

# OFFICIAL SOFTBALL RULES OF NPYL

## 1.0 Objectives of the Game

**1.01** Softball is a game between two teams of nine players each, under direction of a manager, played on a 60-foot-square infield in accordance with these rules, under jurisdiction of one or more umpires.

**1.02** The objective of each team is to win by scoring more runs than the opponent.

**1.03** The winner of the games shall be that team which shall have scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.

**1.04 THE PLAYING FIELD.** The field shall be laid out according to the instructions below, supplemented by Diagrams No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 on adjoining pages.

The infield shall be a 60-foot square. The outfield shall be the area between two foul lines formed by extending two sides of the square, as in Diagram 1. The recommended distance from home base to the nearest fence is 200 feet. The infield and outfield, including the boundary lines, are fair territory and all other area is foul territory.

It is desirable that the line from home base through the pitcher's plate to second base shall run East-Northeast.

It is recommended that the distance from home base to the backstop, and from the base lines to the nearest fence, stand or other obstruction on foul territory shall be a minimum of 25 feet. See Diagram 1.

When location of home base is determined, with a steel tape measure 84 feet, 10¼ inches in desired direction to establish second base. From home base, measure 60 feet towards first base; from second base, measure 60 feet towards first base; the intersection of these lines establishes first base. From home base, measure 60 feet towards third base; from second base, measure 60 feet towards third base; the intersection of these lines establishes third base. The distance between first base and third base is 84 feet, 10¼ inches. All measurements from home base shall be taken from the point where the first and third base lines intersect.

The catcher's box, the batter's boxes, the coaches' boxes and the three-foot first base lines shall be laid out as shown in Diagrams 1 and 2.

The foul lines and all other playing lines indicated in the diagrams by solid black lines shall be marked with wet, unslaked lime, chalk or other white material.

The grass lines and dimensions shown on the diagram are those used in many fields, but they are not mandatory and each league shall determine the size and shape of the grassed and bare areas of its playing field.

A skinned infield is strongly recommended. To determine the area of the infield to be skinned, measure a 60-foot arc from the front center of a pitching plate placed at 46 feet from the apex of home plate. Although a 40-foot pitching distance is used in the game, the pitching rubber should be placed at 46 feet for measurement of the 60-foot arc to be skinned.

14U will pitch from a distance of 43 feet.

**1.05** Home base shall be marked by a five-sided slab of whitened rubber. It shall be a 17-inch square with two of the corners filled in so that one edge is 17 inches long, two 8½ inches and two are 12 inches. It shall be set in the ground with the point at the intersection of the lines extending from home base to first base and to third base; with the 17-inch edge facing the pitcher's plate, and the two 12-inch edges coinciding with the first and third base lines. The top edges of home base shall be beveled and the base shall be fixed in the ground level with the ground surface (See Diagram 3.)

**1.06** The bases, other than home plate, shall be 15 inches square, shall be made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than five inches in thickness. The bases must be securely attached to the ground and positioned as indicated in Diagram 1. First and third bases shall be entirely within the infield.

**1.07** The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber, 24 inches by 6 inches. It shall be set in the ground as shown in Diagrams 1 and 4, so that the distance between the pitcher's plate and home base (the rear point of home plate) shall be 40 feet. 14U shall be at 43 feet.

**1.08** The league shall furnish players' benches, one each for the home and visiting teams, it is recommended that such benches shall not be less than eleven feet from the base lines. It is suggested they be roofed and enclosed at the back and ends.

**1.09** The softball shall be a regular, smooth surfaced ball. Both flat and raised seams are permitted. The center core shall be made of either No. 1 quality long fiber kapok, a mixture of cork and rubber, a polyurethane mixture or other materials approved by New Palestine Youth League, hand or machine wound, with a fine quality twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement.

The cover of the ball shall be one of the finest quality No 1 chrome-tanned horsehide or cowhide, or synthetic material cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with waxed thread of cotton or linen. If the cover is molded, it may be bonded to the core or be of the same composition as the core. Either molded type must have an authentic facsimile of stitching. Either the white-cover, white-stitch or yellow optic cover, red0stitch ball may be used.

The 12" ball shall be used for 12U and 14U regular season and tournament competition. The 11" ball is recommended for 10U regular season play, and required for 10U tournament competition.

The 12" ball shall weigh not less than 6 ¼ ounces or more than 7 ounces. The 11" ball shall weigh not less than 5 7/8 ounces or more than 6 1/8 ounces. The ball used in all divisions shall have a COR of .47 or under. Any softball stamped "Official Babe Ruth League Softball" is recommended.

