base.
- 12.9.2 If the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

Exceptions:

1. When a base runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the base runner, and the ball is live. The base runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Other base runners may advance with liability to be put out.
 2. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides may immediately return without liability to be put out, provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second base.
 3. When a base runner reaches a base safely but the tag is applied with excessive force that causes the runner to lose contact with the base.
- 12.9.3 When she physically passes (that is, completely overtakes) a preceding base runner before that base runner has been put out, unless the passed base runner was obstructed.

Notes:

1. *If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding base runner would count.*
2. *Base runners are returned to proper order as soon as the ball is declared dead.*

A.R. 12.9.3: With fewer than two outs, a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding base runner. **Ruling:** The batter is out, but all preceding base runners score. With two outs, only those preceding base runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. This is a timing play, not an appeal play.

- 12.9.4 When, after play has resumed, she fails to return to touch the base she previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.
- 12.9.5 When a coach or anyone other than another base runner who has not yet crossed the plate physically assists her while she is actively running the bases and the ball is in play.

12.9.6 When she is running to any base in regular or reverse order, and she attempts to avoid or delay a tag by running out of the basepath.

EFFECT—(12.9.1 to 12.9.6)—The ball is live. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

Exception: It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the base runner's proper path, and the base runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

12.9.7 When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the base runner is put out, the base runner being played on shall also be called out.

Notes:

1. *If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make a play, the base runner will be ruled out if she intentionally interferes with the second fielder.*

2. *If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play, and only that fielder is protected from interference by the base runner. The base runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the base runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made a play.*

12.9.8 When she is struck with a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If two base runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first base runner is out. If the base runner is off a base and hit by an infield fly, both the base runner and the batter are out. If the base runner is touching a base when hit by an infield fly, she is not out.

12.9.9 When the umpire rules intentional interference (with the ball or fielder making the play) as she is struck by a batted ball while in contact with a base.

12.9.10 When she intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—(12.9.9 to 12.9.10)—The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.9.11 When, after being declared out or after scoring, a base runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another base runner.

12.9.12 When a coach, while in the coach's box, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a base runner.

Note: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live and in play.

12.9.13 When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and draws a throw to home plate.

EFFECT—(12.9.11 to 12.9.13)—The ball is dead. The base runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.9.14 When a defensive player has the ball, and the base runner remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player.

Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall also be ejected. (See Rule 12.14)

12.9.15 When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a base runner is advancing, confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

Note: Members of a team include all people authorized to be in the team's dugout.

EFFECT—(12.9.14 to 12.9.15)—The ball is dead. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.9.16 When she leaves the base she is occupying before the pitch is released.

12.9.17 When she is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, she fails to immediately return to her base or attempt to advance to the next base.

12.9.18 When, once she returns to a base for any reason, she leaves the base, unless:

12.9.18.1 A play is made on her or another base runner;

12.9.18.2 The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle; or

12.9.18.3 The pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

EFFECT—(12.9.16 to 12.9.18)—The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

12.9.19 When, after reaching a base safely, she abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, believing she was put out or that another base runner or the batter-runner was put out to end the inning.

12.9.20 When she uses a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

EFFECT—(12.9.19 to 12.9.20)—The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.

12.10 Base Runner Is Out After a Proper Appeal

The base runner is out after a proper appeal:

12.10.1 When she fails to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the base runner or the missed base may be tagged.

Note: No base runner may return to touch a missed base after a trailing base runner has scored or after leaving the field of play.

12.10.2 When she fails to retouch her base before a fielder tags her or the base, after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.

12.10.3 When she leaves her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball first touches the fielder. Either the base runner or the base may be tagged.

Notes:

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

2. *No base runner may return to touch a base that she left too soon if she has left the field of play or if a trailing base runner has scored.*

12.10.4 When she legally overruns first base, but attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.

12.10.5 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.

A.R. 12.10: After a conference with the bases loaded and no outs, the base runner from third base returns to her base but the base runners from second and first bases switch places. The base runner from third base scores on a sacrifice fly (first out) and then the defense appeals switching bases at second and first bases. **RULING:** The run does not score as the second and third outs are made on the appeal. (Note: Both players and the head coach are also ejected.)

12.11 Base Runner Is Not Out

The base runner is not out in the following situations that result in a dead ball:

12.11.1 When she is hit with a fair batted ball over foul territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.11.2 When she is hit by a batted ball while touching her base, unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.

The base runner is not out in the following live ball situations:

12.11.3 When she is hit with a fair, batted ball that has passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), and, in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.11.4 When she is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.

- 12.11.5 When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- 12.11.6 When she fails to return to a base at the end of playing action because she is not given sufficient time. She will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. "No pitch" will be called by the umpire.
- 12.11.7 When she keeps contact with her base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- 12.11.8 When she has legally started to advance. She may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, nor by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.
- 12.11.9 When she does not run in a direct line to a base, provided a fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
- 12.11.10 When she runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
- 12.11.11 When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the base runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made a play.
- 12.11.12 When she slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the base runner.
- 12.11.13 When she is touched while off a base:
 - 12.11.13.1 With a ball not securely held by a fielder.
 - 12.11.13.2 With a hand or glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player's other hand.
- 12.11.14 When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
- 12.11.15 When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or base runner while using an illegal glove/mitt.
- 12.11.16 When she returns to a base left too soon or missed before an appeal is made, or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

Regulations Governing Base Running

12.12 Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases

No batter-runner or base runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

- 12.12.1 Not proceeding to first base after a fair batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- 12.12.2 Not proceeding to first base after a base on balls.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.12.3 Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary medical treatment.) Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced.

12.12.4 Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction. (See Rule 9.4.1.)

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the coach elects to take the result of the play, the batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play, and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each base runner may advance only if forced.

12.12.5 After reaching a base safely, obviously heading toward her position or the dugout (for example, believing she was put out, the batted ball was foul, etc.), or leaving the field of play for any reason.

EFFECT—The ball is live. The batter-runner or base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.13 Catch and Carry

A fielder may not catch or field a live ball and carry it into dead-ball territory.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The batter and each 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 base 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 (out-of-play) territory, the line is considered in play.*

2. *If a fielder's foot is touching the line or is in live-ball territory, she is considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball with no effect.*

3. *If a fielder's entire foot or the entire portion of the foot that is in contact with the ground is beyond the line and touching dead-ball territory at the time she catches, fields or throws the ball, she has entered dead-ball territory, the ball is dead and no play is allowed.*

4. *If a fielder has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, she legally may catch, field or throw the ball until and unless her entire foot contacts the ground in dead-ball territory, at which time the ball becomes dead and no play is allowed.*

5. If a fielder contacts dead-ball territory with any part of her body, including her entire foot or the entire portion of her foot that is in contact with the ground, she is considered out-of-play. No play is allowed.

12.14 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 base runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions, whenever possible.

12.14.1 A defensive player shall not block the base, plate or baseline without possession of the ball or not in the immediate act of catching the ball.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. Obstruction is called and the base runner is declared safe. Each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. Exception: If the base runner collides flagrantly, the ball is dead, and although the base runner is declared safe on the obstruction call, the player is ejected.

12.14.2 In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a base runner, the base runner must be called out if she remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the base runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the runner's lane, the base runner would be called out) or return to the previous base touched.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The base runner is called out for deliberately crashing into a fielder, even if the ball is dislodged. If the base runner deliberately crashed into a fielder holding the ball before she was put out and, in the umpire's judgment, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the offender and player being played on shall both be declared out. If the deliberate crash occurs after the base runner was called out, the base runner closest to home plate will also be declared out. If an obstructed base runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the base runner will be called out.

Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected.

12.14.3 Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

Note: If both the fielder and base runner are within their legal rights, neither player shall be penalized for the incidental contact.

A.R. 12.14.3.1: The right-handed batter who lays down a bunt in front of home plate is on a collision course with the catcher if she runs in a direct line to first base. Each player at this point is within legal rights—the batter taking a path in a direct line to first base, and the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball. The questions that have to be answered are: (1) Did the batter alter direction in any way and draw contact in an attempt to receive an obstruction call? (2) Did the catcher alter her attempt to field the ball in any way so as to draw an interference call? and (3) Could the catcher actually make an out on the play?

A.R. 12.14.3.2: The batter-runner collides with the first baseman who is attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line (toward home plate). The base runner has a right to the baseline in this case, and the first baseman has the right to field an errant thrown ball. This is the result of the “normal” flow of the game, and the play should be ruled incidental contact with no effect.

12.14.4 The base 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).

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The base runner is out for unsporting conduct.

12.15 Dislodged Base

12.15.1 When a base runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing base 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 base runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the base runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.15.2 Each base runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs.

12.15.3 At the conclusion of play, “Time” shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

12.16 Fake Tag

A fake tag occurs when a fielder who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball, obstructs a base runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag, which causes the base runner to slow down or stop. A fielder may not fake a tag on a base runner advancing or returning to a base.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or base runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other base runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had there been no obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other base runner forced to advance.

12.17 Hit by a Batted Ball

An umpire or base runner is considered hit by a batted ball when the ball contacts his or her person, attached equipment or clothing:

12.17.1 When an umpire, or a base runner not in contact with a base, is struck by a fair batted ball after it has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.17.2 When an umpire, or a base runner not in contact with a base, is unavoidably struck by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by a fielder (including the pitcher), and no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—(12.17.1 to 12.17.2)—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, whether forced or not.

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

12.17.3 When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base, she is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or the fielder making a play. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.

EFFECT—If the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out. If the closest defensive player is behind the base that the base runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, and credited with a base hit, and each other base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the base runner are out. Each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the interference.

12.17.4 When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and:

12.17.4.1 Before the ball touches an infielder, including the pitcher;

12.17.4.2 Before the ball passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play; or

12.17.4.3 After passing an infielder, including the pitcher, and another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—Base runner interference.

The ball is dead, and the base runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. Each base runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

If two base runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first base runner is out.

If the base runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the base runner and the batter are out. If the base runner is touching a base when struck by an infield fly, she is not out.

12.17.5 When a base runner intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, and the base runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each base

runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

12.17.6 When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball over foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is live and in play. The base runner who was struck and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

12.18 Illegal Glove/Mitt Used to Make a Play on Batter, Batter-Runner or Base Runner

A fielder shall not make a play on a batter, batter-runner or base runner while using an illegal glove or mitt.

EFFECT—The coach of the offended team shall have the option to:

- a. Nullify the entire play.
 1. The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the pitch and continues her turn at bat.
 2. Each base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
- b. Take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.
- c. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair batted fly ball that, in the umpire's judgment, would have cleared the home-run fence, the batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate. The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment that is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

Note: If the illegal glove/mitt does not meet specifications (See Rule 3.7.), it shall be removed from the game (that is, not returned to the dugout).

12.19 Interference

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

As a general rule, when on-deck batter, batter, batter-runner, base runner or coach interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes dead, (2) the violator is called out, 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 with a batted ball, the batter-runner is awarded first base. If the official scorer judges the batted ball would have been a hit, the batter is credited with a base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice.

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

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

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

- 12.19.1.4.1 When the defensive player, while watching the flight of a ball, bumps a base runner who is standing on a base and fails to make a catch on a catchable ball, the base runner shall not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional. A base runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the base runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. This is an exception to the rule that defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field without being hindered.
- 12.19.1.4.2 Merely running in front of the fielder or jumping over the ball while proceeding to the next base is not interference, even though it may be distracting to the fielder or screen her view of the ball. The base runner may not at any time unnecessarily wave her arms or verbally distract the fielder.
- 12.19.1.4.3 It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to make a play, and the base runner contacts the fielder. *Exception:* If the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and base runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact, interference or obstruction.
- 12.19.1.4.4 If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the base runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball, and that fielder only is entitled to protection.
- 12.19.1.4.5 Interference occurs when the ball ricochets off one defensive player, and another player still has the opportunity to make a play, but the base runner intentionally interferes with the second fielder.

EFFECT—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 base hit, but if not, it is scored as a fielder's choice. The offending base runner is out. If forced (by the batter-runner being awarded first base), 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.

Exceptions:

1. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the base runner is put out, the base runner being played on also shall be called out.
2. If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fly ball, the batter is also out.

12.19.1.5 Physical contact by the base runner with a fielder attempting to field a foul batted fly ball shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, a foul ball is charged to the batter and the offending 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.

12.19.2 The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.

12.19.3 The base runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball.

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

EFFECT—(12.19.2 to 12.19.3)—The ball is dead. The offending base runner is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. 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.

12.19.4 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 base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

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

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

A.R. 12.19.5: Base runners are on first and third bases with one out. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop, who throws to second base for the second out. During the attempt to throw out the batter-runner, the base runner who started on first base interferes with the throw. Meanwhile, the base runner on third base has crossed home plate (before the interference). **RULING:** On the interference, the base runner closest to home is called out (the batter-runner). Since the batter-runner is the third out, the run does not score.

12.19.6 A base runner may not remain on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. (See Collisions, Rule 12.14.)

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

Exceptions:

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

Notes:

1. *In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the base runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (within three feet), or return to the previous base touched.*

2. *Should an act of interference (offensive) occur after any obstruction (defensive), enforcement of the interference penalty would take precedence provided both violations involve the same base runner. For example, if an obstructed base runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the base runner will be called out for interference.*

12.19.7 It is not interference, and the base runner is not out:

- 12.19.7.1 When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the base runner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made a play.
- 12.19.7.2 When the base runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher) and, in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play. When said ball contacts the base runner while still in flight, it shall be considered a ground ball; it cannot be caught as a fly ball.
- 12.19.7.3 When the base runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.
- 12.19.7.4 When a batted ball is misplayed, the ball bounds away or past the fielder, and then the fielder and base runner collide. This is considered inadvertent contact.

12.19.7.5 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 base runner or a fielder.

12.19.7.6 When the base runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball (that has not touched or passed a base) while standing in foul territory and no infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

12.19.7.7 When a fielder fields a ground ball and attempts to tag the base runner who crashes into her causing the ball to come loose.

Note: It is not interference because the fielder is no longer fielding the ball.

12.19.7.8 When a fielder is standing watching the ball roll near the foul line and the batter-runner or base runner makes incidental contact, the fielder is not protected as she is not fielding the ball.

EFFECT—(12.19.7.1-12.19.7.8)—The ball is live, and all base runners (including the batter-runner) may advance with liability to be put out.

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

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

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

The ball is dead if the closest defensive player is behind the base. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. If forced, each 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.

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.

12.20 Leaving A Base

12.20.1 A batter-runner or base runner may not leave the base she attained at the conclusion of play once the ball is in the pitcher's possession in the pitcher's circle.

