



SLOW-PITCH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

2012 SSA Rules and Regulations

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Any questions, comments, and/or concerns can be directed to www.ssasoftball.com. Access to email addresses and contact information can be found on the website

MISSION STATEMENT

The Slow-pitch Softball Association was created with intention to make slow pitch softball a more player friendly and cost accessible game. With the minds of current, and former, softball players the SSA is creating opportunities for softball teams old and new. The SSA prides itself on being able expand the game across the country by eliminating those barriers which are prohibitive to newer teams and players.

DEFINITIONS

ALTERED BAT- A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed. Inserting material inside the bat, applying excessive tape/pine tar, or painting a bat other than at the top or bottom for “ID” purposes.

APPEAL PLAY- An appeal play is a play on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach, or player. The appeal may not be made after any of the following has occurred:

- 1) A legal or illegal pitch.
- 2) The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory.
- 3) The umpires have left the field of play.

BASE ON BALLS- A base on balls permits a batter to gain first base without liability to be put out. It is awarded to a batter by the umpire when four pitches are judged to be out of the strike zone.

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

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

BATTING ORDER- The batting order is the official listing of offensive players by first and last name in the order in which they will bat. Uniform number and defensive position must be listed on the lineup sheet.

CATCH- A catch is a legally caught ball, which occurs when the fielder catches a batted, pitched, or thrown ball with the hand(s) or glove.

- 1) In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of it and/or that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball after reaching into the glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.

- 2) If the ball is merely held in the fielder’s arm(s) or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder’s body, equipment or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in the grasp of the

fielder's hand(s) or glove.

- 3) The fielder's feet must be within the field of play, touching the "out of play" line or in the air after leaving live ball territory in order to have a valid catch. A player who is "out of play" and returns must have both feet touching the playable area or one foot touching and the other in the air, before the catch is legal.
- 4) It is not a catch, if a fielder (while gaining control), collides with another player, umpire, fence, or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground.
- 5) A ball which strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight is ruled the same as if it struck the ground.
- 6) An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or glove in the proper place.

CATCH AND CARRY- A legal catch that a defensive player carries into dead ball territory.

CHARGED CONFERENCE- A charged conference takes place when:

- 1) Offensive Conference. The offensive team requests a suspension of play to allow the manager or other team representative to confer with the batter, another representative, and/or runner(s).
- 2) Defensive Conference. The defensive team requests a suspension of play and:
 - a. A representative enters the playing field and talks with any defensive player or
 - b. A defensive player approaches the dugout and receives instructions.

COACH- A coach is a person who is responsible for the team's actions on the field and he represents the team in communications with the umpire and opposing team.

CHOPPED BALL- A chopped hit ball occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat.

COURTESY RUNNER- A courtesy runner is any player who runs for a runner without a charged substitution.

DEAD BALL- The term used for a ball that:

- 1) Touches any object or player out of play. A dead ball line is considered in play.
- 2) Is lodged in umpire's gear or in the offensive players clothing.
- 3) The umpire has ruled dead.

DEFENSIVE TEAM- The defensive team is in the field.

DISLODGED BASE- A dislodged base is a base displaced from its proper position.

DISQUALIFIED PLAYER- A player removed from the game for a rule violation. A team may continue to play shorthanded if no substitutes are available. Any disqualified player discovered participating in the game will constitute a forfeit.

DOUBLE PLAY- A double play is a play by the defense in which two offensive players are legally put out as a result of continuous action.

DUGOUT- The team area, located out of play. This is the area designated for players, coaches, batboys, and official representatives of the team only. There shall be no smoking in this area.

EJECTED PLAYER- A player or coach removed from the game by the umpire. A flagrant act will require the player or coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. A team may NOT continue to play shorthanded if no substitutes are available. If no substitutes are available the game is a forfeit. Any ejected player or coach found to be participating in the game after ejection would constitute a forfeit.

FAIR BALL- A batted ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time the fielder touches the ball. It does not matter whether the ball first touches fair or foul territory, as long as it does not touch anything foreign to the natural ground in foul territory and complies with all other aspects of a fair ball. Detached equipment discarded by the offense or defense over fair territory becomes part of the ground and has no effect in determining fair/foul status when a batted ball initiates contact with the equipment (as long as it was not an intentional act by the player when contacting the ball). A fair ball is one that:

- 1) Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or home and third base.
- 2) Bounds over or past first or third base, which is in fair territory, regardless of where it touches the ground after going over the base.
- 3) While on or over fair territory, touches the person or clothing of a player or an umpire.
- 4) While over fair territory, a runner interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
- 5) Touches first, second, or third base.
- 6) First falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second, or third base.
- 7) While over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
- 8) Hits the foul pole.

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

FAKE TAG- A form of obstruction by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is about to receive the ball and which impedes the progress of a runner either advancing or returning to a base. The runner does not have to stop or slide. Merely slowing down when a fake tag is attempted would constitute obstruction.

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

FLY BALL- A fly ball is any ball batted into the air.

FOUL BALL- A foul ball is a batted ball that:

- 1) Settles or is touched (not caught) on or over foul territory between home and first base or home and third base.
- 2) While over foul territory, touches the person, attached or detached equipment, or clothing of a player, umpire, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
- 3) While over foul territory, a runner interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.

- 4) First hits the ground or is first touched (not caught) over foul territory beyond first or third base.
- 5) Touches the batter or the bat in the batters hand(s) a second time while the batter is within the batters box.
- 6) Hits the pitching plate and rolls untouched to foul territory before reaching first or third base.

HOME TEAM- The home team shall be designated by mutual agreement or by a flip of a coin.

ILLEGAL BAT- An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements.

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL- An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter hits the ball fair or foul and:

- 1) When, at the time the bat makes contact with the ball, any part of the foot is in contact with the plate.
- 2) An illegal, altered, or non-approved bat is used.

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

IN FLIGHT- A batted, thrown, or pitched ball that has not yet touched the ground, some object or a person other than a fielder.

INFIELD- The portion of the field in fair territory that includes areas normally covered by infielders.

INFIELDER- The player who defends the area of the field around first base, second base, short stop, and third base.

INFIELD FLY- A fair fly ball which can be caught by an infielder, pitcher, or catcher with ordinary effort when first and second base, or first, second, and third bases are occupied before there are two outs. Any defensive player who takes a position in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches the highest point based on the position of the closest infielder regardless who makes the play. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the

umpire shall immediately declare “INFIELD FLY.” The ball is live and runners may advance once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching), the same as on any fly ball. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.

INNING- An inning is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three outs for each team. A new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning.

INTERFERENCE- The act of an offensive player or team member, umpire, or spectator that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Contact is not necessary

LEGAL TAG- A legal tag occurs when a runner or batter-runner who is not touching a base is tagged by the ball while it is securely held in a fielder’s hand(s) or glove. The ball is not considered as having been securely held if it is juggled or dropped by the fielder after tagging the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s) or glove of the fielder.

- 1) Once the defensive player has control of the ball in the hand(s) or glove, the base may be touched with any part of the body to be a legal touch. This would apply in force out or appeal situations.

OFFENSIVE TEAM- The offensive team is the team at bat.

ON-DECK BATTER- The offensive player whose name follows the name of the current batter in the batting order.

OUTFIELD- The portion of the field, in fair territory, which is normally covered by outfielders.

OVER SLIDE- The act of an offensive player when, as a runner, over slides a base that they are attempting to reach. It is usually caused when the player’s momentum causes the player to lose contact with the base, that then causes the layer to be in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over slide first base without being in jeopardy.

PIVOT FOOT- The foot that a pitcher must keep in constant contact with the pitcher's plate, or in one spot after a step is taken off of the mound, until the ball is released.

PLAY BALL- The term used by the plate umpire to indicate that play shall start and shall not be declared until all defensive players are in fair territory except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box, and all runners are properly on base.

QUICK PITCH- A pitch made by the pitcher with the obvious attempt to catch the batter off balance. This would be before the batter takes a desired position in the batters box or while the batter is off balance from the previous pitch.

RUNNER- An offensive player who has reached first base and has not yet been put out.

