

North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance -
Open Division



THIS DOCUMENT WAS OFFICIALLY ADOPTED AT THE 2010 NAGAAA WINTER MEETING AS THE CORRECT METHODOLOGY OF UTILIZING THE NAGAAA PLAYER RATING GUIDELINES AND AS THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF TERMINOLOGY REFERENCED IN THE NAGAAA PLAYER RATING GUIDELINES. (Updated for 2010 and 2011 NAGAAA Summer Meeting changes and two additional statements for workshop presentation purposes.)

Directions:

1. Read the following Statement of Purpose:

Statement of Purpose: This form is intended to be used as a tool to assist those responsible for rating players so ratings may be fair and consistent across all levels of play and across all leagues in the Open Division. All questions are intended to determine if a player possesses a skill or skills necessary for softball

2. Circle a YES or NO answer for each question.

3. Many questions have multiple parts. A YES to ANY one part is a YES to the question.

4. Questions: All questions will begin with the phrase: **DOES THE PLAYER HAVE THE ABILITY TO...**

FIELDING:

DEFINITIONS FOR FIELDING QUESTIONS

OCCASIONALLY: to be able to perform the particular skill with some regularity or more often than not. (i.e. the skill can be performed 3 out of 5 times)

CONSISTENTLY: to be able to perform the particular skill with great regularity. (i.e. the skill can be performed 4 out of 5 times)

Questions 1-5 are intended to identify THROWING ability, and have nothing to do with the player's ability to field the ball.

"1.56 Vicinity – within a step in any direction laterally of the player receiving the throw" – *does not have to be right at the receiving player; is not concerned with the ability of the receiving player to successfully catch the throw*

"1.06 Average/Above Average speed –

1. Below Average Speed – a batter, at the point of contact, being able to run home to first in 5 + seconds or slower.
2. Average Speed – a batter, at the point of contact, being able to run home to first in 4 – 5 seconds.
3. Above Average Speed – a batter, at the point of contact, being able to run home to first in less than 4 seconds or faster."

"1.42 Rainbow Arc – a ball that from the point of release rises vertically 10% or more of the total distance that it travels" – *the point of release for most players is 6 to 12 inches higher than the player's height; a 5'9" player may have a release point of 6'6" and would be considered to throw without a rainbow arc if:*

1. the player's throw from 2nd to 1st (65') rose less than 12'6.5";
2. the player's throw from 3rd to 1st (90') rose less than 15'6";
3. the player's throw from 150' (long throw) rose less than 21'6".

"1.41 Proper Place – appropriate base or fielder"

"1.29 Long Throw – a throw that travels 150 feet or more" (term used in Q#5 inadvertently left off previously)

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1. **occasionally** throw a ball through the air **65 feet** or better in the **vicinity** of another player? (65 feet is the distance between bases)

Measures minimal arm strength (making the throw with a rainbow arc is acceptable here) and moderate accuracy ("occasionally")

2. **consistently** throw a ball through the air **90 feet** or better in the **vicinity** of another player? (90 feet is the distance between 3rd and 1st)

More accuracy required here ("consistently") and a longer throw but rainbow arc is still acceptable here

OR

occasionally throw to the **proper place** turning **accurate infield** plays against runners with **average** base running speed?

*"accurate" – not defined; likely means "in the vicinity of a player on the intended base"
Intended to measure effectiveness of pitchers and catchers who might not typically have to throw 65 feet or better (no reference to arm strength, just how often the player makes an effective play)*

[a "YES" to Q#2 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#1]

3. **occasionally** throw a ball through the air **90 feet** or better **without a rainbow arc** in the **vicinity** of another player?

Less consistency required than the first part of #2 but a stronger arm is required

OR

consistently throw to the **proper place** turning **accurate infield** plays against runner with **average** base running speed?

Same as second part of #2 but with more consistency required

[a "YES" to Q#3 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#1, #2]

4. **consistently** throw a ball through the air **90 feet** or better **without a rainbow arc** in the **vicinity** of another player?