EFFECT—The ball is dead. The violator is called out at the moment she loses contact with the base. Exceptions: (1) a play is made on her or another base runner, or (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle. (See Rule 12.21)

12.20.2 A base runner may not leave the base she attained until the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with her base at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. *Exception:* When the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a base runner to return to a base, the base runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

EFFECT—Delayed dead ball is signaled. At the conclusion of the play, the coach of the defensive team shall have the option of 1) taking the result of the play or 2) “No pitch” is declared, the batter is returned to the batter’s box and the offending base runner is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

Notes:

1. *In determining the result of play, ignore the leaving early violation and apply the effects for any other rule violations in the order in which they occurred. That end result becomes the first option.*

2. *The second option is the traditional effect for the leaving early violation and is applied with no regard for any action that follows the pitcher’s windup.*

12.21 Look-Back Rule

12.21.1 The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base, there are one or more base runners, and the pitcher has possession (for example, has the ball in her hand or glove, under her arm or chin, or between her legs) and control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher’s circle when both her feet are within the circle or on the lines.

12.21.2 When a base runner is legally off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat and she is in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher’s circle, the base runner may continue moving forward in the direction she is going without stopping; or she may immediately and directly go back in the other direction. If the base runner is stopped as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher’s circle, the base runner must immediately and directly go forward or back. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a base hit as long as the batter-runner continues past first base.

12.21.3 Once the base runner has determined a direction, she may not reverse direction unless the pitcher:

12.21.3.1 Throws the ball from within the pitcher’s circle.

12.21.3.2 Carries the ball outside the pitcher’s circle.

12.21.3.3 Has one foot completely outside the pitcher’s circle, on the ground, and is in possession of the ball.

12.21.3.4 Sets the ball on the ground or no longer has the ball in her possession.

12.21.3.5 Loses possession of the ball, including handing it to another player.

12.21.3.6 Makes a play on the base runner or another base runner.

Note: When the pitcher’s circle is not visible, the umpire must use good judgment.

12.21.4 The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

12.21.4.1 She fakes a throw.

Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher’s arm moves forward.

12.21.4.2 She makes any aggressive body movement toward the base runner (for example, steps toward the base runner, head and body fakes toward the base runner).

- 12.21.5 There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the base runner to comply with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the base runner.
- 12.21.6 When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:
- 12.21.6.1 A base runner standing off her base must immediately return to the base she last occupied or advance to the next base.
 - 12.21.6.2 A base runner who starts back to the base she last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.
 - 12.21.6.3 The batter-runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.
 - 12.21.6.4 The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.
 - 12.21.6.5 The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return nonstop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the base runner is heading back toward first base within the basepath extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended basepath in foul territory commits the base runner to first base while stepping beyond the basepath toward the second-base side commits the base runner to second base.

EFFECT—The ball is dead, the offending base runner is out, and each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two base runners are off base and both base runners are called out, the umpires must determine which base 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 base runner is called out, and the other base runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.

12.22 Missing a Base (Missing a base is an appeal play. See Rule 7.1.1.)

- 12.22.1 A base runner must touch each base in order when she is advancing or returning to a base and the ball is in play. Missing a base is an appeal play. The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.
- 12.22.2 A base runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the base runner is safe.
- 12.22.2.1 If a base runner misses home plate and the fielder misses or makes no attempt to tag the base runner, the umpire should make a safe signal and declare "No tag." If an appeal play is made (that is, by tagging either the base runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.
 - 12.22.2.2 If a base runner misses home plate, she is considered to have scored on a timing play. If she returns and touches home plate, the time is established upon contact with home plate. If she does not return, the time is established at the time she passes home plate.

A.R.12.22.2.2: With a runner on second base and two outs, the batter singles to centerfield. The throw to the plate is cut off and relayed to second base and a tag applied to the batter-

runner. The runner from second base missed home plate just before the out at second base.

RULING: The run scores on the timing play if there is no appeal or no attempt to touch home plate. If the runner returns to touch home plate, the run does not score because the third out preceded touching home plate.

- 12.22.2.3 If a base runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
- 12.22.3 An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.
- 12.22.4 A base runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. *Exception:* A base runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- 12.22.5 A base runner may not return to touch a missed base if:
- 12.22.5.1 She has left the field of play;
 - 12.22.5.2 A trailing base runner has scored;
 - 12.22.5.3 She is standing on a base beyond the base she missed, and “Time” has been called by the umpire;
 - 12.22.5.4 The ball becomes dead; or
 - 12.22.5.5 On a dead-ball base award, she has touched the final base of the base award.

Note: If the base runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, she can continue.

- 12.22.6 The failure of a preceding base runner to touch a base (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing base runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing base runner cannot score a run when a preceding base runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order.
- 12.22.7 Any base runner who misses the first base to which she is advancing and who is later called out shall be considered as having advanced one base.

12.23 Occupying Bases

- 12.23.1 A base runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing base runner.
- 12.23.2 Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. The base runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other base runner may be put out by being touched with the ball or glove/mitt holding the ball.

Note: If a base runner is being run down between bases and the trailing base runner occupies the same base the first base runner has left, the second base runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first base runner, however, returns safely to the base she left and both base runners then are occupying the same base, the second base runner is out if touched with the ball.

- 12.23.3 A base runner who is touching a base when “Time” is called may not advance or return during the suspension of play.

12.24 Overrunning or Oversliding Bases

12.24.1 When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the batter-runner, after overrunning first base, must immediately return nonstop to first base or, if she does not retouch first base, must make an attempt to advance to second. If after passing the base, the base runner is heading back toward first base within the basepath extended, she may make a decision to go to either base. However, stepping beyond the extended basepath in foul territory commits the base runner to first base while stepping beyond the basepath toward the second-base side commits the base runner to second base.

12.24.2 If the base runner feints or makes an attempt to advance to second, she may be tagged out (while she is off base) by a defensive player with the ball. (See Rule 7.1.1.)

12.24.3 A batter-runner or base runner may round a base and go directly to the next base without stopping. If, however, she stops after rounding a base, and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle, she must comply with the look-back rule.

Note: A batter who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike is treated the same as if she batted the ball.

12.24.4 A base runner may overrun or overslide home plate after legally touching it without liability to be put out.

Note: For scoring purposes, a base runner who overslides a base and is tagged out, whether attempting to return or advance, is not credited with attaining that base. If a base batter, she is credited with a hit to the previous base. If a base runner attempting to steal, charge her with caught stealing. For all other purposes, the player is considered to have attained the base.

A.R. 12.24.4: With a base runner on second base, the catcher obstructs the batter, who somehow puts the ball in play to the shortstop. She fields the ball and throws out the base runner from second, who overslides third base and is immediately tagged while off the base. The batter attains first base safely. **RULING:** Catcher obstruction is canceled because the batter and each base runner advanced at least one base on the batted ball. Therefore, the result of the batted ball stands.

EFFECT—(12.24.1 to 12.24.4)—This is an appeal play. (See Rule 7.1.1.)

12.25 Pick-Off Attempt

On a decision regarding a pick-off attempt, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with his or her partner.

12.26 Running Out of the Base Path or Out of the Runner's Lane

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

EFFECT—The ball is live. The offending base runner is out, but each other base runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out.

Exceptions:

1. A base runner is not out when she runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base line in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
2. The base runner is not out when she fails to run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.

12.26.2 The batter-runner shall not run outside the runner's lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. This is an interference violation.

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

Exceptions:

The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane:

1. If she has not yet reached the start of the runner's lane;
2. To avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball;
3. Or if she leaves the lane on her last stride in order to touch first base.
4. The infraction is ignored if the act does not interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

Notes:

1. The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is in contact with the ground and is completely outside either line.
2. A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.

12.27 Tag and Force Plays

12.27.1 A batter-runner or base runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the base runner to be touched with the hand(s) or glove/mitt holding the ball.

Exceptions:

1. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides it may immediately return without liability to be put out provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second base.
2. When a base runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
3. When a base runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing base 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 base runner, and the ball is live. The base runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.

- 12.27.2 A batter-runner is out when she legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
- 12.27.3 A batter-runner or base runner is considered forced out if she must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another base runner, but:
- 12.27.3.1 She is legally tagged before she reaches the forced base.
 - 12.27.3.2 The fielder, while having and maintaining possession of the ball, contacts the base in advance of the batter-runner or base runner.
 - 12.27.3.3 The fielder touches the ball to the forced base in advance of the batter-runner or base runner.
- 12.27.4 The base runner is out if she is off base when a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught, and she fails to retouch the base (occupied at the time of the pitch) before a fielder tags her or the base.
- 12.27.5 If an appeal is upheld at a base to which a base runner was forced to advance and the out is a force out, no runs would score if it was the third out. If a forced base runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.
- 12.27.6 It is still a force out when a base runner misses a base to which she was forced to advance and is subsequently appealed after the batter-runner or a trailing base runner has been retired.

Note: There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner.

- 12.27.7 The batter-runner or base runner is not out:

- 12.27.7.1 When touched while off a base with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the base runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.

- 12.27.7.2 When touched while off a base with a fielder's hand or glove/mitt when the ball is in the fielder's other hand.
- 12.27.7.3 When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt.
- 12.27.7.4 When an improper live-ball appeal is made. (See Appeals, Rule 7.1.)

12.28 Tagging Up after a Caught Fly Ball

- 12.28.1 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. A base runner is out if she leaves her base too soon. Either the base runner or the base (left too soon) may be tagged. This is an appeal play.
- 12.28.2 An appeal must be upheld even if the base left too soon was before or after an award. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.
- 12.28.3 A base runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order.

Exception: A base runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.

- 12.28.4 A base runner may not return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball if:
- 12.28.4.1 She has left the field of play;
 - 12.28.4.2 A trailing base runner has scored;
 - 12.28.4.3 She is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon, and “Time” has been called by the umpire; or
 - 12.28.4.4 The ball becomes dead.

Note: If the base runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base left too soon, she can continue.

- 12.28.5 The failure of a preceding base runner to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a trailing base runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing base runner cannot score a run when a preceding base runner is declared out for failing to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.
- 12.28.6 If a base runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a timing play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by base runners in advance of the appealed base runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.
- 12.28.7 A base runner may not use a running start from a position behind and not in contact with a base.

EFFECT—The ball is live and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.

12.29 Touching the Bases

- 12.29.1 An advancing base runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home). All awarded bases must also be touched, and in legal order.

Note: Obstructed base 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.

- 12.29.2 Bases missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing. However, no base runner may return to touch a missed base or one she has left too soon on a caught fly ball:
- 12.29.2.1 Once she has left the field of play;
 - 12.29.2.2 Once a trailing base runner has scored;
 - 12.29.2.3 When she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon, and “Time” has been called by the umpire;
 - 12.29.2.4 When the ball becomes dead; or
 - 12.29.2.5 On a dead-ball base award, once she has touched the final base of the base award.

Note: If the base runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base left too soon, she can continue.

- 12.29.3 A base runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. *Exception:* A base runner, who must return to a base after an uncaught foul fly ball, need not touch intervening bases.

EFFECT—(12.29.1 to 12.29.3)—For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the base runner is out if, before she reaches each untouched base, she is legally tagged. If the base is one to which the base runner is forced, she is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base she failed to touch (including home plate).

Notes:

1. *When a base runner does not touch home plate and does not make an attempt to touch it, the fielder may touch either the base runner or home plate. When a base runner misses home plate and the fielder misses or makes no attempt to tag the base runner, the umpire should make a safe signal and declare “No tag.” When a proper appeal play is made, the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.*

2. *If a base runner misses home plate, she is considered to have scored on a timing play. If she returns and touches home plate, the time is established upon contact with home plate. If she does not return, the time is established at the time she passes home plate. (See Rule 12.22.2.2.)*

3. *When a base runner is legally returning to tag up after a caught fly ball, the base runner can be put out by being tagged, or by the defense touching the base the base runner occupied at the time of the pitch. Each other base runner may advance or return with liability to be put out.*

12.29.4 A base runner shall not run bases in reverse order either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.

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

12.29.5 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.

12.29.6 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 base runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a trailing base runner cannot score a run when a preceding base runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

12.29.7 When a base runner has legally started to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher’s plate or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.

12.29.8 When a base runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the trailing base 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 base runner.

EFFECT—The ball is live, and the base runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each base runner who attempts

to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, “Time” shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

12.29.9 When a base runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, she is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a trailing base runner. Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

EFFECT—The base runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other base runner may be put out by being touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of the fielder. For example, if a base runner is being run down between bases and the trailing base runner occupies the same base the first base runner has left, the second base runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first base runner returns safely to the base she left and both base runners are then occupying the same base, the second base runner is out, if touched with the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

12.29.10 Between pitches and after a dead ball, each base runner must return to her base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the base runner to return to her base, and the base runner is obligated to return to her base without undue delay.

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

When the ball is dead, the ball will not be put in play until each base runner has retouched her base. However, a base runner may be declared out if, after being allowed a reasonable amount of time, she fails to retouch the base.

12.29.11 Should “Time” be called while a base runner is touching a base, she may not advance during a suspension of play.

RULE 13

Misconduct

The highest standards of good sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Code of Conduct.

13.1 Ejections

13.1 Umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for unsporting behavior or verbal misconduct. The on-site administrator shall make him/herself available to assist the umpire crew as requested.

EFFECT—An ejected player may remain in the dugout but may not remain on the playing field or communicate with opponents or umpires.

Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field and dugout. They may occupy the space near or behind the home-run fence, but they may not go behind the backstop, or near the dugout or bullpen. They may not communicate (visually, electronically or verbally) further with the teams or umpires.

Note: In the event of an ejection of a head coach, an umpire shall ask the departing coach to identify an acting head coach. If the head coach declines to do so, the umpires shall initiate forfeit proceedings.

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.

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 is responsible for submitting an incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident. The offending head coach may also file an incident report. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

13.1.2 The umpires have the authority to issue a postgame ejection for unsporting behavior that occurs after the last out of the game, before the umpires have left the confines of the field, and 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 will also be notified. The violator shall serve the ejection in his/her team's next regularly scheduled and played contest. All conditions for the effect of an in-game ejection apply.

13.2 Physical Contact with an Umpire or Opponent

Any threat of physical intimidation or harm, including pushing, shoving, spitting, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make aggressive physical contact, or use of equipment in a combative manner, shall not be tolerated and is considered fighting.

EFFECT—The perpetrator shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two 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).

The ejecting umpire and the offending head coach are each responsible for submitting an incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified. (See Rule 13.1.)

Exceptions:

1. A coach or player involved in a fight who was defending himself/herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
2. If a coach or player makes physical contact with an opponent in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, he/she shall not be ejected or suspended.

Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension.

Exception: Players suspended under 13.2 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.

13.3 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 perpetrator shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two 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).

The ejecting umpire and the offending head coach are each responsible for submitting an incident report (See Appendix E),

in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified. (See Rule 13.1.)

Exception: If a coach leaves a team area (that is, a dugout, bullpen) or coach's box to prevent his or her own players from joining a brawl or potential fight.

Note: Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty while serving a suspension.

Exception: Players suspended under 13.2 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.