STRIKE ZONE- When a batter assumes a natural batting stance adjacent to home plate; the strike zone is that space over a specific part of home plate. The pitched ball must land behind home plate, in the allotted space determined by the umpire.

SUBSTITUTE- Any member of a team's roster who is not listed as a starting player, or a starting player who re-enters the game. If a substitute enters the game without reporting, and after a pitch has been thrown (legal or illegal), the player will be disqualified when discovered. If a substitute is illegal for any reason, the player will be subject to the penalty for that violation.

TRAPPED BALL- A trapped ball is:

- 1) A batted fly ball or line-drive which hits the ground or a fence prior to being caught.
- 2) A thrown ball to any base for a force out which is caught with the glove, or hand(s), over the ball on the ground rather than under the ball.

TIME- The term used by the umpire to order the suspension of play.

TRIPLE PLAY- A play by the defense in which three offensive players are legally put out as a result of continuous action.

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

THE PLAYING FIELD

The playing field dimensions are as follows:

- 1) The batters box will be 5' wide and 9' long. 4' from mid plate towards the playing field and 5' towards the catcher's box. The batter must start with two feet in the batter's box and at least one foot in the batter's box when the ball is struck.
- 2) The pitcher's mound will be 38' from home plate. During National Tournament play, while gloves are being used, pitchers must have at least one foot on the mound when the ball is released. An illegal pitch will be called if the ball fails to reach a height of 6' above the ground, or if it exceeds 12' from the ground.
- 3) Bases will be 60'.

EQUIPMENT

GLOVES

The use of gloves will be dependent on specific tournament and/or league rules. There is no restriction on glove size when they are permitted.

UNIFORMS

All players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are alike in color and style. Sleeves or straps of a uniform top may be adjusted, with or without tie-ups, to the comfort of the players, provided uniform numbers remain visible. Players may wear a different uniform from the rest of their team only if their uniform is unwearable because of a malfunction or blood stain. All protective equipment should be worn properly. If a player is requested by the umpire to remove jewelry, illegal shoes, or illegal parts of the uniform and they refuse, the player will not be allowed to play.

UNIFORM NUMBERS- an Arabic whole number (0-99), of contrasting color to the uniform, must be worn and visible on the back of all uniform shirts. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. (Numbers 0 and 00, or 3 and 03 are examples of identical numbers.) Players without numbers will not be permitted to play. There is no penalty for a player wearing a wrong number or a duplicate number. Correct the number in the scorebook, or have the player(s) change jerseys in case of duplication, and continue play

HEADWEAR

Ball caps are allowed, must be alike, and worn properly.

FOOTWEAR

Metal cleats are only permitted during national play. Rulings will be determined based on tournament/league specific rules.

BATS

Official softball bats must be used. All bats must have a safety grip and between 12” and 15” of continuous tape on the bat handle. No altered bats will be allowed. Pine tar may not extend onto the barrel of the bat.

BALLS

Official 16” Clinchers will be used.

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

PLAYERS

A team must have the required number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. Players listed in the starting lineup and not available at game time may be substituted for and re-entered later in the same spot in the batting order.

- 1) Lineup sheets are to be completed and submitted to the official scorer and umpire at the start of each game. A starting player shall be official when the lineup is inspected and approved by the plate umpire and team manager at the pre-game meeting. The lineup shall contain the first and last name, position, and uniform number of each player. If a wrong number is listed on the lineup sheet, correct it and continue playing with no penalty. All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place by their last name, first name, and uniform number.
- 2) Male rosters shall include only male players, and female rosters shall include only female players.
- 3) A team shall consist of players in the following positions: Pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, short center, short stop, third base, left field, center field, right field.

SHORT HANDED RULE

To start a game:

- 1) A game may begin or finish with one less player than required to start. The vacant position must be listed in the batting order. An out will be taken when the vacant spot in the batting order appears.

To continue a game once started with a full team listed on batting order:

- 1) If a team begins play with the required number of players as listed, that team may continue a game with one less player than

is currently in the lineup whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection. Under no circumstances may a team be allowed to bat less than 9 players.

- 2) If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot. If the substitute refuses to enter for any reason that player becomes ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- 3) If the player leaving the game is a runner or a batter, the runner or batter shall be declared out.
- 4) When the player who has left the game is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat. An inning or the game can end on an automatic out.
- 5) The player who has left the game cannot return to the lineup.
Exception: A player who has left the game to clean an injury/blood may return even after missing an at bat.

EXTRA PLAYERS

An extra player (EP) is optional but if one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and listed on the scoring sheet in the regular batting order. If the EP is used, the EP must be used the entire game. If an EP is used and not listed on the lineup card, the following occurs:

- 1) If discovered while at bat, the legal batter enters and assumes the count, or
- 2) If discovered while on base and before a pitch has been thrown to the next batter, treat as batting out of order, the person who should have batted is out, and all play as a result of improper batting is nullified, and person not listed in lineup is removed from the game.
- 3) If discovered while the illegal player is on base and a pitch has been thrown to the next batter, remove the illegal player from the base, or if the player has scored, remove the run, and remove the player from the game.

The EP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game. If an EP is used, all 11 on the starting lineup must bat and any 10 of those 11 players may play defense. Defensive positions may be changed, but the batting order must remain the same. The EP may be substituted for at any time, but only by someone who has not been in the game yet.

RE-ENTRY

Any player may be substituted or replaced and re-entered once, providing players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the lineup. Players may not re-enter a second time. The starting player and their substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time.

- 1) If a player re-enters the game a second time or a player re-enters the game in a position in the batting order other than their original starting or substitute position, this is considered an illegal re-entry.
 - a. Violation of the re-entry rule is considered an illegal player. The illegal player shall be disqualified.

SUBSTITUTES/ ILLEGAL PLAYER

A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in his team's batting order. The following regulations govern player substitutions:

- 1) The coach or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time the substitute enters. The plate umpire shall then report the change to the scorer. A substitute is not officially in the game until a pitch has been thrown or a play has been made.
- 2) If a substitute enters the game without reporting, and after a pitch has been thrown (legal or illegal), or after a play has been made, the player will be disqualified when discovered. The use of an unreported substitute is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game. If the team manager or player in violation informs the umpire prior to the offended team's protest, there is no violation regardless of how long the player or players were legally in the game. All action

prior to the discovery is legal. If the team in violation has no substitutes to replace the player disqualified, it is treated the same as the shorthanded rule. The player is disqualified, an out is declared, and the next batter bats.

- a. **Exception-** If an unreported substitution on offense bats and reaches base safely, and then is discovered and protested before a pitch to the next batter, or if at the end of the game and before the umpires leave the field, all runners (including the batter) will return to the base occupied on the batted ball, and the unreported substitute is disqualified and called out. All outs that occur on this play will stand.
- 3) If an injury to a batter-runner, or runner prevents them from proceeding to an awarded base, and the ball is dead, the batter-runner may be substituted for. The substitute will be allowed to proceed to any awarded base(s). The substitute must legally touch any awarded or missed base(s) not previously touched. This is not a courtesy runner, but a legal substitute.
 - 4) An illegal player is a player who takes a position in the lineup, either on offense or defense, who does not have a legal right to that position. A player will not violate the illegal player rule until one pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown or a play made. The use of an illegal player is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game. Once the umpire has been informed, in all cases the illegal player shall be disqualified, and can be legally replaced either by a substitute or a starter who re-enters the game. Illegal players include:
 - a. **Illegal Pitcher-** A player who returns to pitch after being removed from the pitching position by the umpire.
 - b. **Illegal Runner-** An illegal runner occurs when:
 - i. Placing an offensive player in the lineup as a runner for another offensive player.

ILLEGAL RE-ENTRY/ UNREPORTED SUBSTITUTE

An illegal re-entry occurs when:

- 1) A starting player returns to the game a second time after being substituted for twice.
- 2) A starting player returns to the game, but is not in his original position in the batting order.
- 3) A substitute returns to the game after being replaced twice.