Measures consistency, arm strength, and accuracy; same as first part of #3 but with more consistency

[a "YES" to Q#4 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#1, #2, #3]

5. **consistently** throw **without a rainbow arc** to the **proper place** turning **accurate infield** plays against **aggressive** runners with **above average** speed?

Measures consistency, arm strength, accuracy and effectiveness of infielders against the top base runners

OR

consistently make **long throws** **without a rainbow arc** from the **outfield** **directly and accurately** to the **proper base** completing **proper plays** against **aggressive** runners with **above average** speed?

"directly and accurately" – not defined; likely means "without a cutoff man (but not necessarily on the fly – a strong, accurate one- or two-hop throw that accomplishes the other facets of this question is sufficient to get a "YES" here) and in the vicinity of a player on the intended base"

Measures consistency, arm strength, accuracy and effectiveness of outfielders against the top base runners

[a "YES" to Q#5 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#1, #2, #3, #4]

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Questions 6-14 are intended to identify **FIELDING** ability, and **have nothing to do with the player's ability to throw the ball.**

mph is not intended to infer a constant speed (never changing no matter how far the ball travels); the ball begins slowing down the instant after it is hit and is effected by items such as gravity, humidity and friction (if the ball hits the ground)

“1.37 On Purpose – with intent”

“1.47 Slow Hit Ball – a ball hit up to 55 mph or hit 150 feet or less in the air.”

“1.58 Within A Few Steps – includes balls hit to the player as well as balls hit within a few steps of the player”

“1.14 Fly Ball – a ball hit in the air that is not a line drive but is in the air for less than 5 seconds”

“1.31 Medium Hit Ball – a ball hit 55 to 80 mph or hit 150 to 250 feet in the air.”

“1.23 In the Hole - a ball that is hit at a distance that is more than 12 foot radius from the infield defender.” – a 12 foot radius is typically about 3 steps and a reach

“1.17 Hard Hit Ball – described as a ball hit at a minimum of 80 mph or greater than 250 feet in the air.”

“1.27 Line Drive – a ball that from the point of contact rises vertically less than 10% of the total horizontal distance it travels.” – e.g., a ball struck at 4' off of the ground that travels 100' and rises less than 14' off of the ground

“1.22 In the Gap – a ball that is hit at a distance that is more than 30 foot radius from the outfield defender.” – a 30 foot radius is typically about 10 steps for an outfielder

“1.50 Spectacular catch – when a player catches the ball while leaving his center of gravity or is able to overcome obstructions.” – e.g., a diving catch or reaching over a fence (either for a foul or a home run)

6. **occasionally on purpose** catch balls that are **thrown to the player with a rainbow arc?**

Measures moderate consistency of the ability to catch a thrown ball that is thrown accurately to the player and with very low velocity.

7. **occasionally on purpose** catch balls that are **thrown to the player without a rainbow arc?**

Same as #6 except on throws with higher velocity (but still throws with a fair amount of arc)

[a “YES” to Q#7 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#6]

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8. consistently on purpose field slow hit balls that are within a few steps?

Measures consistency of fielding slow hit balls that may be directly to the player.

OR

consistently on purpose catch fly balls that are within 15 feet?

Measures primarily outfield consistency of fielding fly balls with minimal range requirements

[a “YES” to Q#8 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#6, #7]

9. consistently on purpose field medium hit balls that are within a few steps?

Same as first part of #8 except on harder hit balls (but not hard hit balls)

OR

consistently on purpose catch fly balls that are more than 15 feet away?

Same as second part of #8 except with more range required (but still not necessarily great range)

[a “YES” to Q#9 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#6, #7, #8]

10. occasionally on purpose field medium hit balls that are in the hole?

Less consistency required than first part of #9 but with greater range required

OR

occasionally on purpose catch fly balls that are more than 30 feet away?

Less consistency required than second part of #9 but with greater range required

[a “YES” to Q#10 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#6, #7, #8, #9]

11. consistently on purpose field medium hit balls that are in the hole?

Same as first part of #10 except with more consistency

OR

consistently on purpose catch fly balls that are more than 30 feet away?