13.4 Equipment Misuse

13.4.1 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. Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender. (See Rule 13.1.)

13.4.2 No player or coach shall use equipment in any way other than what is intended by the manufacturer (for example, banging bats and balls in a dugout).

EFFECT—When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending head coach. Any subsequent violation shall result in the abused equipment being removed from the game (not returned to the dugout).

13.5 Intentionally Pitching at a Batter or Umpire

A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter or umpire.

EFFECT—If the plate umpire believes such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall warn the pitcher, catcher and her head coach that future violations by any pitcher from his/her team will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher, catcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher and catcher without warning. The head coach of the offending team 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 a game or at any time during a game if the umpire deems it to be appropriate. (See Rule 13.1.)

13.6 Verbal Misconduct

No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere:

13.6.1 Use profanity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.

13.6.2 Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials.

13.6.3 Refrain from making disparaging public comments on officiating to the media.

EFFECT—(13.6.1 to 13.6.3)—If the violation occurs during the game, the offender shall be ejected with or without a warning. (See Rule 13.1.) If the violation occurs after the game but while still under the jurisdiction of the umpires, the offender shall serve a post-game ejection during the next regularly scheduled and played contest. If the violation occurs at any other time, the institution’s athletic director and conference office shall be notified as well as the NCAA Championship Committee in the event of a violation during the postseason.

13.6.4 Argue balls and strikes.

EFFECT—A team warning shall be issued for the first offense in a game. Subsequent violations by the same team shall result in ejection of the violator(s).

13.7 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.

EFFECT—The offender shall be ejected with or without a warning. (See Rule 13.1.)

13.8 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. If an illegal pitch is thrown, it shall be declared “No pitch.”

EFFECT—“No pitch” is declared (See Rule 10.10) and a team warning is 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. (See Rule 13.1.)

13.9 Tobacco Use

13.9.1 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, the field, bullpens, dugouts and the press box (or official scorer’s area) are considered to be on site.

EFFECT—Student-athletes, managers, coaches and medical personnel who use tobacco products during practice or competition shall be ejected for the remainder of that practice or competition.

Notes:

1. During regular-season play, it is the responsibility of each institution to enforce the rule for its athletes and game personnel.

2. During postseason championship play (regional and championship competition in Divisions I, II and III), umpires shall enforce the tobacco rule. During pretournament meetings, the divisional softball committee shall remind all postseason participants that the rule and penalties (ejection) shall be enforced by game officials.

13.9.2 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 ejection. (See Rule 13.1.)

13.10 Refusal to Play

Refusal to continue to play as noted in Rule 6.19.1 will not be tolerated.

EFFECT—The coach shall be ejected and then suspended from the institution's next two scheduled and played contests in a traditional season (spring).

The ejecting umpire and the offending head coach are each responsible for submitting an incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the incident. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Notes:

1. An ejected coach must leave the playing field and dugout. He/she may occupy space near or behind the home-run fence, but may not go behind the backstop, or near the dugout or bullpen. He/she may not communicate (visually, electronically or verbally) further with the teams or umpires.

2. The umpire should notify the offender that failure to comply as noted above will result in a forfeit. Exception: An ejected coach may participate in a limited capacity during a game only to attend to an injured or ill player or to ensure the safety of players when their safety is in question.

3. Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, shall not be allowed in any team area and shall not perform any team duty, while serving a suspension.

13.11 Refusal to Leave after Ejection

The order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel must be obeyed in a timely manner.

EFFECT—A one-minute forfeit warning shall be issued to the head coach. If the warning expires, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire crew in favor of the team not at fault.

13.12 Subsequent Violations by Ejected Player

An ejected player may remain in the dugout but may not communicate with opponents or umpires.

EFFECT—Subsequent violation of any rule by the same player shall result in a game forfeit.

13.13 Subsequent Violations by Ejected Nonplaying Personnel

Ejected nonplaying personnel must leave the playing field and dugout. They may occupy space near or behind the home-run fence, but they may not go behind the backstop, or near the dugout or bullpen. They may not communicate (visually, electronically or verbally) further with the teams or umpires. The umpire

should notify the offender that failure to comply as noted will result in a forfeit. *Exception:* An ejected coach may participate in a limited capacity during a game only to attend to an injured or ill player or to ensure the safety of players when their safety is in question.

EFFECT—A forfeit is declared by the umpire crew in favor of the team not at fault.

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 Official Scorer

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

- 14.1.1 The official scorer shall record in writing the team lineups, names of the head coaches and umpires, and inning, score, number of outs, base runners' position and count on the batter throughout the game.
- 14.1.2 The official scorer shall have sole authority to make all decisions involving scoring judgment. The scorer shall be objective and shall score for both teams in a similar manner.
- 14.1.3 The official scorer shall have a current copy of the NCAA Softball Rules at the game and shall know the rules pertinent to his/her responsibilities (for example, illegal re-entry, unreported substitution, designated player).
- 14.1.4 The official scorer shall sit in the press box or a neutral area (not in or near the dugout), whenever possible.
- 14.1.5 The official scorer's decision shall be communicated to both teams and members of the media present.
- 14.1.6 The official scorer shall inform the public-address announcer of all substitutions recorded and relayed by the umpire.
- 14.1.7 The official scorer's decision shall be in agreement with the NCAA Softball Rules and the umpire's decision. The official scorer shall have the authority to rule on any scoring matter not specifically covered in the rules.
- 14.1.8 The official scorer shall notify the umpire immediately if the teams attempt to change sides before three outs are recorded in one half of an inning.
- 14.1.9 The official scorer shall notify an umpire immediately in the bottom of an inning if the home team has enough runs to win by the run-ahead rule.
- 14.1.10 The official scorer shall not notify an umpire if the offensive team is batting out of order or if either team has an unreported substitution or an illegal player. This is the responsibility of the opposing team.

Note: In the unfortunate circumstance that the official scorer is in the team dugout, he/she may communicate with his or her own team. At all other times, information gained outside the dugout shall not be communicated into the dugout.

- 14.1.11 If the game is protested or halted, the official scorer shall make note in writing of the exact situation at the time of the interruption. The inning, score, number of outs, base runners' position and count on the batter shall be recorded.

14.2 Scoring Terms

- 14.2.1 **Assist:** Credit given to a defensive player when she handles or effectively deflects the ball during action that is connected with a putout.
- 14.2.2 **At-Bat:** A plate appearance that does not include sacrifices, hit by pitch, base on balls, gaining first base by interference, obstruction, or an incomplete turn at bat.
- 14.2.3 **Base Hit:** A batted ball that permits the batter to reach first base safely because of a fair hit; because a base runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball or because the umpire is hit by a batted ball; when a fielder attempts to put out a preceding base runner but is unsuccessful, although there is no fielding error and the official scorer believes the batter-runner would have reached first base with perfect fielding; or when a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that any fielder attempting to make a play has no opportunity to do so. A hit shall be scored even if the fielder deflects the ball from or cuts off another fielder who could have put out a base runner.
- 14.2.4 **Base on Balls (Walk):** An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, receives four pitches that are declared balls.
- 14.2.5 **Batters Faced:** A statistic kept for each pitcher that indicates the number of opposing batters who make plate appearances.
- 14.2.6 **Caught Stealing:** Action of a base runner who is thrown out by the catcher as she attempts to steal a base.
- 14.2.7 **Defensive Indifference:** Scoring term to describe the lack of a defensive play on a batter-runner or base 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 the outcome of the game.
- A. R. 14.2.7.1** In the bottom of the seventh inning with no one out and the winning run on third base, the batter taps the ball to the pitcher who makes no throw to first base to prevent the winning run from scoring. **RULING**—Credit the batter with a fielder's choice to gain first base and an additional fielder's choice if she gains second base due to indifference.
- A.R. 14.2.7.2** In the bottom of the seventh inning with no one out, base runners on first and third bases, the base runner from first base advances to second base with no play by the catcher to prevent the winning run from scoring. **RULING**—Credit the base runner with a fielder's choice to gain second base due to indifference. (See Rule 14.7.2.5 and 14.15)
- 14.2.8 **Double Play:** A play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between the putouts.
- 14.2.9 **Error:** A misplay charged to a defensive player when it is judged by the official scorer to have prolonged the time at bat (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) of an offensive player or contributed to an offensive player being declared safe.
- 14.2.10 **Extra-Base Hit:** A hit that allows the batter-runner to safely advance past first base in continuous action without an error or indifference by a defensive player. It may be a double, triple or home run.
- 14.2.11 **Fielder's Choice:** Charge a batter-runner with a fielder's choice when a defender fields a ground ball and attempts to put out a preceding base runner

rather than the batter-runner at first base when a throw to first base would have put out the batter-runner. Advance a base runner by a fielder's choice when she advances safely while another base runner is played on.

- 14.2.12 **Force Out:** A putout in which a base 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 base runner is being forced to advance.
- 14.2.13 **Game-Winning Run Batted In:** The run batted in that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.
- 14.2.14 **Games Started:** Credit given to the players listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game, whether or not they actually pitch, field or bat.
- 14.2.15 **Games Played:** Credit given to starting players and their substitutes reported in the game, as recorded on the umpire's official game lineup card.
- 14.2.16 **Hit Batter by Pitch:** An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, was hit by a pitch, including a pitch that would have resulted in a base on balls. (See Rule 11.16.)
- 14.2.17 **Illegal Pitch:** Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.
- 14.2.18 **Intentional Base on Balls (Intentional Walk):** An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to a batter who, during her time at bat, received a fourth ball that the pitcher intentionally threw outside the strike zone. An intentional base on balls also is referred to as an intentional walk.
- 14.2.19 **Left Early:** Action of a base runner who is called out for leaving the base she occupied before the release of the pitch.
- 14.2.20 **Left on Base:** A base runner legally occupying a base at the end of a half-inning. This includes a batter-runner whose batted ball results in another base runner being the third out.
- Note: Every player who completes a plate appearance must be put out, score a run or be left on base.*
- 14.2.21 **Passed Ball:** A pitched ball that the catcher can reasonably be expected to catch but misses, resulting in a base runner advancing.
- 14.2.22 **Pick-Off:** An action initiated by the defense trying to retire a base runner at the base she occupied at the time of the pitch. The catcher is credited with a pick-off for a throw behind a base runner that catches that base runner off base and results in an out.
- 14.2.23 **Pitcher of Record:** The pitcher who is the player who will receive a decision (that is, a loss, win or save). (See Rule 14.29.6, 14.29.7 and 14.29.8 respectively.)
- 14.2.24 **Plate Appearance:** Anytime a batter completes a turn at bat. *Exception:* When a batter leaves the game with two strikes and the substitute batter strikes out, the substitute receives credit for the game played but neither a plate appearance nor a time at bat. The first batter is credited with a game played, plate appearance, at bat and strikeout.
- 14.2.25 **Putout:** Credit given to a defensive player for retiring a batter or base runner.

- 14.2.26 **Run:** The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.
- 14.2.27 **Run Batted In:** Credit given to the batter for each run that scores as a result of a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded, a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded.
- 14.2.28 **Sacrifice:** Credit given to a batter who, with fewer than two outs, advances one or more base runners by bunting and is called out at first base; would have been called out had no error occurred; or is not called out because the defense plays on another base runner who advances safely.
- 14.2.29 **Sacrifice Fly:** A legally batted fly ball with fewer than two outs that results in a base runner scoring a run. If the fielder drops the ball but, in the scorer's opinion, the base runner would have scored had the fielder held the ball, the play shall be scored as a sacrifice fly, and an error shall be given to the defensive player.
- 14.2.30 **Stolen Base:** An action initiated by the offense when the base runner attempts to advance unaided. The base runner is credited with a stolen base when she advances a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- 14.2.31 **Strikeout:** A putout that is credited to the catcher as a result of the batter being charged with three strikes in a single at-bat.
- 14.2.32 **Throw Out:** Credit given to the catcher for initiating the play on an attempted stolen base when an out results. It also is given to a catcher for throwing in front of a base runner who subsequently is put out in a rundown that does not involve a batted ball.
- 14.2.33 **Total Bases:** The sum of all bases a player earns in a game as a result of a hit(s).
- 14.2.34 **Triple Play:** A play by the defense in which three offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, provided there is no error between putouts.
- 14.2.35 **Wild Pitch:** A pitched ball that the catcher misses and could not be expected to catch, resulting in a base runner advancing.

Batting

14.3 Base Hit

A base hit is credited to a batter when she advances to a base safely:

- 14.3.1 On a fair ball that settles on the ground or clears or touches the home-run fence before being touched by a fielder.
- 14.3.2 On a fair ball hit with such force or so slowly that more than a routine play is required to put out the batter-runner.
- 14.3.2.1 It should not be anticipated that an off-balance throw would retire a base runner. A hit is credited to the batter even if the throw is wild.
- 14.3.2.2 When a ground ball is fielded and no throw or a late throw is made, a hit is credited to the batter unless a throw was not made or was made late because of checking or holding a base runner on base.

- 14.3.2.3 If a slowly hit ball or a hard-hit ball is deflected and eliminates a routine play for another fielder, a hit is credited to the batter.
- 14.3.2.4 When a fair-batted ball deflects off a fielder playing in front of the base line, a hit is credited to the batter.
- 14.3.3 When a play is made on a lead base runner unsuccessfully and the batter would have been safe had a play been made on the batter. This includes bunts and running slaps.
- 14.3.4 When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder does not recover in time to gain good position.
- 14.3.5 On a fair ball that takes an unnatural bounce so that the ball cannot be handled with ordinary effort or that bounces off the pitching plate or any base (including home plate) before being touched by a fielder and at an angle such that it cannot be handled with ordinary effort.
- 14.3.6 On a ball that reaches the outfield untouched by an infielder, unless the ball should have been handled by an infielder with ordinary effort (for example, ball between the legs).
- 14.3.7 On a fair ball that might have touched a fielder but was blown by the wind, lost in the sun or lights, or falls to the ground because the fielder slips on the field or an object on the field (for example, catcher's mask, base, home plate, sprinkler).
- 14.3.8 On a fair line drive hit to the outfield that drops to the ground, if the outfielder is attempting to catch the ball on the run or if the outfielder had to cover considerable distance or make the catch running at a high rate of speed. A hit is credited even if the ball is touched.
- 14.3.9 On a fair batted ball not touched by a fielder that touches a base runner or umpire if the official scorer believes the batter earned a hit (rather than a fielder's choice).
- 14.3.10 On a fair batted ball that strikes a hat or glove thrown at it.
- 14.3.11 When no one covers the base or a fielder is late in covering the base.
- 14.3.12 If the official scorer judges the batter would have earned a base hit had base runner interference not occurred.
- 14.3.13 If the ball is not touched because of confusion as to who should have fielded it.
- 14.3.14 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.