**1.09 (a)** Rawlings is official tournament softball.

**1.10** The Official Bat shall be round, made of one piece of hardwood or formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive in such a way that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat. Any such laminated bat shall contain only wood or adhesive, except for a clear finish. The bat shall not be more than 34 inches long, and not more than 2 ¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. The bat, in its entirety, shall not exceed 38 ounces in weight. The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (not smooth plastic type), or composition material. The safety grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the small end of the bat. The bat shall be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" or "OFFICIAL FASTPITCH" by the manufacturer. The bat may also be made of metal and a metal bat may be angular. The bat shall have no exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges, or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. All exposed surfaces of the bat shall be smooth and free of burrs. A metal bat shall not have a wooden handle. It shall conform to all the above specifications, with the exception that it is metal instead of wood.

Unless the bat is made of one piece construction with the barrel end closed, there shall be a rubber or vinyl plastic insert firmly secured at the large end of the bat. A ONE PIECE RUBBER GRIP AND KNOB COMBINATION IS ILLEGAL. A metal or magnesium bat must have a knob on the handle end welded or mechanically fastened.

**NOTE:** *The on-deck batter may loosen up only with official softball bats or approved warm-up bats. Nothing may be attached to a bat such as donut, fan, etc. when loosening up.*

**1.11 (a)** (1) All players on a team should wear uniforms identical in color, trim and style, and all players' uniforms should include minimal six-inch numbers on their backs. Headgear (visors, headbands and caps) is optional for players. However, teams may not mix caps, visors, and headbands. Plastic visors, bandannas, and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear. All coaches must be dressed alike and display team colors. (2)

Any part of an undershirt exposed to view shall be a uniform solid color for all players on a team. Any player other than the pitcher may have numbers, letters, insignia attached to the sleeve of the undershirt.

**NOTE:** *It is permissible to allow individual team local league uniforms during tournament competition provided they are like in style and each player has a different number.*

- (b) A league should provide that each team wear a distinctive uniform at all times.
- (c) (1) Sleeve lengths may vary for individual players, but the sleeves of each individual player shall be approximately the same length. (2) No player shall wear ragged, frayed or slit sleeves.
- (d) No player shall attach to the uniform tape or other material of a different color from her uniform.
- (e) Solid-coloring sliding pants/shorts are allowed. It is not required for all players to wear sliding pants/shorts, but if more than one player wears them, they must be alike in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed or slit legs on exposed sliding pants.
- (f) Glass buttons, polished metal or any exposed jewelry of any kind shall not be used. Hair barrettes are not considered jewelry and are allowed unless adjudged by the umpire to be dangerous.
- (g) No player shall attach anything to the heel or toe of her shoe other than the ordinary shoe plate or toe plate. Shoes with metal spikes or cleats are not permitted.
- (h) Uniforms for team managers and coaches – the team manager and coaches will be required to wear identical uniforms consisting of the following: (1) a collared shirt in the same colors as the team's uniform, (2) dress shorts or pants of the same style and in the same colors as the team's uniform, and (3) athletic footwear including running shoes, sneakers, cleats and excluding open toed footwear.

**1.12** The catcher may wear a mitt of any size, shape or weight.

**1.13** The first baseman may wear a leather glove or mitt not more than twelve inches long from top to bottom and not more than eight inches across the palm, measured from the base of the thumb crotch to the outer edge of the mitt. The space between the thumb section and the finger section of the mitt shall not exceed 5½ inches at the top of the mitt and shall be constructed so that this space is permanently fixed and cannot be enlarged, widened, or deepened by the use of any materials or process whatsoever. The glove may be of any weight.

**1.14** Each fielder, other than the first baseman or catcher, may wear a leather glove not more than 14 inches wide.

**1.15** (a) The pitcher's glove shall be uniform in color, or of varying shades of the same color, and may have contrasting stitching, lacing and/or webbing, provided the glove, lacing, or webbing is not white, gray, or optic yellow.

- (b) No pitcher shall attach to her glove any foreign material of a color different from the glove. The pitcher may wear her batting glove on her non-pitching hand under her pitcher's glove provided the batting glove is not white, gray, or optic yellow.

**1.16** (a) All players shall use a protective helmet with a mask or shield on deck, at bat and while on the bases and by players in the coaches' box during practice and all games. Such headgear must cover the top of the head and have extended ear flaps which cover both ears and properly fit the player wearing it. All batboys/girls must also wear protective headgear while out of the dugout or bench. **PENALTY**-If a player refuse to wear the headgear, the player shall be removed from the game.

- (b) The use of face guards on all batting helmets will be required for all divisions and all levels of play.