Same as second part of #10 except with more consistency

[a “YES” to Q#11 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#6, #7, #8, #9, #10]

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12. occasionally on purpose field hard hit balls that are in the hole?

Less consistency than first part of #11 but on harder hit balls and still with good range

OR

occasionally on purpose stop line drives in the gaps from getting by the outfielders?

Measures consistency on outfielders' ability to field harder hit balls with good range, but does not require them to catch those balls in the air, just to field them before they get by the outfielder

[a "YES" to Q#12 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11]

13. consistently on purpose field hard hit balls that are in the hole?

Same as first part of #12 except with more consistency

OR

consistently on purpose stop line drives in the gaps from getting by the outfielders?

Same as second part of #12 except with more consistency

[a "YES" to Q#13 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12]

14. occasionally on purpose make spectacular catches?

Not linked with any other questions

Concentrate on definition of "spectacular catch" to properly evaluate level of skill required, but keep in mind "occasionally" to properly evaluate level of consistency required

BASE RUNNING:

DEFINITIONS FOR BASE RUNNING QUESTIONS

OCCASIONALLY: to be able to perform the particular skill with some regularity or more often than not. (i.e. the skill can be performed 3 out of 5 times)

“1.45 Rudimentary Knowledge – no definition required”

“1.52 Take Extra Bases – advance at least one base beyond what the opportunity would typically provide a base runner with average speed.”

This is the biggest key to properly evaluating in this section. The concept here was that, for a player to get a YES to questions 16 – 18, the player would be doing something above average - not necessarily with above average speed in all instances, but with above average base running results.

For example, if a typical runner with average speed would get a single on a certain hit, this base runner would occasionally get a double on that same hit; or if a typical runner with average speed would go from 1st to 2nd on a certain hit, this base runner would occasionally go from 1st to 3rd on that same hit. It is comparative to a typical runner with average speed, and should be used to identify above average base runners.

It is not intended to mean that every time a base runner goes more than one base on a hit, he is “taking an extra base”. Sometimes even a typical runner with average speed gets a double, or goes from 1st to 3rd on a slow base hit to right field; that does not constitute “taking an extra base”, it merely is doing what any typical base runner with average speed would do. Similarly, if a base runner advances a base when a ball is bobbled, that does not necessarily mean he is “taking an extra base”; if a typical runner with average speed would have done the same thing, then the base runner has not done anything “above average”, he has simply done what most runners would have. However, if most players would not have advanced on the bobble, this player has “taken an extra base.”

This is a high level skill (though still relative to the level of defense against which the player could perform this skill) but not limited to any particular division and not limited to any particular number of players.

“1.11 Defense definitions

- a) A limited level of defense is a theoretical set of players having the following skills: 1,2,3,6,7,8
 - b) An intermediate level of defense is a theoretical set of players having skills greater than a limited level of defense but less than an exceptional level of defense
 - c) An exceptional level of defense is a theoretical set of players having greater skills than: 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10”
- This is another very important element in evaluating this section. The level of defense assumes the base runner is competing against a team where every player can do the respective skills (see questions for more details). Since a player may not face every level of defense, the evaluator must be able to project whether or not success could be achieved against certain levels of defense. Just because a player has not faced a certain level of defense does not mean the player could not perform the skill against that level of defense if given the opportunity. There is not a correlation between the terminology of the levels of defense and a particular division of play; that is, “a limited level of defense” does not correlate to a “D” division team or a “C” division team – it is simply a theoretical team having the identified skills.*

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15. go from base to base utilizing rudimentary knowledge of the rules?

Measuring a very basic level of ability; most players would get a YES to this

16. run with average speed and occasionally take extra bases on good hits or errors against a limited level of defense?

“good hits or errors” – not defined: “good” is likely extraneous – the key is whether or not the player “takes extra bases” on the hit or error.