14.4 Base Hit Not Credited

A hit is not credited to the batter in the following situations:

- 14.4.1 When a batter advances one or more bases while a fielder who handles a fair hit attempts to put out a preceding base runner.
- 14.4.2 When a batter misses first base and is then called out on an appeal.
- 14.4.3 When a batter hits safely and a preceding base runner misses the first base to which she was forced to advance. This is an appealed force out, and the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.
- 14.4.4 When a base runner is called out for being touched by an infield fly ball.

- 14.4.5 When a base runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.
- 14.4.6 When a fielder fails in an attempt to retire a preceding base runner and, in the official scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.
- 14.4.7 When the base runner interferes with a batted ball and the official scorer judges that the batter would have been put out but for the interference. In this case, the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

14.5 Extra-Base Hit

- 14.5.1 A batter is credited with an extra-base hit when she reaches a base beyond first base solely because of her hit. It may be a double, triple or home run. *Exception:* A batter never gets credit for a triple if a preceding base runner is out at home plate or would have been out had no error occurred. The same applies with receiving credit for a double.

Note: When the batter is tagged out after oversliding or overrunning second or third base, for scoring purposes, she is not credited with reaching such base unless she touched the base before oversliding or overrunning and is tagged out while attempting to return. When a batter misses a base, she gets credit only for the bases touched before missing a base.

- 14.5.2 A batter is credited only with the base she would have reached had no play on a preceding base runner taken place. If she stops, sees another play and then advances, she does not receive credit for that base.
- 14.5.3 If a fielder merely holds the ball too long, the batter gets credit for all the bases she takes.
- 14.5.4 A batter is credited with a home run when any fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without being caught, touching the ground or going through the fence, even if the ball is deflected by a fielder.

14.6 Game-Ending Hit

- 14.6.1 A hit that scores a winning run is credited with 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 base runners legally touch all bases.
- 14.6.2 When the winning run scores on a home run, but a preceding base runner stops running before reaching home plate, the batter is credited with her last legally touched base.

14.7 Fielder's Choice

A fielder's choice is credited in the following situations:

- 14.7.1 To a batter:
- 14.7.1.1 When a ground ball is put in play and any preceding base runner is out on the hit or would have been out had no error occurred.
- 14.7.1.2 When a ground ball is put in play and the lead base runner is safe, but the batter would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.

- 14.7.1.3 When a ground ball is put in play and any preceding base runner, who is forced to advance, is called out on an appeal for missing the first base to which she was advancing.
- 14.7.1.4 When a base runner is checked and no throw or a late throw is made, but the base runner would have been out had the initial play gone to first base.
- 14.7.1.5 When the base runner interferes with a batted ball and the official scorer judges that the batter would have been put out but for the interference. In this case, the batter is credited with a fielder's choice.
- 14.7.2 To the base runner:
- 14.7.2.1 When, after reaching base safely, a batter earns extra bases because of a play on a preceding base runner.
- 14.7.2.2 When other base runners advance while the catcher makes a play on the batter on a dropped third strike.
- 14.7.2.3 When a fielder makes a play on a base she thought the base runner was advancing to, but was wrong, and the batter-runner would have been out if the fielder had made a play on her at first base.
- 14.7.2.4 When a base runner safely advances and another base runner is:
- 14.7.2.4.1 Put out in a rundown;
- 14.7.2.4.2 Safe because of an error; or
- 14.7.2.4.3 Credited with a stolen base.
- 14.7.2.5 When a base is gained by a runner who is allowed to advance because of defensive indifference. (See Rule 14.2.7.) *Exception:* See Rule 14.15 for first and third situations.

14.8 Sacrifice

A sacrifice is credited to the batter in the following situations:

- 14.8.1 When a plate appearance meets the following four criteria: 1) there are fewer than two outs, 2) the batter advances one or more base runners by bunting, 3) the ball must be bunted (that is, not swung at, not slapped at, not chopped at), and 4) the batter is called out at first base or would have been out had no error occurred.

Note: Just as the official scorer should award base hits instead of charging errors in cases involving doubt, a play that meets all four criteria for a sacrifice should be scored as such instead of simply awarding a putout and assist (if applicable).

- 14.8.2 When, with fewer than two outs, the defense (without error) fails to get the lead base runner out on any type of bunt.

Note: If the lead base runner is tagged out in an attempt to advance more than one base, it is scored a fielder's choice. If the batter is obviously bunting for a hit in a situation in which a sacrifice is not normally used, credit the hitter with an at-bat.

- 14.8.3 When, with fewer than two outs, the lead base runner advances by means of a bunt but a trailing base runner is out.
- 14.8.4 When, with fewer than two outs and base runners at first and third bases, the pitcher fields a bunt, holds the base runner at third base, throws the base runner out at first base and the base runner at first advances safely to second base.

14.9 Sacrifice Not Credited

No sacrifice is credited in the following situations:

- 14.9.1 When a lead base runner advances on a bunt because of a dropped good throw.
- 14.9.2 When a batter inadvertently taps the ball into fair territory and it results in a base runner advancing and the batter being retired. The intent to sacrifice bunt must exist.

Note: Scoring for the left-handed running slapper should be the same as for a traditional left- or right-handed batter. If the running slapper clearly shows the intent to advance a base runner by bunting, credit a sacrifice. If the running slapper slaps or swings, charge an at-bat, even if a base runner advances.

- 14.9.3 When a play made on the lead base runner is successful and she is put out, charge the batter with an at bat and fielder's choice.

14.10 Sacrifice Fly

A sacrifice fly is credited to the batter in the following situations:

- 14.10.1 When a plate appearance meets the following four criteria: 1) there are fewer than two outs, 2) the batter hits a fly ball or line drive that scores a base runner, regardless of where the ball is caught (in fair or foul territory), as long as it is in play, 3) a run must score, and 4) a run batted in must be credited to the batter.
- 14.10.2 When a fair ball is dropped and an error charged, credit the batter with a sacrifice fly if the base runner would have scored with the catch.

Notes:

1. *Although the batter in this case reaches base by virtue of an error when a sacrifice fly is not caught, she is not charged with an at-bat but is credited with a sacrifice fly, and the fielder is charged with the error.*
2. *Just as the official scorer should award base hits instead of charging errors in cases involving doubt, a sacrifice that meets all four criteria for a sacrifice fly should be scored as such instead of simply awarding a putout.*
3. *If the catcher clearly has the ball in her possession before the base runner arrives but drops the ball as the base 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.*

14.11 Run Batted In

A run batted in is credited to the batter for each run that scores as a result of a batter's safe hit (including a batter scoring on a home run), a sacrifice or sacrifice fly, a ground out, a fielder's choice, a walk with the bases loaded (whether caused by ball four or an illegal pitch), a hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, or defensive obstruction with the bases loaded. A game-winning run batted in is the RBI that gives the team the lead that is never tied or lost.

Notes:

1. *On a play involving an error, an RBI is credited to the batter only if the base runner would have scored without the error. In addition, an RBI is credited when, with fewer than two outs, an infielder makes an error on a play made to a base*

other than home plate. On a third out, when the base runner crosses the plate before the third out is made on another base runner, credit an RBI.

2. No RBI is credited when a) a base runner rounds third base, stops, notices a misplay and then advances safely to home, or b) on a base award such as catch and carry or a thrown ball that goes out of play.

14.12 Appeal Plays

- 14.12.1 **Batting Out of Order.** When an incorrect batter is reported after she is retired and before the next pitch is thrown, the player who should have batted is out and the play is scored as if she had been the correct batter. If the incorrect batter becomes a base runner and is then reported out of order, the proper batter is out and the putout is credited to the catcher. If a pitch has been thrown, all play is legal and the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who batted out of order. If more than one batter bats out of order, score all play as it stands and skip the turn at bat of those who missed their turns.
- 14.12.2 **Inaccurate Lineup Card.** If submitting an inaccurate lineup card results in a base runner being removed from a base and declared out, the results of her at-bat are nullified, and the putout is credited to the catcher.
- 14.12.3 In all other appeals, credit the fielder closest to the misplay with the putout.

14.13 Strikeout

The batter is charged with a strikeout in the following situations:

- 14.13.1 When her third strike is caught by the catcher before striking the dirt.
- 14.13.2 On a dropped third strike, whether or not the batter-runner is safe at first base.
- 14.13.3 When, with first base occupied and fewer than two outs in the inning, she is put out on a dropped third strike because she cannot legally advance to first base.
- 14.13.4 When the catcher catches a foul tip directly from the bat to the glove/mitt on a third strike.
- 14.13.5 When a foul bunt on the third strike is not caught in the air.
- 14.13.6 When, with two strikes, the batter violates the time between pitches rule.
- 14.13.7 When the batter receives two strikes, a substitute batter is inserted and the substitute batter strikes out. Both the plate appearance and the strikeout are charged to the first batter and not the substitute batter. When after sharing a turn at bat with more than one other batter, none of whom received more than one strike, the final batter receives the strikeout.

14.14 Stolen Base

A stolen base is credited:

- 14.14.1 To a base runner who advances to a base unaided by a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference or obstruction.
- 14.14.2 To a base runner, if the base runner starts for the next base on the release, and the pitch results in what would otherwise be scored a passed ball or wild pitch. If the base runner advances another base because of the wild pitch or passed ball, only the initial base is stolen.

- 14.14.3 To a base runner, regardless of the accuracy of the throw and whether an accurate throw would have resulted in a sure putout. No error is charged unless another base is gained due to the wild throw.
- 14.14.4 To a base runner who gets caught in a rundown attempting to steal and advances to the next base safely, only if the next base was unoccupied and no error is made. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
- 14.14.5 To a base runner awarded a base due to obstruction during an attempted steal.
- 14.14.6 To a base runner who advances to a base because of a pick-off play on another base runner, provided the base runner broke for the next base before the release of the catcher's throw.
- 14.14.7 To each base runner who successfully advances in a double- or triple-steal attempt, whether played on or not, as long as no other base runner is put out. If a base runner is played on and she is safe without the aid of an error, she is credited with a stolen base as are any other base runners who safely advance. If a base runner is played on and she is safe by virtue of an error, charge the error to the fielder, and any other base runner who advances is safe on a fielder's choice. If a base runner is played on and she is put out, she is charged with a caught stealing and any other base runner who advances is safe on a fielder's choice. If the lead base runner fails to advance but is instead safe at the base she occupied at the time of the pitch (and no error occurred), credit the trailing base runner who successfully advances with a stolen base.
- 14.14.8 To a base runner who advances on a bobbled (not dropped) pitch, even if the base runner decides to advance after seeing the bobble.
- 14.14.9 To a base runner who advances a base when the defense leaves a base undefended in mid-play. Statistically, a stolen base shall be charged to the catcher if she was involved in the play and charged to the "defensive team" if the catcher was not involved in the play.

Note: When electronic scoring is used, "defensive team" is entered into the program as a pitcher. In the event a stolen base is charged to the "defensive team" or a run is scored by the base runner placed on second base in the tie breaker, it is recorded against "defensive team" and not any other player.

A.R. 14.14.9.1 Following a base on balls, the batter-runner rounds first base and, noticing the infielders are not defending second base, takes off and safely attains second base. Seeing no fielder, the catcher makes no throw but instead holds onto the ball following the last pitch.

RULING: Stolen base is charged to the catcher.

A.R. 14.14.9.2 Following a single to right field, the batter-runner rounds first base and, noticing the infielders are not defending second base, takes off and safely attains second base. Seeing no fielder, the right fielder makes no play but instead walks the ball into the infield.

RULING: Stolen base is charged to the "defensive team."

14.15 Stolen Base Not Credited

- 14.15.1 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner who advances to a base with the aid of a safe hit, putout, error, force, fielder's choice, illegal pitch, wild pitch, base on balls, hit batter, passed ball, interference, obstruction, or defensive indifference.

14.15.2 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.

The base runner's advance is scored as a fielder's choice. (See Rule 14.15.3 for first and third situations.)

14.15.3 A stolen base is not credited to any base runner when any other base runner is thrown out on an attempted double or triple steal.

Exceptions:

1. On a double-steal attempt, with base runners on first and third bases, credit the base runner from first base with a stolen base if she advances on an unsuccessful but legitimate attempt made to put her out at second base, and the base runner at third base is thrown out at home plate on a continuous play.
2. With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to second base even if the initial throw is not to second base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
3. With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to home plate even if the initial throw is not to third base. The base runner must show the intent to steal.
4. With base runners on first and third bases, credit a stolen base to the base runner advancing to second base if no throw is made even if the advance was immediately after a base on balls unless defensive indifference applies. (See Rule 14.2.7.)

14.15.4 A stolen base is not credited to a base runner if another base runner is put out in a rundown or an error allows the base runner to be safe. In these cases, the base runner not in the rundown who safely advances does so on a fielder's choice.

14.16 Caught Stealing

14.16.1 Charge a base runner with caught stealing when:

- 14.16.1.1 She is put out or would have been put out had no error occurred on her attempt to steal a base.
- 14.16.1.2 There is a throw and she immediately attempts to advance to the next base and is thrown out.
- 14.16.1.3 She attempts to advance after a pick-off throw and is subsequently called out on the play.
- 14.16.1.4 She attempts to steal a base but is tagged out while oversliding or overrunning the base.

14.16.2 Do not charge caught stealing unless the base runner has an opportunity to be credited with a stolen base when the play starts (that is, unsuccessfully advancing on a wild pitch or passed ball would not be caught stealing).

Note: When in question, give the benefit of the doubt to the base runner.

14.17 Throw Outs

The catcher is credited with a throw out when she throws in front of the base runner, resulting in a rundown that does not involve a batted ball, regardless of the base at which the putout occurs. If the catcher initiates the play on an attempted stolen base and an out results, she also is credited with a throw out.

14.18 Pick-Off

The catcher is credited with a pick-off when a throw behind the base runner results in a putout regardless of whether the put out is made at the base occupied at the time of the pitch or the base runner attempts to advance and is putout. In either case, it is tallied as caught stealing in the box score,

Fielding**14.19 Putout**

- 14.19.1 Credit a putout to a fielder who catches a fly ball or line drive, tags out a base runner or tags the base to force out the base runner.
- 14.19.2 Credit a putout to the catcher in the following instances:
- 14.19.2.1 A legally caught third strike.
 - 14.19.2.2 The batter is called out for an illegally batted ball.
 - 14.19.2.3 A batter is out on a third strike foul bunt.
 - 14.19.2.4 A batter is out for being touched by her own fair batted ball while one or both feet are completely out of the batter's box or for stepping on home plate.
 - 14.19.2.5 A batter is out for intentionally interfering with her own foul batted ball.
 - 14.19.2.6 A batter interferes with the catcher.
 - 14.19.2.7 A batter who batted out of order becomes a base runner and a proper appeal is made.
 - 14.19.2.8 A batter-runner fails to touch first base after a base on balls.
 - 14.19.2.9 A catcher steps on the plate with the ball in her possession with the bases loaded. This includes a dropped third strike.
 - 14.19.2.10 A base runner is out for not advancing legally to home plate for the game-winning run.
 - 14.19.2.11 A base runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return. The catcher properly appeals, and the base runner is called out.
- 14.19.3 Credit a putout to the nearest fielder in the following instances:
- 14.19.3.1 A batter is out on an infield fly that is not caught.
 - 14.19.3.2 A base runner is out for failing to keep contact with the base to which she is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
 - 14.19.3.3 A base runner is out for being hit by a fair batted ball.
 - 14.19.3.4 A base runner is called out for being out of the baseline in order to avoid a tag.
 - 14.19.3.5 A base runner runs backward in the first-base line to avoid a tag.
 - 14.19.3.6 A base runner is out for passing another base runner or removing her helmet while the ball is in play.
 - 14.19.3.7 A base runner is out for running the bases in reverse order.
 - 14.19.3.8 A base runner is out for interfering with a fielder. If the interference is a deliberate attempt to impede another play, a second base runner also may be declared out.