If the illegal player/unreported substitute is discovered by the **defense**:

- 1) While the illegal player is at bat, the illegal player is disqualified, and a replacement shall assume the ball and strike count.
- 2) After the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and before the next legal or illegal pitch, before the defensive team has left the field, and before the umpires have left the game, the illegal player is called out, disqualified, and any advance of runners as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified. Any outs that were recorded on the play will stand.
- 3) After the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and after the next legal or illegal pitch, or after the defense has left the field, the illegal player is disqualified. If still on base a replacement will take that base. Any advance of runners as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is legal.
- 4) If the player is in the game illegally as a runner and it is brought to the attention of the umpire before the next legal or illegal pitch is thrown or a play is made, this is a correctable situation.
- 5) If the player is in the game illegally as a runner and is discovered after a legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or a play made, the player is disqualified and replaced on the base. Any advance of the runner(s) is legal.

If the illegal player/unreported substitute is discovered by the offense:

- 1) After the illegal player makes a play and before the next legal or illegal pitch, before the defense has left the field, and before the umpires have left the game, the illegal player is disqualified, and the offensive team has the option of:
 - a. Taking the result of the play, or
 - b. Having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count the batter had prior to the discovery of the illegal player. Each runner would return to the base which they occupied before the play occurred.
- 2) After a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter the illegal player is disqualified and all play stands.

COACH

A coach is a person who is responsible for the team's actions on the field and will represent the team in communications with the umpire and opposing team. A player may be designated as a coach in the event the coach is absent or that player is acting as a player/coach.

- 1) One coach can have in possession in the coach's box, a scorebook (electronic or paper), pen, or pencil used for score keeping.
- 2) A base coach should stay within the confines of the coaching boxes with both feet
 - a. A coach may leave the coach's box to signal the runner to slide, advance or return to a base, or move out of a fielder's way as long as the coach does not intentionally interfere with the play.
 - b. A coach may not leave the coach's box to give verbal communications or signals to the batter. After a warning an offensive conference will be charged.
- 3) Base coaches may not use language that will reflect negatively upon players, umpires, or spectators.

DISQUALIFIED OR EJECTED PLAYER

A player or coach who has been disqualified from the game is restricted to the bench. A disqualified player may serve as a base coach. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the player or coach must leave the grounds. Any disqualified or ejected player found to be playing in the game after actions have been made would constitute a forfeit.

- 1) Any arguing on the judgment of balls and strikes will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.
- 2) If a player is disqualified a team can play shorthanded, however if a player is ejected and the team does not have enough players to continue, the game is forfeited.

BLOOD

A player, coach, or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on their uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered to be reasonable is left to the umpire's best judgment. Uniform rule violations will not be enforced if a uniform change is required in these matters. In cases like this the umpire shall:

- 1) Stop the game and immediately call a coach, trainer, or authorized person to the injured player and allow treatment.
- 2) Apply the rules of the game regarding substitutions, short-handed player and re-entry if necessary.

INJURED PLAYER

During a live ball situation, when a player becomes injured, and in the umpire's best judgment requires immediate attention, the umpire shall call "DEAD BALL" and allow or seek first aid. Any bases that would have been reached by base runners will be awarded.

THE GAME

HOME TEAM

The team that bats last in the inning.

VISITING TEAM

The team that bats first in the inning

REGULATION GAME

A regulation game consists of seven innings. A full seven innings do not need to be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six and one-half innings or before the third out in the bottom of the seventh inning, or when the run rule is applied.

- 1) A game that is tied at the end of the seven innings shall be continued by playing extra innings until one team has scored more runs than the other at the completion of an inning, or until the home team has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
- 2) A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the home team has scored more runs in four or more innings than the visiting team has scored in five or more innings. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or any other cause that places the patrons or players in danger.
- 3) Games that are not considered regulation will be resumed at the exact point at which they were suspended.
- 4) A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more complete innings, or if the home team has scored as many runs as the visiting team in the incomplete inning.
- 5) Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point at which they were stopped.

FORFEITED GAMES

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

- 1) If an umpire is physically attacked by any team member and/or spectator.
- 2) If a team fails to appear on the field, or, being on the field, refuses to begin a game at the scheduled game time, or within the allotted time set for forfeits.
- 3) If one team refuses to continue play after the game has begun, unless the game has been ended or suspended by the umpire.
- 4) If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one team fails to resume playing the game within two minutes of the umpire saying, "PLAY BALL".
- 5) If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or hasten the game.
- 6) If, after a warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
- 7) If the order for the ejection of a player, manager, or coach is not obeyed within one minute.
- 8) If the ejection of a player or players from the game results in less than the required amount of players required to continue the game.
- 9) If an ejected player is discovered playing in the game after ejection.
- 10) If a team is playing one player short and another player becomes injured, or ill, leaving the team with less players than the required amount.
- 11) Once a game has been forfeited, the forfeit cannot be changed.

SCORING OF RUNS

A run is scored each time a runner touches first base, second base, third base, and home plate.

- 1) No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is a result of:
 - a. A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter runner. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred.
 - b. A runner being put out by a tag or live ball appeal play prior to the lead runner touching home plate.
 - c. A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.
Note- An appeal can be made after the third out in order to nullify a run.
- 2) No run shall be scored if a “fourth out” is the result of an appeal of a missed base or leaving a base too soon on a runner who has scored.

GAME WINNER

The winner of the game is the team who scores more runs in a regulation game.

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

CONFERENCES

Offensive Conference

- 1) There shall be only one charged conference between the manager and/or other team representative(s) and the batter, another team representative, and/or runner(s) in an inning. The umpire shall not permit any such conferences in excess of one in an inning. A coach or manager who insists on another charged conference shall be ejected.

Defensive Conference

- 2) There shall be only three charged conference(s) between the manager and other team representative from the dugout with any defensive player(s) in a seven inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning between the manager and other team representative from the dugout with any defensive player(s).
- 3) The fourth, and each additional, charged conference in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one per inning in an extra inning game, shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The removed pitcher can play another position on defense but cannot pitch again

The following are not defensive conferences:

- 1) If the team representative enters the playing field and informs the umpire prior to verbal comments with any defensive player that the pitcher will be removed
- 2) Shouting instructions from the dugout area to the pitcher
- 3) If a dugout representative confers with any defensive player during a charged offensive conference and is ready to play ball when the offense is ready.
- 4) A manager playing in the game may confer with any defensive player and is not charged; however, an umpire may control repeated meetings between a playing manager and a pitcher by first issuing a warning and then disqualifying the manager.

RUN RULE (SLAUGHTER RULE)

The run rule is put into effect when one team is winning by 15 runs or more after four innings, or 12 runs or more after five innings.

- 1) Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the 15th or 12th run while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

PITCHING REGULATIONS

PREPARING TO PITCH

The pitcher must take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's mound. During National Tournament play the pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's mound throughout the delivery.

- 1) The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- 2) The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's mound without possession of the ball.
- 3) A pitcher may take one step off of the mound to either side, or backwards. A pitcher may not take a step forward, towards home plate. Once a pitcher takes a step off of the mound, their pivot foot should remain in the same spot throughout the duration of the pitch.

LEGAL DELIVERY

- 1) The pivot foot must remain in the same position until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- 2) The pitcher is allowed two hesitations before the mandatory delivery of a pitch. Hesitations are defined as:
 - a. Making any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
 - b. Using a delivery that is not a continuous motion.
 - c. Not delivering the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- 3) The pitcher must not pitch the ball between the legs or behind the back.
- 4) After a hesitation of the pitching motion, and before a restart of the motion, the pitcher may attempt or fake a throw for a pick

off with his pivot foot in the same position.

- 5) The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.
- 6) The ball must be delivered with an arc and reach a minimum height of at least 6 feet and a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.
- 7) The pitcher must not continue his motion after releasing the ball.
- 8) Runners may be off the bases without penalty during the delivery or fake delivery.
- 9) During the pick off attempt by the pitcher, or the catcher following a pitch, each runner must return to the base occupied at the start of the pitch, and before the runner is touched with the ball.
- 10) If the ball is overthrown, no runners may advance.
- 11) If the thrown ball remains in playable territory, the runners are in jeopardy until they return to their original bases.
- 12) The pitcher has 10 seconds to throw the next pitch, or begin the pitching sequence, after receiving the ball, or after the umpire yells "PLAY BALL".
- 13) The pitcher may not deliver a pitch from their glove.

DEFENSIVE POSITION

The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, acts in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released. The offending player shall also be ejected from the game.