Measures occasional success of a player with average (or presumably better than average) speed taking extra bases against a limited level of defense; that is, in evaluating #16, it must be based on whether or not the player could accomplish that skill when playing against a team where every player can do #3 (“occasionally throw a ball through the air 90 feet or better without a rainbow arc in the vicinity of another player OR consistently throw to the proper place turning accurate infield plays against a runner with average base running speed”) AND #8 (“consistently on purpose field slow hit balls that are within a few steps OR consistently on purpose catch routine fly balls that are within 15 feet”).

[a “YES” to Q#16 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#15]

17. run aggressively with average or better speed and occasionally take extra bases on good hits or errors against an intermediate level of defense?

“aggressively” – not defined; may not need this word since key is “take extra bases” and it likely doesn’t matter how you accomplish it, just that you do accomplish it against this level of defense higher than that in #16.

Measures occasional success of a player with average or better speed taking extra bases against an intermediate level of defense; that is, in evaluating #17, it must be based on whether or not the player could accomplish that skill when playing against a team where every player can do something GREATER THAN #3 (“occasionally throw a ball through the air 90 feet or better without a rainbow arc in the vicinity of another player OR consistently throw to the proper place turning accurate infield plays against runners with average base running speed”) AND GREATER THAN #8 (“consistently on purpose field slow hit balls that are within a few steps OR consistently on purpose catch routine fly balls that are within 15 feet”).

[a “YES” to Q#17 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#15, #16]

18. run very aggressively and occasionally take extra bases on good hits or errors against an exceptional level of defense?

“very aggressively” – not defined; may not need this word since key is “take extra bases” and it likely doesn’t matter how you accomplish it, just that you do accomplish it against this level of defense higher than that in #17.

Measures occasional success of a player with average or better speed taking extra bases against an exceptional level of defense; that is, in evaluating #18, it must be based on whether or not the player could accomplish that skill when playing against a team where every player can do skills GREATER THAN #4 (“consistently throw a ball through the air 90 feet or better without a rainbow arc in the vicinity of another player”) AND GREATER THAN #10 (“occasionally on purpose field medium hit balls that are in the hole OR occasionally on purpose catch fly balls that are more than 30 feet away”).

[a “YES” to Q#18 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#15, #16, #17]

HITTING:

DEFINITIONS FOR HITTING QUESTIONS

OCCASIONALLY: to be able to perform the particular skill, but without regularity. (i.e. the skill can be performed 2 out of 5 times)

CONSISTENTLY: to be able to perform the particular skill with some regularity or more often than not. (i.e. the skill can be performed 3 out of 5 times)

OCCASIONALLY and CONSISTENTLY are lower for HITTING than for FIELDING and BASE RUNNING

Questions 19-26 are intended to be answered based on the outcome – not counting walks – of each completed at bat (whether the batter reaches base or is out on the final pitch of the at bat), not based on the outcome of each swing during an at bat.

This is a modified on-base percentage (actual on-base percentage includes walks but does not include errors). Since we are trying to evaluate a measure of hitting, we do not include walks. Since reaching base on an error is a positive outcome of hitting the ball, and since errors are often a factor of how hard the batter hit the ball or how fast the batter is, we include that in measuring the success of a hitter.

“1.32 Medium Velocity – a ball hit 55 to 80 mph or hit 150 to 250 feet in the air.”

“1.11 Defense definitions (see above section on BASE RUNNING)”

The level of defense assumes the batter is competing against a team where every player can do the respective skills (see questions for more details). Since a player may not face every level of defense, the evaluator must be able to project whether or not success could be achieved against certain levels of defense. Just because a player has not faced a certain level of defense does not mean the player could not perform the skill against that level of defense if given the opportunity.

19. occasionally hit a fair ball?

Measures only the consistency of the batter putting the ball in fair territory from at bat to at bat, not whether or not they reach base.

20. consistently hit a fair ball?

Same as #19 except with more consistency

[a “YES” to Q#20 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#19]

21. occasionally hit a fair ball with at least medium velocity?

Same as #19 except hitting harder

[a “YES” to Q#21 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#19, #20]

22. consistently hit a fair ball with at least medium velocity?