Note: If the fielder was in the act of throwing or fielding a ground ball, the fielder is credited with an assist, but the putout is credited to the fielder for whom the throw was intended.

14.19.3.9 A base runner is out when a proper appeal is made on a missed base or home plate.

14.19.3.10 An unreported player or an illegal player is declared out.

14.19.3.11 A proper appeal is made on a batter who batted out of order but was put out. The proper batter is out and the play scored as if she had batted.

14.20 Assist

An assist is credited to a fielder in the following situations:

14.20.1 A fielder deflects a batted or thrown ball that results in a putout.

14.20.2 A fielder throws a ball that results in a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders. The fielder may receive a putout in addition to an assist.

14.20.3 A fielder throws or deflects a ball that results in a base runner being called out for interference or running out of the baseline.

14.20.4 A fielder makes a wild throw and, after the throw, the base runner is tagged out before reaching the next base. If the base 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 base runner.

14.21 Error

14.21.1 An error is charged against any fielder for each misplay (that is, fielding, wild throws, missed catches on good throws) that prolongs the life of a batter (causes one or more pitches to be thrown) or a base runner or permits a base runner to advance. This includes a dropped foul ball (unless it was allowed to drop intentionally to prevent a base runner from advancing), whether or not the batter subsequently is put out.

14.21.2 A single error is charged for each miscue even if more than one base is gained by a base runner or more than one base runner advances as a result of the play.

Note: An error is charged when a wild throw allows a base runner to be safe only if the base runner would have been put out had the throw not been wild.

Exception: See Rule 14.22.13.

14.21.3 An error shall be charged against any fielder when she catches a thrown ball or fields a ground ball in time to put out any base runner on a force play and fails to tag the base or the base runner, including a batter-runner on a play at first base.

14.21.4 An error shall be charged against any fielder whose throw takes an unnatural bounce, touches a base or the pitcher's plate, or touches a base runner, a fielder or an umpire, thereby permitting any base 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 base runner.

- 14.21.5 When a throw is made to a base and more than one fielder could have received the throw but neither did, an error is charged to the fielder who should have received the throw.
- 14.21.6 An error is charged to a fielder (including the catcher) committing obstruction when an additional base is gained as a result of the obstruction.
- 14.21.7 An error is charged to a defensive player who collides with a fielder making the initial catch on a fly ball that is dropped.
- 14.21.8 An error is charged when an unnecessary throw allows a base runner to advance.

Note: This does not include a throw made to play on a different runner.

- 14.21.9 An error is charged to the thrower when an otherwise good throw hits a base runner, umpire or discarded bat.

14.22 No Error Is Charged

No error is charged to a fielder in the following situations:

- 14.22.1 When a ball is misplayed because it is lost in the sun or lights, blown by the wind, or the fielder slips and falls—even if contact is made with the ball.
- 14.22.2 When there is a mental mistake. Throwing to the wrong base is considered a mental mistake.
- 14.22.3 When a catcher attempts a pick-off, unless the base runner advances an additional base.
- 14.22.4 When a base runner returns safely to her original base on a rundown.
- 14.22.5 When a base 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). This also pertains to the second or third out of a double or triple play.

Note: A dropped ball by the receiver is an error if the base runner would have been out.

- 14.22.6 When a ball is hit with such force, so slowly or with erratic spin, that it would require more than ordinary effort to play the ball.
- 14.22.7 When a fly ball is misjudged and the fielder cannot recover in time to make the play.
- 14.22.8 When a fielder drops a ball after running a considerable distance or if she fails in her attempt to catch the ball while running at a high rate of speed.
- 14.22.9 When a fielder drops a line drive after moving more than a few steps to catch the ball.
- 14.22.10 As a result of an illegal pitch, wild pitch, passed ball or hit batter, even if more than one base is gained from the initial misplay.
- 14.22.11 When a base runner advances on a dropped third strike. In such a case, a wild pitch or passed ball shall be charged; however, if an accurate throw or proper catch would have resulted in an out, an error shall be charged to the appropriate player.
- 14.22.12 When a pitcher mishandles a sharply batted ball. Wild throws and the mishandling of routine ground balls and bunts are reason for charging the pitcher with an error.

- 14.22.13 When a wild throw is made in an effort to prevent a base runner from stealing, no error is charged even if a good throw would have resulted in a putout, unless the base runner advances at least one additional base.
- 14.22.14 When a fielder intentionally does not catch a foul fly ball to prevent a base runner from advancing.
- 14.22.15 When the scorer charges the pitcher with a wild pitch or the catcher with a passed ball.
- 14.22.16 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.

14.23 Double Play/Triple Play

- 14.23.1 A double or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time the pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is in the possession of the pitcher in her pitching position. Play must be continuous. If an error occurs between putouts, no double or triple play is credited. In addition, a double or triple play is credited when an appeal play results in a second or third out after the pitcher has the ball in her possession but before the next pitch is thrown.
- 14.23.2 The second part of a double play never should be assumed. If an overthrow is made, no error is recorded unless the base 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

14.24 Earned/Unearned Run

- 14.24.1 Earned runs are runs for which the pitcher is statistically accountable. An earned run shall be charged against the pitcher when a base 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 charged only in the event that the defense did not have the opportunity to make the third putout. Earned runs are determined by reconstructing the inning as if there were no errors or passed balls. The pitcher should be given the benefit of the doubt in determining the advancement of base runners had the defensive team been errorless. Any pitcher who is replaced is charged with earned runs for which she is totally responsible.

Note: A batter who gets on base as a result of a fielder's choice can score an earned run only if the base runner that was out as a result of the fielder's choice was a potential earned run.

- 14.24.2 When a base runner who began the inning on second base during the tiebreaker scores and the pitcher is held accountable for all bases gained, score the run as earned but charge it to the team total and not to the individual. (See Rule 14.30 for information on the tiebreaker rule.)
- 14.24.3 A run is unearned if the base runner who scores reached first base by error or had prolonged life because of a dropped foul fly or obstruction.

14.25 Relief Pitcher

- 14.25.1 A relief pitcher is charged with every run that scores when the batter has reached base while she was pitching. *Exception:* If a batter reaches base on a fielder's choice that puts out an inherited base runner and the batter subsequently scores, the run is charged to the previous pitcher, not the relief pitcher.
- 14.25.2 When a relief pitcher enters the game to pitch to a batter in midcount and the batter gets on base and scores, charge the first pitcher with the run if the batter has a count of two or three balls and fewer than two strikes, or if the count is full, and in either case, the batter walks. Charge the relief pitcher with any other action of the batter (including a strikeout).
- 14.25.3 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 14.13.

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 she fails to stop or control a pitch with ordinary effort and at least one base runner advances. Only one passed ball is recorded regardless of the number of base runners who advance or the number of bases advanced. A third strike not handled by the catcher that could have been handled with ordinary effort, when the batter reaches first base safely, is scored as both a passed ball and a strikeout. No passed ball is charged if a base runner stealing on the pitch advances only one base. A passed ball is not an error.

Statistics**14.29 Pitching Statistics**

- 14.29.1 Credit a pitcher with a complete game, no-hitter, shutout, etc., if she pitches the first pitch and every subsequent pitch of a new game. For statistical purposes, she is considered the starting pitcher; however, she does not have the substitution rights of a starting player unless she is listed on the lineup card in one of the nine or 10 starting positions.

- 14.29.2 The flex player is charged with a game played in terms of eligibility, but not statistically (unless she participates in the game as a pitcher), if she is replaced in the lineup before the first pitch.
- 14.29.3 If a pitcher is removed from the game offensively by a batter or a base runner, all runs scored by her team during the remainder of that inning are credited to her benefit in determining when her 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 she faces the minimum number of batters required for the number of innings played, none of whom reaches any base safely. *Note: The tiebreaker does not change this requirement.*

14.29.6 **Winning Pitcher.**

14.29.6.1 The starting pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:

- 14.29.6.1.1 She has pitched at least four total innings (cumulative, not necessarily consecutive) of a game of six or more innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced (including base runners for whom she was responsible and later scored), and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
- 14.29.6.1.2 She has pitched a total of three innings (cumulative, not necessarily consecutive) when a regulation game is called after five innings, her team is ahead when she is replaced (including base runners for whom she was responsible and later scored), and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
- 14.29.6.1.3 She has pitched the required number of innings, her team is ahead or tied when she is replaced, she re-enters the game with her team behind, and her team subsequently recaptures the lead.

Note: A pitcher cannot receive credit for a save if she receives the win.

14.29.6.2 The relief pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:

- 14.29.6.2.1 The starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, or her team fell behind.
- 14.29.6.2.2 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.
- 14.29.6.2.3 The relief pitcher was the pitcher of record when her team gained the lead and stayed in the lead.
- 14.29.6.2.4 A relief pitcher left the pitching position while the score was tied or her team was behind, and she re-entered as the pitcher and regained the lead.

14.29.7 **Losing Pitcher.**

14.29.7.1 A starting pitcher receives the loss if she is relieved while her team is behind and her team remains behind for the remainder of the game, regardless of the number of innings pitched.

14.29.7.2 A relief pitcher receives the loss if she is the pitcher of record when the opponent goes ahead and stays ahead for the remainder of the game.

14.29.8 Save.

A pitcher must meet all three of the following conditions to be credited with a save:

14.29.8.1 She is the last pitcher in the win.

14.29.8.2 She is not the winning pitcher.

14.29.8.3 She meets one of the following conditions:

14.29.8.3.1 She enters the game with a lead of not more than three runs and pitches for at least one inning.

14.29.8.3.2 She pitches effectively for at least three innings.

14.29.8.3.3 She enters the game with the potential tying run on base, at bat or on-deck.

Note: Not more than one save may be credited in a game.

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 lead-off base runner to be put out, the first run scored that inning may be charged to the “defensive team.” (Example: If a base runner reaches first base safely on a fielder’s choice as a result of a first-to-third putout, this new base runner still is charged to the “defensive team.”)

14.30.3 If the lead-off base runner at second base is put out without action by the batter (for example, caught stealing, picked off or leaving the base early), then no run scored in that half-inning is charged to the “defensive team.”

Notes:

1. *A run charged to the “defensive team” is neither earned nor unearned because there is no actual person to whom the run is to be charged. It is technically impossible for the “defensive team” to have an earned-run average because the “defensive team” will always have zero innings pitched.*

2. *In the statistical pitching summary for a game using the tiebreaker rule, “defensive team” is listed as a pitcher. The only statistic recorded for “defensive team” is total runs allowed. The total runs allowed by a team may exceed the sum total of earned and unearned runs. The box score will not prove as it normally does since there is usually an extra base runner left on base for each inning in which the rule is in effect.*

3. *The respective pitchers of record receive the win and loss.*

4. *See Rule 6.15 for an explanation of the tiebreaker rule.*

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 6.16) shall be recorded. If the scoring in an incomplete inning has no bearing on the outcome of the contest, include all individual and team statistics. If a called game is a tie, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated.
- 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. If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall be designated. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or the score is tied at the time the forfeit is declared, the winning and losing pitchers shall not be designated. If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, no statistics shall be recorded. Refer to the NCAA Statistics Policies as listed on NCAA.org for more information concerning statistics from forfeited games.
- 14.32.3 **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	left on base
BB	base on balls (walk)	OB	obstruction (defensive)
BF	batters faced	PA	plate appearance
CG	complete games pitched	PB	passed ball
CS	caught stealing	PKO	pick-off
DP	double play	PO	putout
E	error	R	run scored
ER	earned runs	RBI	run batted in

Symbol	Definition	Symbol	Definition
ERA	earned-run average	SB	stolen base
GP	games played	SBA	stolen base attempt
GS	games started	SAC/SH	sacrifice
GWRBI	game-winning run batted in	SF	sacrifice fly
H	base hit	SHO	shutout
HBP	hit by pitch	SO	strikeout
HR	home run	SV	save
IBB	intentional base on balls	TB	total bases on safe hits
ILP	illegal pitches thrown	TO	throw out
INT	interference (offensive)	TOA	throw out attempt
IP	innings pitched	TP	triple play
K	strikeout (swinging)	W	win
X	strikeout (called)	2B	double
		3B	triple

Percentage Table

Batting average:	$\frac{\text{hits}}{\text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{H}{AB}$
Earned-run average:	$\frac{\text{earned runs} \times 7.0}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{ER \times 7.0}{IP}$
Fielding percentage:	$\frac{\text{putouts} + \text{assists}}{\text{putouts} + \text{assists} + \text{errors}}$	$\frac{PO + A}{PO + A + E}$
On-base percentage:	$\frac{\text{walks} + \text{hit by pitch} + \text{hits}}{\text{walks} + \text{hit by pitch} + \text{sacrifice flies} + \text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{BB + HBP + H}{BB + HBP + SF + AB}$
Winning percentage:	$\frac{\text{games won} + .5 \text{ games tied}}{\text{games won} + \text{games lost} + \text{games tied}}$	$\frac{W + .5 T}{W + L + T}$
Reached-base percentage:	$\frac{\text{any possible way batter reached base safely}}{\text{plate appearances minus sacrifice bunts}}$	$\frac{\text{total on-base}}{PA - SAC/SH}$
Slugging percentage:	$\frac{\text{total bases earned by hits}}{\text{at-bats}}$	$\frac{TB}{AB}$
Stolen-base percentage:	$\frac{\text{stolen bases}}{\text{stolen-base attempts}}$	$\frac{SB}{SBA}$
Strikeout ratio:	$\frac{\text{strikeouts} \times 7.0}{\text{innings pitched}}$	$\frac{SO \times 7.0}{IP}$
Throw-out percentage:	$\frac{\text{throw-outs}}{\text{throw-out attempts}}$	$\frac{TO}{TOA}$
Total bases: (home runs x 3) + (triples x 2) + (doubles x 1) + total number of hits		

RULE 15

Umpires

Note: Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 15 shall not be grounds for protest.