FOREIGN SUBSTANCE

No defensive player shall be allowed at any time of the game to use any foreign substance upon the ball, the pitching hand, or the fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands. The pitcher may wear tape on the fingers, or a sweatband on the wrist or forearm of the pitching arm. Batting gloves may not be worn without a fielding mitt.

CATCHER

The catcher must remain behind home plate until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground or plate, or reaches the catchers area. The catcher should return the ball directly to the pitcher except after a strikeout or on a pick off attempt.

QUICK PITCH

The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance as a result of a pitch

WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver the warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, etc. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position as long as the player is legally in the game.

NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared when:

- 1) The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
- 2) The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery or during the back swing.

- 3) No player, manager, or coach shall call time, employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch. A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

BATTING

ON-DECK BATTER

The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order.

- 1) The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest the offensive team bench.
- 2) The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two.
- 3) The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:
 - a. When the on-deck batter becomes the batter.
 - b. To direct runners advancing from third to home plate
- 4) The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's opportunity to make an out.
 - a. If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
 - b. If it is with the defensive fielder attempting to catch a fly ball, the batter is out.

BATTING ORDER

The batting order of each team showing the players' first and last name, uniform number, and position must be on the lineup card and must be delivered before the game by the manager or captain to the plate umpire.

- 1) The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game, unless a player is replaced by:

- a. A substitute who must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.
- 2) The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows the last batter of the previous inning.
- a. If a team bats out of order, it is the responsibility of the defensive team to appeal the play. The defensive team forfeits the right to appeal batting out of order when a legal or illegal pitch has been thrown to the next batter, or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on the way to the dugout.
 - b. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter must take the batter's position and legally assume any balls and strikes. Any runs scored or bases run while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal. The offensive team may correct a wrong batter at the plate with no penalty.
 - c. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed a turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area:
 - i. The player who should have batted is out.
 - ii. Any advance or score made as a result of the improper batter becoming a batter-runner shall be nullified. Any out that is made prior to discovering the infraction remains an out.
 - iii. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.
 - iv. 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 by ordinary play.

- d. If the error is discovered after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat. 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.
 - e. No runner shall be removed from the base occupied except the batter-runner who has been taken off the base by the umpire as in above to bat in the proper place. The correct batter merely misses the turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following the correct batter in the batting order becomes the legal batter.
- 3) When the third out in an inning is made before the batter has completed a turn at bat, this player shall be the first batter in the next inning and the ball and strike shall be canceled.

BATTING POSITION

Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batters box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside of the batters box before the pitch.

- 1) The batter must take the batters position within 10 seconds after being directed by the umpire. If the batter does not comply, a strike will be called on him. No pitch needs to be thrown, and the ball is dead.
- 2) After the ball is in play, the batter may not step out of the batter's box to stop play unless time has been granted by the umpire.
 - a. **EXCEPTION-** If special conditions warrant, such as a ball from another field, a wind gust putting dust in the

batter's eyes, or car lights in the batter's eyes, time can be called.

A STRIKE IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE

It is the umpire's responsibility to call balls and strikes. An umpire will call a strike:

- 1) For each legal pitch entering the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing. It is not a strike if the pitch touches home plate and then is swung at by the batter. Any pitch that hits the plate or ground cannot be legally swung at by the batter. If the batter swings and misses the pitch prior to the ball hitting the ground or plate, it is a strike.
- 2) For each legal pitch that is swung at and missed by the batter.
- 3) For each foul tip.
 - a. If a batter hits a foul tip with 2 strikes, they are out.
- 4) For each pitch that is swung at and missed, but hits any part of the batter.
- 5) When any part of the batter's person or clothing is hit with a batted ball when the batter is in the batter's box.
- 6) When a delivered pitch hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.
- 7) If the batter does not take the batter's position within 10 seconds of being instructed to do so by the umpire.

A BALL IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE

It is the umpire's responsibility to call balls and strikes. An umpire will call a ball:

- 1) For each legal pitch which does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing. Any pitched ball that hits the ground or plate cannot be legally swung at by the

- batter. If the batter swings at a pitch after the ball hits the ground or plate, it is a ball.
- 2) For each illegal pitch not swung at by the batter.
 - 3) When a pitched ball hits a batter outside of the strike zone.
 - 4) When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
 - 5) For each excessive warm-up pitch.

THE BATTER IS OUT

A batter can be called out by the umpire when:

- 1) The third strike is:
 - a. Swung at and the pitched ball touches any part of the batter.
 - b. Is not swung at, and the pitch hits the batter in the strike zone
- 2) When a batter enters the batter's box or is discovered using an altered or illegal bat. The batter shall be disqualified from the game, and if in a tournament, may be disqualified for the remainder of the tournament.
- 3) When any part of the foot is touching home plate when the ball makes contact with the bat.
- 4) When the batter bunts or chops the ball.
- 5) When members of the team at bat (including the dugout area) other than runners interfere with a player attempting to field a fair or foul fly ball.
- 6) When a batter intentionally hits a pitched ball that first hits the ground or home plate with intention to prevent the catcher from executing a pick off attempt.

- 7) When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.
- a. **EXCEPTION:** If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hands, a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time in fair territory.
 - b. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is live and in play.
 - c. If contact is made on the follow through, after missing the pitch on the initial swing, it is a foul ball.
- 8) Whenever the batter due up has left the game under the Short-handed Rule.
- 9) The batter shall not:
- a. Hinder the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.
 - b. Intentionally hinder the catcher while standing in the batter's box.
 - c. Intentionally interfere with a thrown ball, in or out of the batter's box.
 - d. Interfere with a play at home plate.

BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER

The batter will change roles in the game and become a batter-runner when:

- 1) When he legally hits a fair ball.
- 2) When four balls have been called by the umpire, the batter is awarded first base.
 - a. The ball is dead and runners may not advance unless forced to.
- 3) If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, he may do so by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base.
 - a. If two batters are to be walked intentionally, the second intentional walk cannot occur until the first batter reaches first base.
- 4) When the catcher obstructs, hinders, or prevents the batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.
 - a. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, the runner is considered to have reached that base.
 - b. If all runners including the batter-runner do not advance at least one base, the manager has the option to take the result of the play, or have the obstruction enforced by awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced.
- 5) When a batted fair ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire or a runner. If the runner is hit with a batted fair ball while touching a base, the runner is not out.
 - a. If before passing a fielder without being touched, the ball is dead. If the runner is hit by the ball while off base and before it passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, or if it passes an infielder and another fielder has an opportunity to make an out, the runner is out and the batter-runner is

entitled to first base without liability of being put out. Any runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base reached prior to the interference. When a fair ball touches a runner who is in contact with a base, the ball remains live, or is ruled dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.

- b. If the batted fair ball hits an umpire before passing a fielder other than the pitcher, the ball is dead and the batter-runner is entitled to first base without liability to be put out.

BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT

The batter-runner will be called “out” by the umpire when:

- 1) When after hitting a fair ball the batter-runner is legally put out prior to reaching first base.
- 2) When, after a fly ball is hit, the ball is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, and object, or person other than a defensive player.
- 3) When the batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after a batted fair ball, a base on balls, or catcher obstruction.
- 4) When the batter-runner runs outside the three foot lane, and in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base; however, the batter-runner may run outside the three foot lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. When the defensive player uses the colored portion of a double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, and if hit by the thrown ball, it would not be interference. If intentional interference were ruled, the runner would be out.
- 5) When the batter-runner 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 discards their bat which prevents the

defense from making a play on the ball.

- a. If this interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall be called out. A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.
- 6) When the batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate. The runner is also out.
 - 7) When the batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
 - 8) When an infield fly is declared. If an infield fly is ruled, and the batted fair ball hits the batter-runner before reaching first base, the ball is ruled dead and the infield fly is invoked.
 - 9) When an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, including a line drive, which can be caught with ordinary effort with first; first and second, first and third, or first second and third bases occupied with fewer than two outs. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.
 - 10) When the immediate preceding runner who is not 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 the play on the batter-runner.
 - 11) When using the double base at first, the following rules should be enforced.
 - a. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is declared fair and a batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored portion is declared foul.
 - b. Whenever a play is being made by an infielder on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion. The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion, providing the

defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white, no appeal can be made.