Same as #21 except with more consistency

[a “YES” to Q#22 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#19, #20, #21]

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23. consistently reach base safely on a batted ball against a limited level of defense?

Basically having a .600 modified on base percentage against a team where every player can do #3 ("occasionally throw a ball through the air 90 feet or better without a rainbow arc in the vicinity of another player OR consistently throw to the proper place turning accurate infield plays against a runner with average base running speed") AND #8 ("consistently on purpose field slow hit balls that are within a few steps OR consistently on purpose catch routine fly balls that are within 15 feet").

OR

- occasionally reach base safely on a batted ball against an intermediate level of defense?

Basically having a .400 modified on base percentage against a team where every player can do something GREATER THAN #3 ("occasionally throw a ball through the air 90 feet or better without a rainbow arc in the vicinity of another player OR consistently throw to the proper place turning accurate infield plays against runners with average base running speed") AND GREATER THAN #8 ("consistently on purpose field slow hit balls that are within a few steps OR consistently on purpose catch routine fly balls that are within 15 feet").

[NOTE: Q#23 is not linked with any previous questions] (point previously not on document included here for emphasis in workshop presentation)

24. consistently reach base safely on a batted ball against an intermediate level of defense?

Same as the second part of #23 except with more consistency (having a .600 modified on base percentage) against the same level of defense

OR

- occasionally reach base safely on a batted ball against an exceptional level of defense?

Basically having a .400 modified on base percentage against a team where every player can do skills GREATER THAN #4 ("consistently throw a ball through the air 90 feet or better without a rainbow arc in the vicinity of another player") AND GREATER THAN #10 ("occasionally on purpose field medium hit balls that are in the hole OR occasionally on purpose catch fly balls that are more than 30 feet away").

[a "YES" to Q#24 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#23]

25. consistently reach base safely on a batted ball with high velocity against an intermediate level of defense?

Same as the first part of #24 except hitting with more velocity with the same success (.600 modified on base percentage) against the same level of defense

OR

- consistently reach base safely on a batted ball against an exceptional level of defense?

Same as second part of #24 except with more consistency (.600 modified on base percentage) against the same level of defense

[a "YES" to Q#25 automatically results in a "YES" to Q#23, #24]

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26. consistently reach base safely on a batted ball with high velocity against an exceptional level of defense?

Same as second part of #25 except hitting with more velocity with the same success (.600 modified on base percentage) against the same level of defense

[a “YES” to Q#26 automatically results in a “YES” to Q#23, #24, #25]

27. occasionally hit a ball over a 300’ fence?

Measures the ability to hit a home run on a 300’ fenced field 2 out of every 5 at bats.

OBSERVATION: Sometimes evaluators are willing to answer “NO” to low level skill questions for many players regardless of how they compare to each other – this is how it should be. For example, in evaluating Question #1, a player who can only throw the ball 30 feet will get the same answer to this question as the player who can throw the ball 65 feet easily but cannot get it in the vicinity of another player 3 out of 5 teams. Clearly, the second player is more skilled than the first; however, each is unable to perform the skill described in #1 so they both get a “NO” to the question. This is because each question in a section of the questionnaire is typically a higher skill level than the previous question, and there is a range of players that fit in each category.

However, those same evaluators are sometimes unwilling to answer “YES” to high level skill questions because they compare players to each other instead of simply answering the question as defined. For example, in evaluating Question #5, a player who can throw the ball 160 feet without a rainbow arc from the outfield directly and accurately to the proper base completing proper plays against aggressive runners with above average speed should get the same answer as the player who can do the same skill from a distance of 250 feet, because both can satisfy the skill necessary to get a “YES” to the question. But some evaluators will use the logic that, since player one is clearly inferior in arm strength to player two, only player two should get a “YES” to #5 – this is incorrect.

FINAL NOTE: The Player Ratings Guidelines are only as good as we make them. The most important factor in their success is our ability to agree on how to interpret each question. The bottom line is that, no matter how you interpret a question, if one of your players is being protested at a GSWS and the Commissioners on that Protest Committee don’t agree with your interpretation of the protested question, your player will lose that protest. So we simply must work to get consensus on how to interpret each question: it would save time, money, and grief and reduce greatly the number of protests filed.