15.1 Apparel and Equipment

15.1.1 The umpiring crew shall be dressed alike.

15.1.1.1 The standard uniform is composed of a plain navy blue fitted cap, powder blue short-sleeve pullover shirt (with a collar, button placket and navy, powder blue and white trim on the collar and sleeves), white undershirt, navy blue pants, navy blue ball bag, black belt with a silver buckle, all black socks and shoes, and plain navy blue umpire jacket. A turtleneck shirt may be worn under the jacket only and, if worn, must be navy blue.

15.1.1.2 The umpire crew may wear approved alternate uniforms as designated by conferences or associations. The approved alternate uniforms may include the following: heather gray pants, a navy undershirt, a navy blue short-sleeve pullover shirt (with a collar, button placket and red, navy and white trim on the collar and sleeves), a navy blue long-sleeve pullover shirt (with a collar, button placket and red, navy and white trim on the collar), a powder blue long-sleeve pullover shirt (with a collar, button placket and navy, powder blue and white trim on the collar) and/or a color-trimmed navy blue umpire jacket.

15.1.1.3 All umpires must wear the same color shirt, but individual umpires may wear a short- or long-sleeve shirt.

15.1.1.4 All umpires must wear the same color and style (with the same trim) jackets, but individual umpires may choose to not wear a jacket.

Notes:

1. Conference affiliation may be embroidered on caps and/or shirts for use in conference play only.

2. "NCAA" may be embroidered on caps and approved NCAA logos and marks may be embroidered on shirts and/or jackets for use in NCAA postseason play only.

3. A 3-by-2-inch patch of the American flag may be sewn with its bottom edge on the hem of the uniform shirt's left sleeve.

15.1.2 The plate umpire shall wear a black or nickel-color mask with natural or black padding.

15.1.3 It is required that the umpiring crew have a current NCAA Softball Rules and Interpretations book accessible during the competition.

15.1.4 It is strongly recommended that all umpires wear appropriate protective equipment.

15.2 Duties

Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team personnel to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce prescribed penalties. The umpires are approved officials of the institution or conference by which they have been assigned to a particular game and are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpires shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is general information for umpires:

- 15.2.1 It is strongly recommended that the umpires not be affiliated with a team or its institution.
- 15.2.2 The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and should report to the playing field at least 30 minutes ahead of time, start the game at the designated time and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when he/she arrives on the field and reports to the host coach, and it ends when he/she leaves the confines of the field after the game.
- 15.2.3 The umpires should introduce themselves to the coaches and other appropriate game management personnel, including the on-site administrator.
- 15.2.4 The umpires shall inspect the playing field and equipment including matching bats to each institution's approved bat list.
- 15.2.5 At the pregame meeting, the plate umpire shall clarify all ground rules for the representatives of each team.
- 15.2.6 Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension of play.
- 15.2.7 No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his or her respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- 15.2.8 An umpire should consult his or her associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it is to make the decision and who requests the opinion of the other umpire(s).
- 15.2.9 In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes shall be designated as the plate umpire, while the umpire(s) whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions shall be designated as the base umpire(s).
- 15.2.10 The plate umpire and base umpire(s) shall have equal authority to:
 - 15.2.10.1 Call a base runner out for leaving a base too soon;
 - 15.2.10.2 Call "Time" for suspension of play;
 - 15.2.10.3 Eject or suspend a player, coach or other team personnel; and
 - 15.2.10.4 Call illegal pitches.
- 15.2.11 The umpire shall declare the batter or base runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases in which such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire shall not render a decision on:

- 15.2.11.1 Participation by an improper player (that is, batter out of order, player who is listed inaccurately on the lineup card, unreported/misreported substitute and illegal player). (See Rule 8.3 and Appendix B for effect.)
- 15.2.11.2 Missing a base. (See Rule 12.22 for effect.)
- 15.2.11.3 Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched. (See Rules 12.10.3 and 12.28 for effect.)
- 15.2.11.4 Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base. (See Rule 12.8.1 for effect.)
- 15.2.11.5 Switching base runners on occupied bases. (See Rule 12.10.5 for effect.)
- 15.2.12 The plate umpire calls, "Play ball," loud enough for the coach charged with the conference, the batter and catcher to hear. The base umpire(s) calls, "Play ball," loud enough for the opposing coach to hear. Failure of players and coaches to hear the call shall not void the call.
- 15.2.13 The umpire shall not impose an effect on a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the effect would be an advantage to the offending team.
- 15.2.14 The plate umpire is empowered to rectify any situation in which a delayed call or a reversal of a call places a player in undue jeopardy.

A.R. 15.2.14: With base runners on first and second bases, the batter blooms a pitch into short center field. The center fielder dives, and as she catches the ball on her shoe tops, the base umpire calls the batter out. Immediately, the center fielder hits the ground, and the ball rolls out of her glove, causing the umpire to reverse the call, declaring no catch. Both base runners returned to their bases on the out call and are now in undue jeopardy of being out on the force plays. **RULING:** The umpire shall award the base(s) as deemed appropriate.
- 15.2.15 The umpire shall use his/her authority to protect the well-being of the participants by granting warm-up pitches, fielding and/or throwing to players after an injury, in inclement weather, or as deemed appropriate.

15.3 Plate Umpire

The plate umpire shall:

- 15.3.1 Have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- 15.3.2 Have the authority to ensure the pace of the game is acceptable and take action to address a situation that could create an unnecessary delay or interrupt the flow of the game. This includes consideration to grant a timeout request by the offense or defense.
- 15.3.3 Take a position behind the catcher.
- 15.3.4 Have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.
- 15.3.5 Call and count all balls and strikes and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes.
- 15.3.6 By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire(s), make decisions on plays, fair or foul balls, and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield in a two-umpire system, the plate umpire will assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.
- 15.3.7 Determine and declare whether:
 - 15.3.7.1 A batter is out when, with two strikes, a batted ball is bunted foul;
 - 15.3.7.2 A batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter; and

- 15.3.7.3 A fly ball is an infield fly.
- 15.3.8 Call or indicate “Play ball” to start the game or resume play, “Time” to temporarily suspend play, and “Game” to terminate play for a regulation game.
- 15.3.9 Document and announce each substitution to the opposing coaches and scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer, if applicable.
- 15.3.10 Render base decisions as indicated in the umpires’ mechanics manual.
- 15.3.11 Have the lights turned on when necessary for safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.
- 15.3.12 Be the final judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play should bad weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game. The on-site administrator shall keep the umpire crew informed of relevant weather changes. (See Appendix G for Safety Guidelines.)
- 15.3.13 For the second game of a doubleheader, the plate umpire from the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of a second game of a doubleheader.
- 15.3.14 Penalize rule infractions (such as illegal pitch, interference, delay of the game, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsportsmanlike conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher).
- 15.3.15 Conduct the pregame meeting with the opposing coaches before the scheduled starting time.
- 15.3.16 Assume all duties when circumstances warrant starting or finishing a game as a single umpire.
- 15.3.17 Document all conferences, warnings, incidents and protests.

15.4 Base Umpire(s)

The base umpire(s) shall:

- 15.4.1 Take such positions on the playing field as outlined in the umpires’ mechanics manual.
- 15.4.2 Assist the plate umpire in administering the rules of the game.
- 15.4.3 Render base decisions as indicated in the umpires’ mechanics manual.
- 15.4.4 Call base runners out for leaving a base before the pitch has been released.

15.5 Change of Umpires

Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless incapacitated by injury or illness.

15.6 Pregame Responsibilities

Before the start of each game (even of successive games or a doubleheader), the umpires shall:

- 15.6.1 Match each bat on the field or in team areas to the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List provided by each head coach. Inspect the bats for grip, size, ASA certification and any obvious damage. Umpires should make certain that damaged or illegal bats are not available for use during the game (that is, not allowed in the dugout).

EFFECT—See Rule 3.3 for illegal, altered and nonapproved bat violations.

- 15.6.2 Check the condition of the field, inspect all playing lines and markers for proper location and adequate visibility, and direct the host institution to

correct problems if possible or be prepared to make a ground rule to address the situation.

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

15.6.3 Collect from the teams a minimum of 12 game softballs — one new ball rubbed up by each team and additional balls from the host team's games management staff. The plate umpire shall determine whether the game balls meet specifications, are of the same specifications and manufacturer, and are of suitable quality for play. Additional balls should be furnished by a host team or tournament representative.

15.6.4 Have balls available to replenish the supply of game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:

15.6.4.1 A ball has been hit out of the playing field.

15.6.4.2 A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play.

15.6.4.3 The pitcher requests a different ball.

Note: The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

15.7 Pregame Meeting

The plate umpire shall conduct the pregame meeting per Rule 5.7.

15.8 Procedures at End of Game

At the completion of the game, the umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play or protest.

The plate umpire shall return the game balls to the appropriate games management staff or coach and leave the field together in as polite, businesslike and inconspicuous manner as possible.

Following the game, the plate umpire shall report any flagrant conduct or irregularity associated with the game to the on-site administrator (if applicable) and complete all necessary documentation for the NCAA softball secretary rules editor (using Appendix E).

15.9 Umpire's Judgment

15.9.1 Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed, but is never subject to protest. There will be no protest on such judgments as to whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a base runner was safe or out, a pitched ball was a ball or strike, or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with his or her associate(s) before taking any action, but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.

Exceptions:

1. On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the catcher, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball.
2. On a decision regarding a pick-off, when asked by either coach, the base umpire must confer with his/her associate(s).
- 15.9.2 Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.
- 15.9.3 The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a base runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

15.10 Suspension of Play

- 15.10.1 An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
 - 15.10.1.1 When, in his or her judgment, conditions justify such action.
 - 15.10.1.2 As noted in the Safety Guidelines in Appendix G (information provided by the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports regarding concussions, lightning and extreme cold).
 - 15.10.1.3 When he/she leaves his or her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
 - 15.10.1.4 When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- 15.10.2 An umpire shall not temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
 - 15.10.2.1 While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
 - 15.10.2.2 After the pitcher has started her delivery.
 - 15.10.2.3 In case of injury until all plays in progress have been completed or each base runner has been held at her base. *Exception:* When necessary to protect an injured player, the umpire may suspend play immediately and before resumption, award a base or bases that offensive players would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had play not been suspended.
 - 15.10.2.4 At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed.

15.11 Umpire's Responsibility for a Protest

- 15.11.1 During regular-season play, the head coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a head coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:
 - 15.11.1.1 After input from one coach of each team, the umpiring crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rules book.

- 15.11.1.2 The protesting coach has the right to continue the game under protest and submit a written protest to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.
- 15.11.1.3 If the protesting coach decides to continue the game under protest:
 - 15.11.1.3.1 The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, scorekeepers, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game will be resumed under protest.
 - 15.11.1.3.2 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.
 - 15.11.1.3.3 As soon as possible but no later than within 72 hours, the plate umpire and the protesting coach must each complete an official protest form (See Appendix E or the NCAA website) and send it to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor. The opposing coach may also choose to complete and send the official protest form to the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.
 - 15.11.1.3.4 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.”

Notes:

1. It is the responsibility of each conference to determine if conference games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared “No contest.” It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.

2. For nonconference games, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to determine if the games shall be replayed from the point of protest or declared “No contest.” It is the responsibility of the competing teams to arrange for the completion of a protested game.

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

15.11.2 During play that determines an NCAA qualifier and during NCAA championship play itself, the head coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team has one minute to voice its protest intentions. All intents to protest must be made to the plate umpire. When a head coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules:

15.11.2.1 After input from one coach of each team, the umpire crew must attempt to settle the dispute on site by requiring the protesting coach to identify the alleged rule violation. This should be done in a timely, professional and nonconfrontational manner using a rules book.

15.11.2.2 The protesting coach has the right to submit a written protest to a protest committee composed of the "off" umpire, the umpire in chief (if not involved with the call) and an additional member (chair) who is:

15.11.2.2.1 Predetermined by the conference for a conference championship;

15.11.2.2.2 The tournament director for an NCAA play-in;

15.11.2.2.3 The NCAA representative for regional play; or

15.11.2.2.4 A designated member of the softball championship committee for the NCAA championship series.

15.11.2.3 If the protesting coach proceeds with the protest:

15.11.2.3.1 The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coaches and scorekeeper, official scorer and public-address announcer that the game is being suspended pending the result of the protest.

15.11.2.3.2 The protesting coach must complete the appropriate protest form (provided in Appendix E, on the NCAA website or in the championship handbook) and state the rule in question at the time of the action or incident that caused the protest.

15.11.2.3.3 All protests must be ruled upon immediately by the protest committee. The committee shall confer with the umpires (and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, if available) before making its decision, and the protest committee chair shall make a written report to the chair of the respective softball committee and the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

15.12 Umpire's Responsibility for an Appeal

Once the appeal is made to the umpire responsible for the play, that umpire will make the proper call.

15.13 Umpire's Responsibility for a Forfeited Game

The umpire crew must concur in order to declare a game forfeited. If the umpire crew declares the game forfeited, the plate umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

15.14 Umpire's Responsibility for Ejections

The umpire has the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game (ejection). In the event of an ejection of

a head coach, an umpire shall ask the departing head coach to name an acting head coach. If the head coach declines to name a successor, the umpires shall initiate forfeit proceedings. In all cases involving an ejection, the ejecting umpire is responsible for submitting an incident report (See Appendix E), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The offending head coach may also file an incident report. The NCAA softball secretary-rules editor shall notify the institution's athletics director, conference commissioner and coordinators (if applicable).

Appendix A

Feet and Lines Chart (See also Rule 2.15.)

Action	Line In Question	Permissible Position
Catcher in box	Catcher's box	within
Fielder (other than catcher) before pitch	Foul line	on
Legal catch	Dead ball	on
Pitcher on plate taking signal	Width of plate	within
Pitcher's stride	Pitcher's lane	on
Batter position in box	Batter's box	within
Batter at bat/ball contact	Batter's box	on
Batter-runner in running lane	Runner's lane	on
Look-back rule	Pitcher's circle	on

Lines (foul lines, running lane, pitcher's lane and circle, dead-ball areas, 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 which is in contact with the ground extend beyond the outermost edge of the line.

To be considered "on the line," the foot of the player or coach may extend over the boundary as long as the part of the foot that is in contact with the ground is in contact with the line.

In either case, a player or coach must not have an entire foot in contact with the ground completely outside the line that defines the space.