- c. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, or an errant throw pulling the defense off the base into foul ground, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or colored portion.
- d. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield, the batter-runner may touch the white or colored portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner must return to the white portion.
- e. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white portion must be used.
- f. On an attempted pick off play, the runner must return to the white portion.
- g. If, when using the double base, and there is a force play by an infielder on the batter-runner, who touches only the white portion collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white.

TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER

Players must touch the bases in proper order:

- 1) When a runner must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead, the runner must touch the base(s) in reverse order. The runner would be called out if properly appealed. This rule does not apply on a foul ball.
- 2) When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, the runner or batter-runner is entitled to hold the base until legally touching the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have

- touched the base. This applies to awarded bases.
- 3) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base out of position.
 - 4) A runner shall not run the bases in reverse order either to confuse the defense or make a mockery of the game. If so happens, the ball is dead and the runner is out.
 - 5) Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.
 - a. The runner who first legally occupied the base will be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.
 - 6) Failure of a preceding runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball, and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a succeeding runner who touches bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no succeeding runner may score a run.
 - 7) No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left too soon after a following runner has scored or once he leaves the field of play.
 - 8) Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.
 - 9) Awarded bases must be touched in order.

RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY OF BEING PUT OUT

A runner is liable to be put out:

- 1) When a pitched ball is batted.
- 2) On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.

- 3) On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.
- 4) When any defensive player first touches a legally caught fly ball.
- 5) If a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner after having passed an infielder other than the pitcher, and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or when a fair batted ball has been touched by an infielder, including the pitcher, and the runner did not intentionally interfere with the batted ball or the fielder attempting to field the batted ball.
- 6) When a live ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.
- 7) If while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to take the next base.
- 8) If, after overrunning first base, the runner makes an attempt towards second base.
- 9) If, after dislodging a base, a runner attempts to go to the next base.
- 10) A runner may lead off of any base with the risk of being picked off by a throw from either the pitcher or catcher. If the throw is an overthrow no runners may advance. Any runner advancing on a pitch not hit is at risk of being put out before returning to their original base.

RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY OF BEING PUT OUT

Runners can advance with out liability of being put out when:

- 1) When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a walk.
- 2) When a fielder in possession of the ball or not in the act of fielding a batted ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner that is legally running the bases. Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in proper order, or

- they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team. Should any interference occur following any obstruction, enforcement of the interference penalty would have precedence.
- 3) The obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base which would have been reached had there not been obstruction. A dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s), which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction.
 - 4) If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base, which would have been reached had there not been obstruction or ran beyond the two bases the obstruction occurred, the obstructed runner would be called out. The ball remains live.
 - 5) When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base, is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball, or a fielder who fakes a tag without the ball, the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction, will always be awarded the base(s) which would have been reached, in the umpires judgment, had there been no obstruction. If the umpire feels there is justification, a defensive player making a fake tag can be ejected from the game.
 - 6) When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded first base.
 - 7) When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted, thrown, or pitched ball with his hat, pocket, detached glove, or any part of the uniform which is detached from its proper place.
 - a. The batter and runners would be entitled to three bases from the time of the pitch if a batted ball, two bases from the time of the throw if a thrown ball, or one base from the time of the pitch if a pitched ball.
 - 8) When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.

- a. All runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. Runners may return to touch a missed base or base left too soon. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner. Once a base runner advances to the next awarded base, the runner may no longer return to touch any missed base or any base left too soon.
 - i. **EXCEPTION-** When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked.
- 9) If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is called out.
- 10) If an awarded base is in error, after one legal or illegal pitch is thrown the error cannot be corrected.
- 11) When a batted fair ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through a fence. It shall entitle the batter-runner to a home run.
- 12) When a batted fair ball bounces over, rolls under, or goes through a fence or designated boundary of the playing field. Also, when it deflects off of a defensive player and goes out of play in foul territory, deflects off a runner or umpire and goes out of play after having passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher and provided no runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.
- 13) When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory. A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered

to have unintentionally carried it there.

- a. **EFFECT-** The ball is dead, and each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered dead ball territory.

14) 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

- a. **EFFECT-** The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base touched when the fielder entered or the ball was kicked, pushed or thrown into dead ball territory.

15) When there is spectator interference with any thrown or batted fair ball, the ball is dead at the moment of interference.

16) When a ball gets lodged in an umpire's gear or clothing, or a player's clothing. The ball is dead and the umpire should award the runners the bases in his judgment they would have reached.

A RUNNER MUST RETURN TO HIS BASE

When a runner is on base he must return to his base when:

- 1) When a batted ball is foul.
- 2) When an illegally batted ball is declared dead by the umpire.
- 3) When a batter, batter-runner, or runner is called out for interference. All runners shall return to the last legally touched base at the time of the interference.
- 4) When the plate umpire or any part of the plate umpire's clothing interferes with the catcher's attempted pick off play.
 - a. This is a delayed dead ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live. If the runner is not out, return the runner to the base occupied at the start of the pitch. It is not umpire interference if, on

a passed ball or wild pitch, the umpire gets hit by a thrown ball by the catcher. The ball is live.

- 5) After each pitch when stealing is not allowed.
 - a. Each runner may take a lead off, but is at risk of being picked off.
- 6) When an intentionally dropped ball is ruled.

THE RUNNER IS OUT

During the course of a game, the umpire may call out a runner:

- 1) When running to any base in regular or reverse order, in the case of a run down, the runner runs more than three feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder
- 2) When the ball is in play and while the runner is not in contact with a base, the runner is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.
- 3) When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base, or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base.
- 4) When the runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out. If this were the third out of the inning, any runs scoring prior to the third out would count.
- 5) When anyone other than another runner physically assists a runner while the ball is in play.
 - a. The ball is in play and the runner is out.
 - b. After a runner has crossed home plate, but missed the base, and is assisted back to home; the ball is dead, the runner is out and the run is nullified.
- 6) When the runner leaves a base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder provide the ball is

returned to an infielder and properly appealed.

- 7) When the runner fails to touch the intervening base(s) in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to an infielder and properly appealed. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out.
- 8) When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally touched with the ball while off the base.
- 9) When running or sliding for home plate and the runner fails to touch it, and a fielder properly appeals the umpire for the decision.
 - a. These are special appeal plays, and the defensive team loses the privilege of putting the runner out if any of the following occurred:
 - i. The appeal is not made before the next legal or illegal pitch.
 - ii. The pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area.
 - iii. On the last play of the game the umpires have left the field of play.
 - iv. If properly appealed during a live ball, the runner is out.
 - v. Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called, any infielder (including the pitcher or catcher), with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire should acknowledge the appeal and then make a decision on the play. No runner may leave a base during this period, as

the ball remains dead until the next pitch.

- 10) When the runner is struck with a batted, untouched, fair ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder and any infielder has an opportunity to make an out.
- 11) When the runner intentionally kicks a fair ball that an infielder has missed.
 - a. When runners are called out for interference, the batter is awarded first base, and credited with a fielder's choice.
 - b. **EXCEPTION-** If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fair or foul ball with ordinary effort, the batter is also out.
- 12) When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The runner closes to home shall be declared out.
- 13) When member(s) of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. Members of a team include batboy, or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.
- 14) When a coach intentionally interferes with a batted or thrown ball, or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. A batted or thrown ball that unintentionally hits a base coach is not considered interference.
- 15) When after being declared out or after scoring, a runner intentionally interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw may be

considered a form of interference.

16) When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains upright and crashes into the defensive player. If the act is determined to be flagrant by the umpire, the offender shall be ejected.

i. The ball is dead, and the runner is out. All other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

b. An errant throw drawing the defense into the path of the runner is not interference.

17) When a runner abandons a base and enters the team area, or leaves the field of play.

18) When the runner positions himself behind and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball. The ball remains live.

19) Whenever a runner on base leaves the game under the shorthanded rule.

20) Prior to a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, if the runner was discovered having used an illegal or non-approved bat, the runner shall be declared out.

a. If the bat was altered, the runner shall also be disqualified. In either case, if the altered/illegal bat is discovered prior to the next pitch, any runners put out prior to the discovery shall remain out.