Hopefully, this Workshop has given you insight into how to interpret each question; however, if you do not agree with the views expressed here, you should bring your concerns to the Competition Committee for discussion and resolution. That is the way for us all to meet the ultimate goal of having a useful and understandable Player Ratings Guidelines document to assist us in making NAGAAA and the GSWS all it can be.

SOFTBALL CODE (Partial Listing of Entire Section)

1.00 Definitions (Partial Listing of Entire Section)

- 1.06 Average/Above Average speed –
1. Below Average Speed – a batter, at the point of contact, being able to run home to first in 5 + seconds or slower.
 2. Average Speed – a batter, at the point of contact, being able to run home to first in 4 – 5 seconds.
 3. Above Average Speed – a batter, at the point of contact, being able to run home to first in less than 4 seconds or faster.
- 1.11 Defense definitions
- a) A limited level of defense is a theoretical set of players having the following skills: 1,2,3,6,7,8
 - b) An intermediate level of defense is a theoretical set of players having skills greater than a limited level of defense but less than an exceptional level of defense
 - c) An exceptional level of defense is a theoretical set of players having greater skills than: 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10
- 1.14 Fly Ball – a ball hit in the air that is not a line drive but is in the air for less than 5 seconds.
- 1.17 Hard Hit Ball – described as a ball hit at a minimum of 80 mph or greater than 250 feet in the air.
- 1.19 High Fly Ball – any batted ball that is in the air for 5 seconds or more.
- 1.22 In the Gap – a ball that is hit at a distance that is more than 30 foot radius from the outfield defender.
- 1.23 In the Hole – a ball that is hit at a distance that is more than 12 foot radius from the infield defender.
- 1.27 Line Drive – a ball that from the point of contact rises vertically less than 10% of the total horizontal distance it travels.
- 1.28 Long Fly Ball – any batted ball that travels further than 250 feet in the air
- 1.29 Long Throw – a throw that travels 150 feet or more
- 1.31 Medium Hit Ball – a ball hit 55 to 80 mph or hit 150 to 250 feet in the air.
- 1.32 Medium Velocity – a ball hit 55 to 80 mph or hit 150 to 250 feet in the air.
- 1.37 On Purpose – with intent
- 1.41 Proper Place – appropriate base or fielder
- 1.42 Rainbow Arc – a ball that from the point of release rises vertically 10% or more of the total distance that it travels
- 1.45 Rudimentary Knowledge – no definition required
- 1.47 Slow Hit Ball – a ball hit up to 55 mph or hit 150 feet or less in the air.
- 1.50 Spectacular catch – when a player catches the ball while leaving his center of gravity or is able to overcome obstructions.
- 1.52 Take Extra Bases – advance at least one base beyond what the opportunity would typically provide a base runner with average speed.
- 1.56 Vicinity – within a step in any direction laterally of the player receiving the throw
- 1.58 Within A Few Steps – includes balls hit to the player as well as balls hit within a few steps of the player

5.00 Rosters and Ratings (Partial Listing of Entire Section)

- 5.03 Team Ratings –
- a) A Team Rating is calculated by totaling the ratings of the ten top-rated players on each team.
- 5.04 GSWS Division Guidelines –
- a) Teams may compete in the following GSWS divisions based on their Player and Team Ratings.
 - 1) A division
 - A) All teams rated 270 or lower.
 - B) No open rostered team rated lower than 170 is allowed to play in the A division. (changed from 180 to 170 SUM 2011 MTG, effective starting with 2012 GSWS)
 - 2) B division
 - A) All teams rated 185 or lower.
 - B) No players rated over 22 are allowed on a B division team.
 - 3) C division
 - A) All teams rated 145 or lower.
 - B) No players rated over 15 are allowed on a C division team.
 - 4) D division
 - A) All teams rated 105 or lower.
 - B) No players rated over 11 are allowed on a D division team.