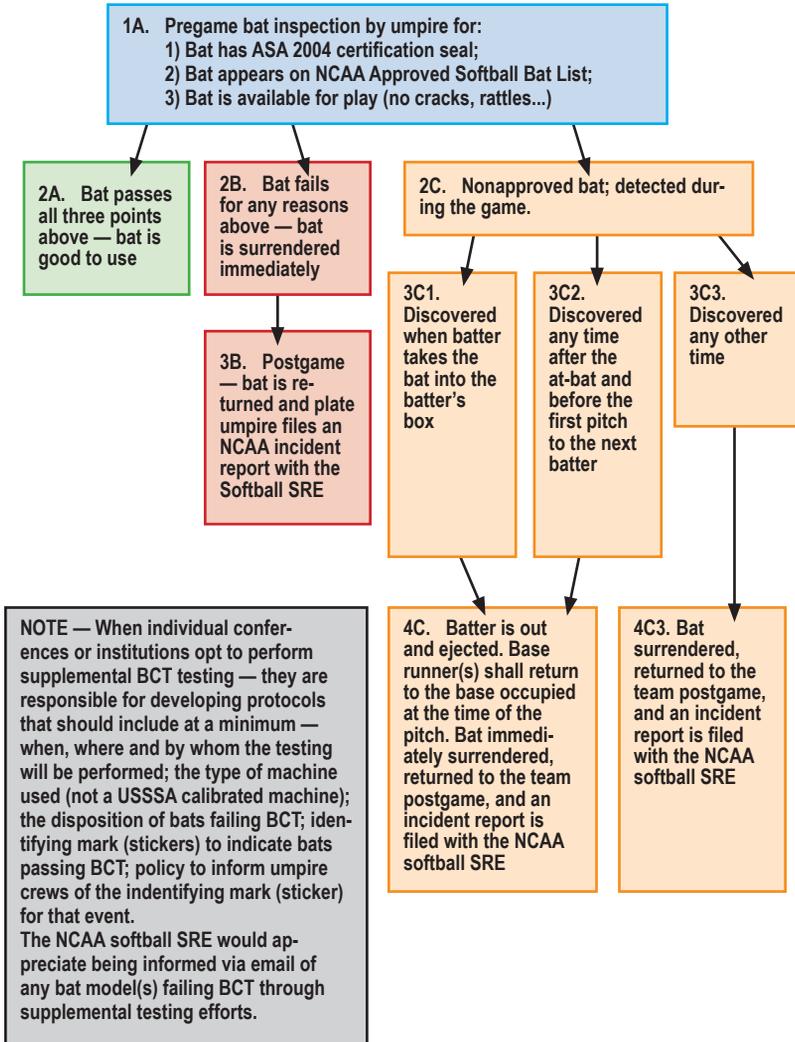
Appendix B

Improper Player Chart

	Batting Out of Order	Inaccurate Lineup	Unreported/Misreported Player	Illegal Player
Information found in	Rule 11.11	Rule 8.3.2	Rule 8.3.3	Rule 8.3.4
1. Offending Team Corrects Own Mistake (Offense or Defense)	Not recommended, but if coach insists, same penalty as if reported by opponent	No penalty to correct name or number as long as player was listed on lineup card	No penalty; declared officially in game	Offending player is ejected; all play stands
2. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire While Offender is At Bat	No penalty; correct batter steps in; all advances are legal	All play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
3. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Immediately After Turn At Bat But Before Next Pitch	Missed batter is out; nullify all advances; next batter is one who follows missed batter	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; nullify advances on last pitch but all previous advances are legal
4. Defensive Team Alerts The Umpire After Turn At Bat And After A Pitch	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; next batter is one who follows incorrect batter	Turn at bat is legal; all play stands; correct lineup	Offending player is out if on base; all advances are legal; declared officially in game	Offending player is out and ejected; all advances are legal
5. Defensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Tiebreaker Or Pinch Runner Who Has Just Advanced But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; correct lineup	Offending player is out; nullify all advances; declared officially in game	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 She Makes A Play But Before Next Pitch	Not applicable	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; correct lineup	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; declared officially in game	Offensive coach has option to nullify play and repeat last pitch, or take results of play; offending player is ejected
8. Offensive Team Alerts Umpire Of Offending Defensive Player After She Makes A Play And After Next Pitch	Not applicable	All play stands; correct lineup	All play stands; declared officially in game	All play stands; offending player is ejected

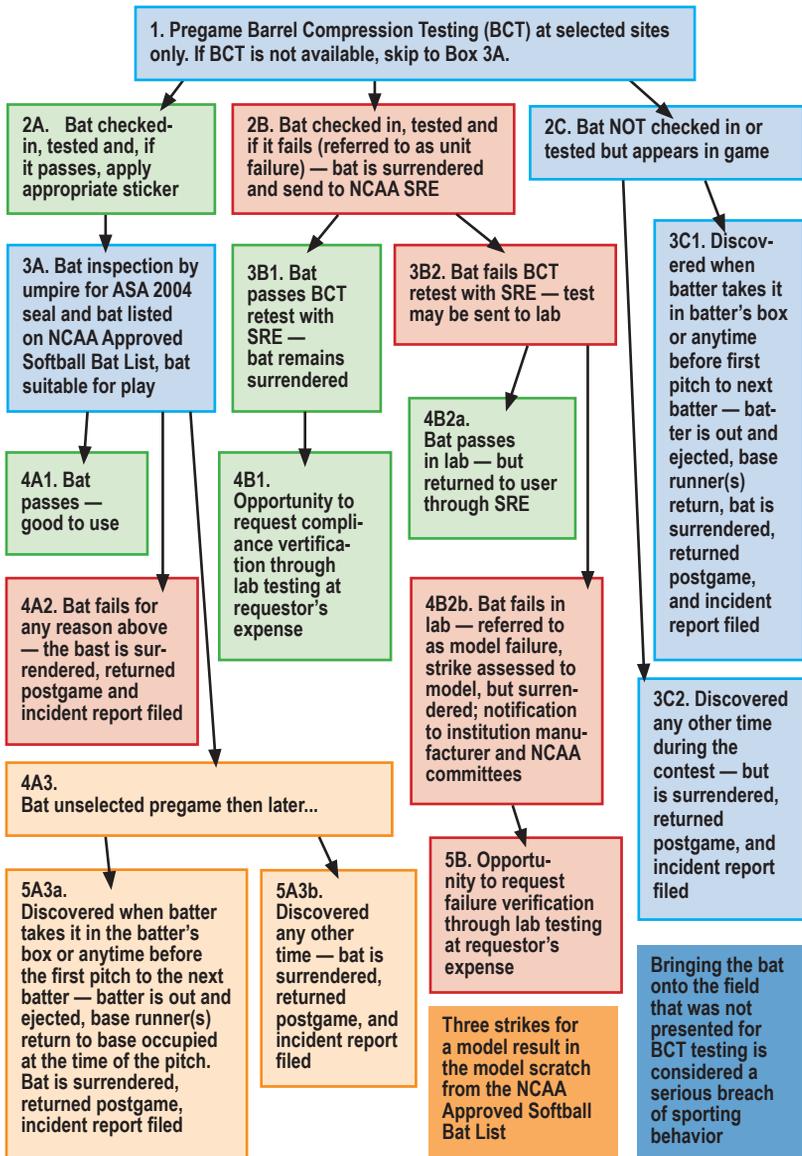
Appendix C

Bat Protocol for all NCAA Softball Games



Appendix D

Bat Protocol for Compliance Barrel Compression Testing



Appendix E

(To get a full-page version of this form, go to NCAA.org)

NCAA Softball Incident Report

Send to: Dee Abrahamson, NCAA Softball Secretary-Rules Editor
(Fax: 317/917-6800; Email: Abrahamson@niu.edu)

Game Date and Time _____ Location _____

Visiting Team _____ Home Team _____

Visiting Coach _____ Home Coach _____

Plate Umpire _____ Contact info _____

Base Umpire _____ Contact info _____

UIC or Add'l Umpire _____ Contact info _____

On-Site Administrator _____ Contact info _____

Official Scorer _____ Contact info _____

Game Details: Visitor's Score _____ Home Score _____ Inning _____ (Circle: Top or Bottom)

Batter's Number _____ Batter's Count _____ Outs _____

Runner(s) on Base & Location _____

Reason for Report: Improper Equipment (3) _____ Refusal to Play (13.10) _____

Fighting or Physical Contact (13.2) _____

Verbal Misconduct (13.6) _____

Other Unsportsmanlike Behavior by a Participant (13) _____

Equipment Misuse (13.4) _____

Misuse of Electronic Equipment, Artificial Noisemakers, or Tobacco (5.9, 5.11, and 13.9) _____

Person Ejected _____ Team _____

Protest Filed by _____ Team _____

Situation/Specific Rule Protested (attach additional page(s) if needed):

After ejection, did the coach: _____ Leave immediately. _____ Continue arguing. _____ Return to argue.

Person Filing Report _____ Date Submitted _____

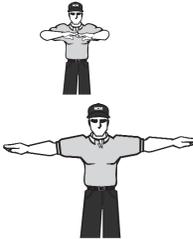
Signature/Title

Appendix F

Umpire Signals



OUT
Raise right arm straight up.
Bring forearm slightly forward
while clenching into a fist.
Verbalize "Out."



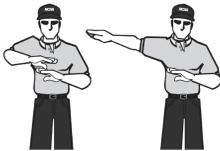
**SAFE/NO CATCH/NO TAG/
NO INFRACTION**
Extend arms straight out with
palms down. Verbally call.



STRIKE
Verbalize "Strike" while set.
Stand, raise right arm up and
forward into a fist.



**FOUL BALL/DEAD BALL/
NO PITCH**
Raise both arms up, palms for-
ward angled out from the body.
Verbalize the call.



FOUL TIP
Optional. Brush fingers with
upward motion, chest high or
higher. Follow with strike signal.
No verbal.



FAIR BALL
Point towards fair ground with
hand closest to infield. No
verbal call.



INFIELD FLY
Raise right arm above head
with fist closed. Verbally call
"Infield Fly."



DOUBLE
Raise right arm above head
showing two fingers. Verbally
call "Two Bases."



HOME RUN
Raise right arm above head with index finger extended. Circle arm in clockwise motion.



TIME
Raise both arms above head, palms forward, with arms at a slight angle from body. Verbally call "Time."



DO NOT PITCH
With palm up, raise hand toward pitcher.



PLAY BALL
Raise arm toward pitcher with palm facing body. Bring arm toward body while verbalizing "Play Ball."



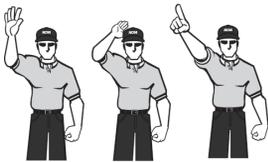
DELAYED DEAD BALL
Extend left arm straight out—in a fist with fingers facing out.



COUNT
Raise both arms shoulder high or higher in front of the body. Indicate strikes with fingers on right hand and balls on the left hand.



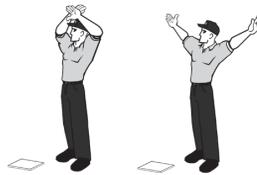
POINT
Extend arm with index finger extended. Keep other arm close to body.



EJECTION
Hold up right arm with palm open and forward. Draw the hand back to the ear and redirect arm skyward at a 45-degree angle away from the body with the index finger extended.



THE RUN SCORES
Point at plate while emphatically verbalizing "The Run Scores."



THE RUN DOES NOT SCORE
Cross both arms back and forth above the head with palms forward. Verbalize "No Run."

Appendix G

Safety Guidelines

The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports acknowledges the significant input of Brian L. Bennett, formerly an athletic trainer with the College of William and Mary Division of Sports Medicine, Ronald L. Holle, a meteorologist, formerly of the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL), and Mary Ann Cooper, M.D., Professor of Emergency Medicine of the University of Illinois at Chicago, in the development of this guideline.

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect intercollegiate athletics. Within the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that 60 to 70 fatalities and about 10 times as many injuries occur from lightning strikes every year. While the probability of being struck by lightning is low, the odds are significantly greater when a storm is in the area and proper safety precautions are not followed.

Education and prevention are the keys to lightning safety. The references associated with this guideline are an excellent educational resource. Prevention should begin long before any intercollegiate athletics event or practice by being proactive and having a lightning safety plan in place. The following steps are recommended by the NCAA and NOAA to mitigate the lightning hazard:

1. Designate a person to monitor threatening weather and to make the decision to remove a team or individuals from an athletics site or event. A lightning safety plan should include planned instructions for participants and spectators, designation of warning and all-clear signals, proper signs, and designation of safer places for shelter from the lightning.
2. Monitor local weather reports each day before any practice or event. Be diligently aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled intercollegiate athletics events or practices. Weather information can be found through various means via local television news coverage, the Internet, cable and satellite weather programming, or the National Weather Service (NWS) website at www.weather.gov.
3. Be informed of National Weather Service (NWS) issued thunderstorm “watches” or “warnings,” and the warning signs of developing thunderstorms in the area, such as high winds or darkening skies. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a “warning” means that severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take the proper precautions. A NOAA weather radio is particularly helpful in providing this information.
4. Know where the closest “safer structure or location” is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that location. A safer structure or location is defined as:

- a. Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, that is, a building with plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using the shower or plumbing facilities and making contact with electrical appliances during a thunderstorm.
- b. In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (neither a convertible, nor a golf cart) with the windows shut provides a measure of safety. The hard metal frame and roof, not the rubber tires, are what protects occupants by dissipating lightning current around the vehicle and not through the occupants. It is important not to touch the metal framework of the vehicle. Some athletics events rent school buses as safer shelters to place around open courses or fields.

Dangerous Locations

Outside locations increase the risk of being struck by lightning when thunderstorms are in the area. Small covered shelters are not safe from lightning. Dugouts, rain shelters, golf shelters and picnic shelters, even if they are properly grounded for structural safety, are usually not properly grounded from the effects of lightning and side flashes to people. They are usually very unsafe and may actually increase the risk of lightning injury. Other dangerous locations include areas connected to, or near, light poles, towers and fences that can carry a nearby strike to people. Also dangerous is any location that makes the person the highest point in the area.