21) When following an offensive conference, base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied.

a. Each runner on an improper base shall be declared out. In addition, the head coach shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.

RUNNER IS NOT OUT

During the course of a game, the umpire will not call a runner out:

- 1) When a runner runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base path in order to avoid contact/interference with a fielder attempting to make a play on a ball.
- 2) When a runner does not run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in possession.
- 3) When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes into contact with one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made an out.
- 4) When a runner is hit with a batted, untouched, fair ball over foul territory that, in the judgment of the umpire, no fielder had a chance to make an out on.
- 5) When a runner is hit by a batted fair ball after it touches, or is touched by, any fielder, including the pitcher, and the runner could not avoid contact with the ball.
- 6) When a runner is touched off a base:
 - a. With a ball not securely held by a fielder
 - b. When a hand or glove of a defensive player and the ball is in the other hand.
- 7) 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 positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, or after the last play of the game when the umpires have left the field of play.
- 8) When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- 9) When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base.

- 10) When the runner has legally started to advance. The runner may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's mound, or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in his possession.
- 11) When the runner stays on the base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- 12) When hit by a batted ball when touching the base, unless the runner intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- 13) When the runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
 - a. A runner reaching a base safely will not be out for being off that base if it becomes dislodged. The runner may return without liability to be put out when the base has been replaced. A runner forfeits his exemption if they attempt to advance beyond the dislodged base before it is replaced.
- 14) When a runner legally returns to a base left too soon or missed prior to an appeal being made, or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

COURTESY RUNNERS

The use of courtesy runners varies between leagues and tournaments. These rules are to be applied when use of a courtesy runner is allowed.

- 1) A courtesy runner is in the game when announced by the offensive manager.
- 2) A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be out. The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and come to bat. A second courtesy runner cannot be substituted at this time.

- 3) A player may be a courtesy runner only once an inning.
- 4) A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner.
 - a. **EXCEPTION-** If an injury occurs to the original courtesy runner.
- 5) A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

PROTESTS

Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment of the umpire.

- 1) Examples of these illegal protests are:
 - a. Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
 - b. Whether a runner was safe or out.
 - c. Whether a pitched ball was a ball or strike.
 - d. Whether a pitch was legal or illegal.
 - e. Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.
 - f. Whether a runner did or did not leave a base too soon on a caught fly ball.
 - g. Whether a fly ball was or was not caught legally.
 - h. Whether it was or was not an infield fly.
 - i. Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.
 - j. Whether the field is or is not fit to continue or resume play.

- k. Whether there is or is not sufficient light to continue play.
- l. Whether a player or live ball did or did not enter dead ball area, or touch some object or person in dead ball area.
- m. Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.
- n. Any other matter involving only the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

2) There are three types of protests:

- a. Misinterpretation of a playing rule. This must be made:
 - i. Before the next pitch.
 - ii. Before the next play.
 - iii. Before all infielders have left fair territory.
 - iv. On the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
- b. Illegal Player. This must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field. An umpire cannot reverse a decision after a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter.
- c. Ineligible Player. This can be made at any time.

3) Protests may involve both a matter of judgment and the interpretation of a rule.

- a. **EXAMPLE-** With one out and runners on second and third, the batter flies out. The runner on third base tags up after the catch, but the runner on second does not. The runner on third 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 runner's left their bases before the catch or whether

the play at second base was made before the runner on third crossed the plate are solely matters of judgment and are not protest able. It is a misinterpretation of a playing rule, and a proper subject for protest however, if the umpire fails to allow the run to score.

- 4) The manager, acting manager, or captain of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the opposing manager and official scorekeeper. To aid in the correct determination of the issue, all interested parties shall take notice of the information, details, and conditions surrounding the decision to protest.
- 5) The official written protest must be filed within a reasonable time. The written protest should contain the following information:
 - a. The date, time, and place of the game.
 - b. The names of the umpires and scorers.
 - c. The rule and section of the official rules or local rules under which the protest is made.
 - d. The information, details, and conditions pertinent to the decision to protest.
 - e. All essential facts involved in the matter protested.
- 6) The decision rendered on 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. When a protest is determined to be valid because of misinterpretation of a playing rule, the decision will be corrected and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made. If the protesting team wins the game the protest then becomes

meaningless.

- c. When a protest for ineligibility is determined to be valid, the offending team shall forfeit the game being played or the game last played to the offended team.

UMPIRES

POWER AND DUTIES

Umpires have the responsibility to take control of the game and make calls with unbiased judgment. Umpires representing the SSA shall act in a professional manner and refrain from confrontation with the players and/or spectators. These are the guidelines for umpires:

- 1) The umpire will not be a member of either team. They cannot be a player, coach, manager, scorer or sponsor.
- 2) The umpire should be sure of the date, time, and place of the game and should arrive at the playing field 20 to 30 minutes ahead of the scheduled time, start the game on time, and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when entering the field to check the bats and ends when leaving the field following completion of the game.
- 3) The male and female umpire shall wear:
 - a. A designated SSA Officials shirt.
 - b. Black or gray slacks or shorts.
 - c. A designated SSA hat or visor.
 - d. A ball bag with home plate brush is optional. An umpire should have some sort of brush in his or her possession to clean home plate between batters and/or innings.
- 4) The umpires should introduce themselves to the captains, managers, and scorers.
- 5) The umpires should inspect the playing field boundaries and equipment and clarify all ground rules for the representatives of both teams.
- 6) Each umpire will have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension

of play.

- 7) No umpire has the authority to set aside or questions decisions made by another umpire within the limits of the respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- 8) An umpire may consult the other umpire(s) at any time; 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).
- 9) In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes will be designated as the PLATE UMPIRE, while the umpire whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions will be designated as the BASE UMPIRE.
- 10) The plate umpire and base umpire will have equal authority to:
 - a. Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon.
 - b. Call TIME for suspension of play.
 - c. Eject or disqualify a player, coach, manager, or other team member from the game for violation of rules or flagrant misconduct.
 - d. Call all illegal pitches.
 - e. Forfeit any game.
- 11) The umpire will declare the batter or runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire will not call a player out for failure to touch a base, for leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, for batting out of order, or for making an attempt to go to second base after reaching first base, as provide in these rules.
- 12) The umpire will not penalize a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the penalty would be an advantage to the

offending team.

THE PLATE UMPIRE SHOULD

Throughout the course of a game, the umpire shall be responsible for fulfilling his duties. These duties include:

- 1) Take a position behind the catcher. The plate umpire will have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- 2) Call balls and strikes, unless requesting the help of another umpire.
- 3) By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire, makes decisions on plays, fair or foul ball, and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that would 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.
- 4) Determine and declare whether:
 - a. A batter chops the ball.
 - b. A batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter.
 - c. A fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.
- 5) Assume all duties when assigned as a single umpire to a game.

THE BASE UMPIRE SHOULD

Throughout the course of the game, the base umpire shall be responsible for fulfilling his duties. These duties include:

- 1) Take the proper positions on the playing field.
- 2) Assist the plate umpire in every way to enforce the rules of the game.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SINGLE UMPIRE

If only one umpire is assigned to a game, the duties and jurisdictions will extend to all points. The umpire's starting position for each pitch should be from behind home plate. On each batted ball or play that develops, the umpire must move out from behind the plate and into the field to obtain the best position for any play that develops.

CHANGE OF UMPIRES

Teams may not request the change of umpires during a game unless an umpire is incapacitated by injury or illness.

UMPIRES JUDGMENT

There will be no appeal on any decision of any umpire on the grounds that the umpire was not correct in the conclusion as to whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a runner safe or out, a pitched ball is a ball or strike, or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. No decision rendered by any umpire will be reversed except when the umpire is convinced it is in violation of one of these rules. In case the manager, acting manager, 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 the umpire's before taking any action; but under no circumstances will any player or person, other than the manager, acting manager, or captain of either team, have any legal right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.

- 1) Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by an associate, nor will any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of their associate(s) unless asked to do so.

- 2) The plate umpire 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 runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after a 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 on their way to the bench or dugout area, or after the last play of the game, the umpires have left the field of play.