5. Lightning awareness should be heightened at the first flash of lightning, clap of thunder, and/or other criteria such as increasing winds or darkening skies, no matter how far away. These types of activities should be treated as a warning or “wake-up call” to intercollegiate athletics personnel. Lightning safety experts suggest that if you hear thunder, begin preparation for evacuation; if you see lightning, consider suspending activities and heading for your designated safer locations. The following specific lightning safety guidelines have been developed with the assistance of lightning safety experts. Design your lightning safety plan to consider local safety needs, weather patterns and thunderstorm types.
 - a. As a minimum, lightning safety experts strongly recommend that by the time the monitor observes 30 seconds between seeing the lightning flash and hearing its associated thunder, all individuals should have left the athletics site and reached a safer structure or location.
 - b. Please note that thunder may be hard to hear if there is an athletics event going on, particularly in stadiums with large crowds. Implement your lightning safety plan accordingly.
 - c. The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not guarantees that lightning will not strike. At least 10 percent of lightning occurs when there is no rainfall and when blue sky is often visible somewhere in the sky, especially with summer thunderstorms. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 (or more) miles away from the rain shaft.
 - d. Avoid using landline telephones, except in emergency situations. People have been killed while using a landline telephone during a thunderstorm. Cellular or cordless phones are safe alternatives to a landline phone, particularly if the person and the antenna are located within a safer structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

- e. To resume athletics activities, lightning safety experts recommend waiting 30 minutes after both the last sound of thunder and last flash of lightning. If lightning is seen without hearing thunder, lightning may be out of range and therefore less likely to be a significant threat. At night, be aware that lightning can be visible at a much greater distance than during the day as clouds are being lit from the inside by lightning. This greater distance may mean that the lightning is no longer a significant threat. At night, use both the sound of thunder and seeing the lightning channel itself to decide on re-setting the 30-minute “return-to play” clock before resuming outdoor athletics activities.
 - f. People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need prompt emergency help. If you are in a 911 community, call for help. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes. Automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) have become a common, safe and effective means of reviving persons in cardiac arrest. Planned access to early defibrillation should be part of your emergency plan. However, CPR should never be delayed while searching for an AED. Note: Weather watchers, real-time weather forecasts and commercial weather-warning devices are all tools that can be used to aid in decision-making regarding stoppage of play, evacuation and return to play.
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 4. National Lightning Safety Institute website: www.lightningsafety.com.
 5. Uman MA. *All About Lightning*. New York: Dover Publications. 1986.
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 7. Walsh KM, Hanley MJ, Graner SJ, Beam D, Bazluki J. A Survey of Lightning Safety Policy in Selected Division I Colleges. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 32(3):206-210. 1997.
 8. Walsh KM, Bennett BL, Holle RL, Cooper MA, Kithil R. National Athletic Trainer’s Association Position Statement. Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 35(4):471-477. 2000.
 9. Holle RL. 2005: Lightning-caused recreation deaths and injuries. Preprints, 14th Symposium on Education, Jan. 9-13, San Diego, California, American Meteorological Society, 6 pp.
 10. The Weather Channel on satellite or cable, and on the Internet at www.weather.com.

Cold Stress and Cold Exposure

June 1994 • Revised June 2002, June 2009

Any individual can lose body heat when exposed to cold air, but when the physically active cannot maintain heat, cold exposure can be uncomfortable, can impair performance and may be life threatening. A person may exhibit cold stress due to environmental or nonenvironmental factors. The NATA position statement (2008) states that injuries from cold exposure are due to a combination of low air or water temperatures and the influence of wind on the body's ability to maintain a normothermic core temperature, due to localized exposure of extremities to cold air or surface.



Wind Chill Chart



		Temperature (°F)																	
Calm		40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40	-45
Wind (mph)	5	36	31	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40	-46	-52	-57	-63
	10	34	27	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47	-53	-59	-66	-72
	15	32	25	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51	-58	-64	-71	-77
	20	30	24	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55	-61	-68	-74	-81
	25	29	23	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58	-64	-71	-78	-84
	30	28	22	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67	-73	-80	-87
	35	28	21	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-82	-89
	40	27	20	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64	-71	-78	-84	-91
	45	26	19	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58	-65	-72	-79	-86	-93
	50	26	19	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60	-67	-74	-81	-88	-95
	55	25	18	11	4	-3	-11	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-54	-61	-68	-75	-82	-89	-97
60	25	17	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-84	-91	-98	

Frostbite Times 30 minutes 10 minutes 5 minutes

Wind Chill (°F) = 35.74 + 0.6215T - 35.75(V^{0.16}) + 0.4275T(V^{0.16})
 Where, T= Air Temperature (°F) V= Wind Speed (mph) Effective 11/01/01

The variance in the degree, signs and symptoms of cold stress may also be the result of nonenvironmental factors. These factors are, but not limited to, previous cold weather injury (CWI), race, geological origin, ambient temperature, use of medications, clothing attire, fatigue, hydration, age, activity, body size/ composition, aerobic fitness level, clothing, acclimatization and low caloric intake. Nicotine, alcohol and other drugs may also contribute to how the person adapts to the stresses of cold.

Early recognition of cold stress is important. Shivering, a means for the body to generate heat, serves as an early warning sign. Excessive shivering contributes to fatigue and makes performance of motor skills more difficult. Other signs include numbness and pain in fingers and toes or a burning sensation of the ears, nose or exposed flesh. As cold exposure continues, the core temperature drops. When the

cold reaches the brain, a victim may exhibit sluggishness, poor judgment and may appear disoriented. Speech becomes slow and slurred, and movements become clumsy. If the participant wants to lie down and rest, the situation is a medical emergency, and the emergency action plan should be activated.

Cold injuries can be classified into three categories: freezing or nonfreezing of extremities and hypothermia.

Definitions of Common Cold Injuries in Sports

Frostbite

Frostbite is usually a localized response to a cold, dry environment, but in some incidents, moisture may exacerbate the condition. Frostbite can appear in three distinct phases: frostnip, mild frostbite and deep frostbite.

Frostnip, also known as prefreeze, is a precursor to frostbite and many times occurs when skin is in contact with cold surfaces. (for example, sporting implements or liquid). The most characteristic symptom is a loss of sensation.

Frostbite is the actual freezing of skin or body tissues, usually of the face, ears, fingers and toes, and can occur within minutes. Signs and symptoms include edema, redness or mottled gray skin, and transient tingling and burning.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a significant drop in body temperature [below 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius)] as the body's heat loss exceeds its production. The body is unable to maintain a normal core temperature. An individual may exhibit changes in motor function (for example, clumsiness, loss of finger dexterity, slurred speech), cognition (for example, confusion, memory loss) and loss of consciousness (for example, drop in heart rate, stress on the renal system, hyperventilation, sensation of shivering). The signs and symptoms of hypothermia will vary with each individual, depending upon previous cold weather injury (CWI), race, geological origin, ambient temperature, use of medications, clothing attire, fatigue, hydration, age, activity and other factors.

Hypothermia can occur at temperatures above freezing. A wet and windy 30- to 50-degree exposure may be as serious as a subzero exposure. As the Wind Chill Equivalent Index (WCEI) indicates, wind speed interacts with ambient temperature to significantly increase body cooling. When the body and clothing are wet, whether from sweat, rain, snow or immersion, the cooling is even more pronounced due to evaporation of the water held close to the skin by wet clothing.

Chilblain and Immersion (Trench) Foot

Chilblain is a nonfreezing cold injury associated with extended cold and wet exposure and results in an exaggerated or inflammatory response. Chilblain may be observed in exposure to cold, wet conditions extending beyond one hour in endurance and alpine events, and team sports, in which clothing remains wet. The feet and hands are usually affected.

Prevention of Cold Exposure and Cold Stress

Educating all participants in proper prevention is the key to decreasing the possibility of cold exposure injury or illness. Individuals unaccustomed to cold conditions participating at venues that may place them at risk for cold stress may need to take extra precautionary measures (for example, proper clothing, warm-up routines, nutrition, hydration, sleep).

The sports medicine staff and coaches should identify participants or conditions that may place members of their teams at a greater risk (for example, predisposing medical conditions, physiological factors, mechanical factors, environmental conditions).

Clothing

Individuals should be advised to dress in layers and try to stay dry. Moisture, whether from perspiration or precipitation, significantly increases body heat loss. Layers can be added or removed depending on temperature, activity and wind chill. Begin with a wicking fabric next to the skin; wicking will not only keep the body warm and dry, but also eliminates the moisture retention of cotton. Polypropylene and wool wick moisture away from the skin and retain insulating properties when wet. Add lightweight pile or wool layers for warmth and use a wind-blocking garment to avoid wind chill. Because heat loss from the head and neck may account for as much as 40 percent of total heat loss, the head and ears should be covered during cold conditions. Hand coverings should be worn as needed, and in extreme conditions, a scarf or facemask should be worn. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Feet can be kept dry by wearing moisture-wicking or wool socks that breathe and should be dried between wears.

Energy/Hydration

Maintain energy levels via the use of meals, energy snacks and carbohydrate/electrolyte sports drinks. Negative energy balance increases the susceptibility to hypothermia. Stay hydrated, since dehydration affects the body's ability to regulate temperature and increases the risk of frostbite. Fluids are as important in the cold as in the heat. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and other drugs that cause water loss, vasodilatation or vasoconstriction of skin vessels.

Fatigue/Exhaustion

Fatigue and exhaustion deplete energy reserves. Exertional fatigue and exhaustion increase the susceptibility to hypothermia, as does sleep loss.

Warm Up

Warm up thoroughly and keep warm throughout the practice or competition to prevent a drop in muscle or body temperature. Time the warm-up to lead almost immediately to competition. After competition, add clothing to avoid rapid cooling. Warm extremely cold air with a mask or scarf to prevent bronchospasm.

Partner

Participants should never train alone. An injury or delay in recognizing early cold exposure symptoms could become life threatening if it occurs during a cold-weather workout on an isolated trail.

Practice and Competition Sessions

The following guidelines, as outlined in the 2008 NATA position statement, can be used in planning activity depending on the wind chill temperature. Conditions should be constantly re-evaluated for change in risk, including the presence of precipitation:

- 30 degrees Fahrenheit and below: Be aware of the potential for cold injury and notify appropriate personnel of the potential.
- 25 degrees Fahrenheit and below: Provide additional protective clothing; cover as much exposed skin as practical; provide opportunities and facilities for re-warming.
- 15 degrees Fahrenheit and below: Consider modifying activity to limit exposure or to allow more frequent chances to re-warm.
- 0 degrees Fahrenheit and below: Consider terminating or rescheduling activity.

Environmental Conditions

To identify cold stress conditions, regular measurements of environmental conditions are recommended during cold conditions by referring to the Wind Chill Equivalent Index (WCEI) (revised Nov. 1, 2001). The WCEI is a useful tool to monitor the air temperature index that measures the heat loss from exposed human skin surfaces. Wind chill is the temperature it “feels like” outside, based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of the wind and cold. Wind removes heat from the body in addition to the low ambient temperature.

When traveling to areas of adverse weather conditions, the following terms will be consistently referred to in weather forecasting.

Wind Chill

Increased wind speeds accelerate heat loss from exposed skin, and the wind chill is a measure of this effect. No specific rules exist for determining when wind chill becomes dangerous. As a general guideline, the threshold for potentially dangerous wind chill conditions is about minus-20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind Chill Advisory

The National Weather Service issues this product when the wind chill could be life threatening if action is not taken. The criteria for this warning vary from state to state.

Wind Chill Factor

Increased wind speeds accelerate heat loss from exposed skin. No specific rules exist for determining when wind chill becomes dangerous. As a general rule, the threshold for potentially dangerous wind chill conditions is about minus-20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind Chill Warning

The National Weather Service issues this product when the wind chill is life threatening. The criteria for this warning vary from state to state.

Blizzard Warning

The National Weather Service issues this product for winter storms with sustained or frequent winds of 35 miles per hour or higher with considerable falling and/or blowing snow that frequently reduces visibility to one-quarter of a mile or less.

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Appendix H

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. Fights or disputes between or among uniformed personnel on the field;
 - d. Any episode or event that would embarrass or denigrate an umpire, visiting team member, visiting team representative or the official scorer;
 - e. The likeness of an umpire or an umpire’s name that could be used to embarrass an umpire; and
 - f. Fans or other unauthorized personnel running onto the field.
2. Exciting plays such as spectacular catches or players circling the bases after home runs may be shown more than once.
3. Replays may not delay the game. The next batter is expected to immediately step into the batter’s box.
4. Any instance in which an umpire has made a judgement call may be replayed only one time at regular speed.
5. No live game action may be displayed. Close-ups of the batter in the on-deck circle are permitted, but once a player steps into the batter’s box, all live action must stop. A still shot, statistics or other non-moving pictures must remain on the screen until the batter finishes the plate appearance.
6. Arguments or disputes between umpires and players or coaches may not be shown.
7. Live shots of fans are permitted during dead-ball periods, but good judgement must be used to avoid unacceptable behavior, signs or clothing.

B. Audio and 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 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 file an incident report (Appendix E or downloaded from the NCAA website), in writing, to the NCAA as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours after the game. The offending institution's athletics director and conference commissioner (if applicable) will be notified.

Appendix I

Concussions

A concussion is a brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head. Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness or other obvious signs. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the previous one (hours, days or weeks) can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death.

Recognize and Refer: To help recognize a concussion, watch for the following two events among your student-athletes during both meets and practices:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
- AND-
2. Any change in the student-athlete’s behavior, thinking, or physical functioning (see signs and symptoms).

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Is unsure of score or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows behavior or personality changes.
- Can’t recall events before hit or fall.
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall.

Symptoms Reported by Student-Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Double or blurry vision.
- Sensitivity to light.
- Sensitivity to noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.
- Concentration or memory problems.
- Confusion.
- Does not “feel right.”

An athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, either at rest or during exertion, should be **removed immediately from practice or competition** and should not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:

1. **Remove the student-athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of concussion if your student-athlete has experienced a blow to the head. Do not allow the student-athlete to just “shake it off.” Each individual athlete will respond to concussions differently.
2. **Ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Immediately refer the student-athlete to the appropriate athletics

medical staff, such as a certified athletic trainer, team physician or health care professional experienced in concussion evaluation and management.

3. **Allow the student-athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** Allow athletics medical staff to rely on their clinical skills and protocols in evaluating the athlete to establish the appropriate time to return to play. A return-to-action progression should occur in an individualized, step-wise fashion with gradual increments in physical exertion and risk of contact. Follow your institution's physician supervised concussion management protocol.
4. **Develop a game plan.** Student-athletes should not return to play until cleared by the appropriate athletics medical staff. In fact, as concussion management continues to evolve with new science, the care is becoming more conservative and return-to-play time frames are getting longer. Coaches should have a game plan that accounts for student-athletes to be out for at least the remainder of the day.

For further details please refer to the "NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook Guideline on Concussions" or online at www.NCAA.org/health-safety and www.CDC.gov/Concussion.



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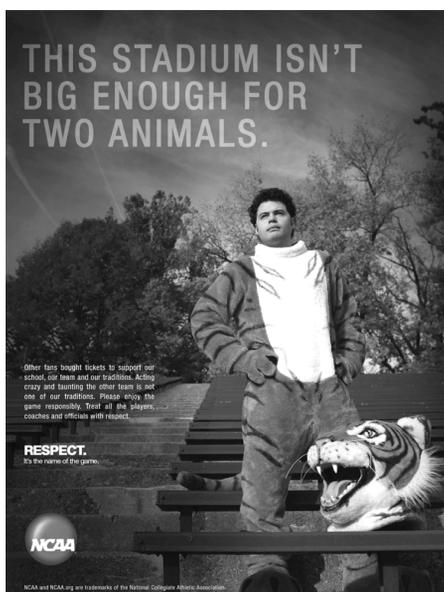
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Sportsmanship is a core value of the NCAA. The NCAA Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct has identified **respect** and **integrity** as two critical elements of sportsmanship and launched an awareness and action campaign at the NCAA Convention in January 2009.

Athletics administrators may download materials and view best practices ideas at the website below: **www.NCAA.org**, then click on **"Student-Athlete Programs,"** then **"Sportsmanship"** and select the **"Resources/Best Practices"** tab.



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