SIGNALS

The umpire will use designated signals to make specific calls through out the course of a game. These signals are:

- 1) **SAFE-** Body upright, eyes on the ball, and arms extended straight out with the palms down. A verbal call of "SAFE" is made as the arms are extended out to the side from the upper chest.
- 2) **OUT-** Body upright, eyes on the ball and right arm extended straight up as an extension of the shoulder. As we come to the "hammer" position, the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle and the fist is closed with the fingers facing the right ear. The left arm should be brought to the midsection of the body. A verbal call of "OUT" is made as the right arm is extended high into the air and is continued as the arm drops into the "hammer" position.
- 3) **STRIKE-** Body upright, eyes on the pitcher and right extended straight up as an extension of the shoulder. As we come to the "hammer" position, the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle and the fist is closed with the fingers facing the right ear. The left arm should be brought to the midsection of the body. A verbal call of "STRIKE" is made as the right arm is extended high into the air and continued as the arm drops into the "hammer" position.
- 4) **FAIR BALL-** Body upright, eyes on the ball and point toward fair territory with the arm toward the infield. There is no verbal call on a fair ball, and if the umpire is wearing a mask, it should be in the left hand.

- 5) **FOUL BALL-** On all foul balls, the ball is dead and the dead ball signal should be given. For balls touched close to the foul line or over foul territory, the arm should be extended straight out toward foul territory away from the playing field. If caught, follow with a verbal “OUT” call and the out signal. If not caught, follow with a dead ball signal.
- 6) **TIME OUT/DEAD BALL/NO PITCH/FOUL BALL-** Body upright and both arms extended high in the air with the palms of the hands open and facing away from the body. A verbal call of “TIME OUT”, “DEAD BALL”, or “NO PITCH” is made at the same time as the arms are going up.
- 7) **PLAY BALL-** Body upright, eyes on the pitcher, and the umpire makes a motion toward the pitcher. On a right handed batter use the right hand. On a left handed batter use the left hand. A verbal call of “PLAY” or “PLAY BALL” is made as the umpire motions toward the pitcher.
- 8) **HOLD UP PLAY-** Body upright and raise either hand with the palm facing the pitcher. On a right handed batter use the right hand. On a left handed batter use the left hand. “NO PITCH” shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire has a hand in this position.
- 9) **DELAYED DEAD BALL-** Body upright, the left arm is extended straight out to the side of the body as an extension of the shoulder and the left hand is in a fist. This position is held long enough for the players to see that the umpire has observed the act that caused this call.
- 10) **INFIELD FLY-** Body upright, eyes on the ball and right arm extended high into the air with a closed fist. Make a verbal call of “INFIELD FLY”. If the batted ball is near a foul line, call “INFIELD FLY IF FAIR”.
- 11) **TRAPPED BALL-** Same as safe signal. The umpire makes a verbal call of “SAFE”.
- 12) **FOUL TIP-** Body upright and eyes on the ball. The fingers of both hands are touched together and then the umpire gives the strike signal with no verbal call. This indicates that the bat

tipped the ball and was caught by the catcher.

- 13) **COUNT-** Body upright eye contact with the pitcher. Both hands are extended high above the head. Consecutive fingers are used to indicate the ball and strike count on the batter. Use the fingers of the left hand for balls, and the fingers of the right hand for strikes. A verbal description of the count on the batter is given while the hands are overhead. Balls are always announced first, and strikes second.
- 14) **DOUBLE-** Body upright. Raise the right hand high above the head indicating with two fingers the number of bases awarded. A verbal call of “TWO BASES” is made while the hands are overhead.
- 15) **HOME RUN-** Body upright. Raise the right hand high above the head with a closed fist. Make a counter-clockwise circling motion with the raised fist. A verbal call of “HOME RUN” is made at the same time the fist is overhead.
- 16) **FOUR-BASE AWARD-** Body upright. Raise the right hand high above the head with four fingers shown. A verbal call of “FOUR BASE AWARD” is made at the same time the hand is overhead.

SUSPENSION OF PLAY

Umpires may suspend play when, in their judgment, conditions justify such action.

- 1) Play will be suspended whenever the plate umpire leaves the umpires position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
- 2) The umpire will suspend play whenever a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- 3) An umpire will suspend play if a batted fair ball hits the umpire prior to passing an infielder.

- a. The batter-runner is awarded a base hit. No runners are advanced unless forced to advance.
- 4) An umpire will not call time while any play is in progress including when a thrown ball hits an umpire
 - a. During a live ball situation, when a player becomes injured, and in the umpires judgment requires immediate attention, then the umpire shall call time and seek first aid.
 - 5) An umpire will not call time after the pitcher has started the delivery.
 - 6) In case of injury, time will not be called until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at his base.
 - 7) Umpires will not suspend play at the request of players, coaches, or managers until all action in progress has been completed.
 - 8) When in the judgment of an umpire, all immediate play is apparently completed, the umpire should call time.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

APPEALS

1) Types of appeals

- a. Missing a base (forward or backward) or touching the white portion only of the double base when a play is being made on the batter-runner at first base.
- b. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
- c. Batting out of order.
- d. Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base.

2) Live ball appeals

- a. In all games an appeal may be made during a live ball by any fielder in possession of the ball touching the base missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner committing the violation if he is still on the playing field.

3) Dead ball appeals

- a. Once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called. Runners must be given ample opportunity, in the umpire's judgment, to complete their base running responsibilities. Any infielder (including the pitcher or catcher), with or without the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire should then make a decision on the play.
- b. If the ball has gone out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities before the dead ball appeal can be made.

4) May not return

- a. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:
 - i. He has left the field of play.
 - ii. A following runner has scored.

5) Appeals must be made:

- a. Before the next legal or illegal pitch.
- b. At the end of an inning, before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area.
- c. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.

6) Advance

- a. Runners may advance during a live ball appeal play.
- b. When the pitcher makes a play on any runner (a fake throwing motion is considered a play). If time out is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant it, and runners may not advance until the next pitch.

7) More than one appeal

- a. More than one appeal play may be made but guessing games should not be allowed.
 - i. **EXAMPLE-** The runner misses second base by a step but just touches the corner of third base. Even though an appeal may be made at third (the umpire calls the runner safe), an appeal may be made at second base on the same runner.

8) Plate and missed tag

- a. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, he should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is then made by tagging either the runner or home plate, the umpire should then make a decision on this appeal play.

9) Force out

- a. If an appeal is honored at a base to which a 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 runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base he had first occupied, the force play is reinstated and he may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which he is forced. If the batter-runner is put out or is the first out on multiple outs on the same play, this would eliminate all force-outs. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred.

10) Tag ups

- a. If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a time play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.

11) Missing first base before the throw arrives

- a. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, he is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made. If using the double base and a batter-runner touches the white rather than the colored portion and a play is made at first, the same procedure follows. If an appeal is made in either situation, it must be made prior to the runner returning to first base while the ball is live.
 - i. If a play is being made from first base foul territory, or an errant or missed throw pulls the defensive player into foul territory, the runner may touch the

white portion of the base and be safe.

12) End of game

- a. If any situation arises which could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should wait until all defensive infielders have crossed the foul line on their way to the team dugout, before leaving the infield. If teams line up for high fives there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line and umpires can leave the game at this point. No appeal can be made once the umpires have left the field.

13) Crashing into a fielder with the ball (interference)

- a. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if he remains on his feet and crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent the crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender while staying in the three foot base path, or return to the previous base touched. If the act is determined flagrant, the offender will be ejected. A runner may slide into the fielder.
 - i. When a runner is called out for crashing into a fielder holding the ball, the ball becomes dead. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of interference.
 - ii. If the runner crashed into a fielder holding the ball before he was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate succeeding runner will also be declared out.
- b. If the crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out.

- i. If an obstructed runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored and the runner will be called out.
- c. If a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or draws him into the path of the base runner, this would not be a crash.
- d. If the ball, runner, and the defensive player all arrive at the same time and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke the collision rule or obstruction. This is merely incidental contact.
 - i. If the ball does not enter dead ball territory the ball remains live and in play.

14) Extra player

- a. If a team uses the Extra player, it must be on the lineup card at the start of the game, and the team must end the game with 11 players, unless they are shorthanded due to injury or ejection.
- b. All 11 players bat but only 10 play defense. Changes with the defensive players may be made at any time, however, the batting order may not change.
- c. Any of the 11 starting players may leave the game once and re-enter. A starting player and his substitute may not be in the game at the same time. If this occurs, the player listed in the wrong spot in the batting order is disqualified by the umpire.

15) Fake Tag

- a. A fake tag occurs when a fielder without the ball deceives the runner by impeding his progress.
 - i. Obstruction is called when a fake tag is made as mentioned above. The umpire shall give the

delayed dead ball signal and let the play continue to its completion. The obstructed runner, and each runner affected by the obstruction, will always be awarded the base(s) he would have reached if there had not been any obstruction. Remember, each runner is awarded a base(s) only, in the judgment of the umpire; he would have made the base or bases had there not been any obstruction.

- b. The umpire should rule obstruction on a fake tag. Continued fake tags should result in ejections. In flagrant cases where the sliding player gets hurt, the offending player should be ejected without warning.
- c. If a fielder fakes a tag but the runner continues on to the next base without sliding or breaking stride, there is not a rule violation. Obstruction is the act of a fielder in the base path without the ball impeding the progress of a runner. In this case, the progress was not impeded. A warning should be given.

16) Falling over the fence on catch

- a. The fence is an extension of the field of play, making it legal for a player to climb and make the catch. If a portable fence is used which is collapsible and a defensive player is standing on the fence, it is ruled a legal catch. A defensive player can climb a fence to make a catch so he should be able to stand on a fence which has fallen to the ground. There should be no doubt left in an umpire's judgment whether the fence is on the ground, six inches off the ground, or three feet off the ground when the defender steps on it. As long as the defensive player has not stepped outside the playing area the catch will be legal.

17) Home runs/four base awards/ground rule double

- a. When a ball does not hit the ground and leaves the playing field in fair territory it is a home run.

- b. A batted ball hitting a foul pole above the fence is a home run.
- c. A batted ball hitting a defensive player in fair territory, but going over the fence in foul territory is a two base award.
- d. A batted ball that leaves the park in fair territory and first touches the ground in foul territory is a home run.

18) Interference

- a. Interference is defined as the act of an offensive player or team member, which impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. It may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction, which would hinder the fielder in the execution of the play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered.
- b. Runner interference includes:
 - i. A runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder executing a play (including the batter-runner touching the white part of a double base at first and colliding with the fielder trying to catch a thrown ball from an infielder).
 - ii. When a runner interferes with a fielder, the umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the proper rule.
 - iii. When a runner is hit by a batted fair ball, it is interference if it occurred before it passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher) and provided the runner was not in contact with the base. It is interference if the batted ball deflects off one defensive player and the runner intentionally interferes with any defensive player who has the

opportunity to make an out.

- iv. A runner could be standing on a base and a defensive player bumps the runner while watching the flight of the ball. If the defensive player fails to make a catch on a catchable ball, it is the umpire's judgment whether interference should or should not be called. The rule provides that a runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. In this case, the runner should not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional.
 - v. If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball not caught, the runner is out, a strike is called, the ball is dead, and the batter remains at bat. If on the third strike, the play would result in two outs.
 - vi. A runner or batter-runner who is hit by a touched or untouched fair ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.
- c. Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before he hits the ball. It can occur when a batter releases his bat in such a manner that it hits the catcher and prevents him from making a play. If the batter merely drops his bats and the catcher trips over it, there is no interference.
- d. Offensive players in the dugout may be charged with interference if they interfere with a fielders' opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.
- e. On-deck batters may be charged with interference if they interfere with a throw and a possible tag on a runner, or a fielder's opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.
- f. Coach's interference occurs when a base coach runs toward home and draws a throw or when he interferes with a fielder attempting to catch or throw a ball.

The coach's box is not a sanctuary.

- g. Spectator interference occurs when:
 - i. Enters the field and interferes with a play. The batter and runner(s) shall be placed where in the umpire's judgment they would have made it on base had the interference not occurred.
 - ii. Reaches onto the field from the stands and prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play. A dead ball is ruled and the batter is called out. All runners shall be placed, where in the umpire's judgment they would have made, had the interference not occurred. It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands.
- h. Umpire Inference occurs:
 - i. When an umpire is hit by a fair, untouched, batted ball before it passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher). The batter-runner is awarded first base.
 - i. When batter, batter-runner, runner, on-deck batter, or coach interference occurs, the ball is dead, someone must be called out, and each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- j. Offensive team interference could occur on a thrown ball striking loose equipment left on the playing field should there actually be a play interfered with.
- k. Batter-runner interference occurs when he steps back while running to first base to avoid a tag by a defensive player, or when running to first runs outside the three foot lane over fair or foul territory and interferes with a thrown ball to first base.

19) Passing a runner

Passing a runner occurs during a live ball. It can occur while runners are advancing or returning to a base. Normally it occurs when a lead runner stops to see if a ball

will be caught and the trail runner, also watching the ball, does not see the lead runner and passes him. The trail runner is the one called out and the ball remains live. To pass a runner, the trail runner must pass the lead runner. Not just an arm or leg ahead of the trail runner.

20) Runner hit by a fair ball

- a. While in contact with the base
 - i. The runner shall never be called out unless the act is intentional. The ball remains live or dead depending on the closest defensive player. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. However, if the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If the ball is ruled dead and the batter awarded a base hit, only runners forced to advance due to the batter being placed on first base shall be advanced one base.
- b. While not in contact with the base
 - i. The runner will be called out or ruled safe depending on the interference rule.

21) Shorthanded teams (continuing after starting with full team)

- a. A team may continue a game with one player less than it uses to begin a game as long as the player vacancy is not created by an ejection. This rule is designed to avoid forfeits whenever possible. When a team starts with the required number of players, and a player has to leave the game for any reason other than ejection, the following guidelines should be applied:
 - i. If a team is short one player due to a player being disqualified the game is not forfeited. If the team is already playing shorthanded and the disqualification occurs, then the game will be forfeited.
 - ii. If a player leaving the game is a runner, the runner is declared out even if the runner reached the base

safely.

- iii. When a team plays shorthanded because a player leaves the game, the player cannot return to the lineup. A player can only return if they are treated under the blood rule.
- iv. If there is an eligible substitute at the game, or if an eligible substitute arrives before the game is over, the substitute must enter the game. Refusal to do so makes the player ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- v. A team cannot bat less than nine players. The game is forfeited. If the team has only 10 players, one is injured in the third inning, a substitute arrives in the fifth inning and is entered in the game, and another player becomes injured, this is legal as the team can continue to play with nine. If the same team did not have a substitute when the second player was injured, reducing the number of players to 8, the game is forfeited. Playing shorthanded is not a strategic option for a coach. The purpose of this rule is to allow all players on a team to play without fear of injury or illness that previously created a forfeit.

22) Substitutes

- a. All substitutions should be reported to the plate umpire who, in turn, will report the changes to the official scorekeeper. All substitute names and numbers should be listed on the official lineup card submitted to the plate umpire at the start of the game; however, if a player is not listed on the card and is not on the official roster, the player can be added after the game has begun.
- b. A substitute is considered in the game after a legal or illegal pitch has been thrown, or a play has been made.
- c. If a substitute has not reported, and is brought to your attention, the player will be disqualified. All action

prior to the discovery is legal. If the manager or player in violation informs the umpire prior to the offended team's protest, there is no violation. Should an unreported substitute bat, and it is discovered prior to the next pitch, all runners are returned to their original base, and outs reported will stand, and the unreported substitute is disqualified and called out. The re-entered player or legal reported substitute assumes the ball/strike count. If it is discovered on the last play of the game, and before the umpires have left the field, the runners will be returned to their previous base and the unreported substitute disqualified.

- d. Any player may be substituted or replaced, and re-entered once, providing the players occupy the same batting position whenever in the lineup.
- e. A game is forfeited for a substitution violation when a player, removed by the umpire is back in the same game, or if the ejected or disqualification creates a situation where there are not enough players to continue the game.