**1.17** Playing equipment including but not limited to the bases, pitcher's plate, softball, bats, uniforms, catcher's mitts, first baseman's gloves, infielder's and outfielder's gloves and protective helmets, as detailed in the provisions of this rule, shall not contain any undue commercialization of the product. Designations by the manufacturer on any

such equipment must be in good taste as to the size and content of the manufacturer's logo or the brand name of the item.

**1.18** The catcher or anyone acting as the catcher shall wear a catcher's mask while warming up the pitcher at home plate or at any other location. In addition, during the course of the game and practice, a catcher shall wear a catcher's mask, protective headgear which covers the top of the head, throat protector, shin guards and chest protector. (Hockey style mask does not require "dangling" throat protector.)

## **2.00 Definitions of Terms**

**ADJUDGED** is a judgment decision by the umpire.

An **APPEAL** is the act of a fielder in claiming violation of the rules by the offensive team.

A **BALL** is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter. If the pitch touches the ground and bounces through the strike zone it is a "ball." If such a pitch touches the batter, she shall be awarded first base. If the batter swings at such a pitch after two strikes, the ball cannot be caught, for the purpose of Rule 6.05(c) and 6.09(b). If the batter hits such a pitch, the ensuing action shall be the same as if she hit the ball in flight.

A **BASE** is one of four points which must be touched by a runner in order to score a run; more usually applied to the canvas bags or other suitable material and the rubber plates which mark the base points.

A **BASE COACH** is a team member in uniform who is stationed in the coach's box at first or third base to direct the batter and the runners.

A **BASE ON BALLS** is an award of first base granted to a batter who, during her time at bat, receives four pitches outside the strike zone.

A **BATTER** is an offensive player who takes her position in the batter's box.

**BATTER-RUNNER** is a term that identifies the offensive player who has just finished her time at bat until she is put out or until the play in which she became a runner ends.

The **BATTER'S BOX** is the area within which the batter shall stand during her time at bat.

The **BATTERY** is the pitcher and the catcher.

**BENCH** or **DUGOUT** is the seating facilities reserved for players, substitutes and other team members in uniform when they are not actively engaged on the playing field.

A **BUNT** is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield.

A **CALLED GAME** is one in which, for any reason, the umpire-in-chief terminated play.

A **CATCH** is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in her hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it; providing she does not use her cap, protector, pocket or any other part of her uniform in getting possession. It is not a catch, however, if simultaneously or immediately following her contact with the ball, she collides with a player, or with a wall, or if she falls down, and as a result of such collision or falling, drops the ball. It is not a catch if a fielder touches a fly ball which then hits a member of the offensive team or an umpire and then is caught by another defensive player. If the fielder has made the catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw following the catch, the ball shall be adjudged to have been caught. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove that she has complete control of the ball and that her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. A catch is legal if the ball is finally held by any fielder, even though juggled, or held by another fielder before it touches the ground. Runners may leave their bases the instant the first fielder touches the ball. A fielder may reach over a fence, railing, rope or other line of demarcation to make a catch. She

may jump on top of a railing, or canvas that may be in foul ground. No interference should be allowed when a fielder reaches over a fence, railing, rope or into a stand to catch a ball. She does so at her own risk. If a fielder, attempting to catch at the edge of the dugout is “held up” and kept from an apparent fall by a player or players of either team and catch is made, it shall be allowed.

The **CATCHER** is the fielder who takes her position back of the home base.

The **CATCHER’S BOX** is that area within which the catcher shall stand until the pitcher delivers the ball.

A **COACH** is a team member in uniform appointed by the manager to perform such duties as the manger may designate such as but not limited to acting as base coach.

A **COURTESY RUNNER** – The pitcher and/or catcher may have a courtesy runner run for them every time they are up to bat. Each courtesy runner used must be a player who is not in the game at the time. Each courtesy runner may only pinch run once per inning.

A **DEAD BALL** is a ball out of play because of a legally created temporary suspension of play.

The **DEFENSE** (or **DEFENSIVE**) is the team, or any player of the team, in the field.

A **DOUBLE-HEADER** is two regularly scheduled or rescheduled games, played in immediate succession.

A **DOUBLE PLAY** is a play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, providing there is no error between putouts.

**DUGOUT** (See definition of **BENCH**)

A **FAIR BALL** is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first or third base, or that touches first, second or third base, or that falls on fair territory on or beyond first or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.

A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time she touches the ball.

If a fly ball lands in the infield between home and first base, or home and third base, and then bounces to foul territory without touching a player or umpire and before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball; or if the ball settles on foul territory or is touched by a player on foul territory, it is a foul ball. If a fly ball lands on or beyond first or third base and then bounces to foul territory, it is a fair hit.

**FAIR TERRITORY** is that part of the playing field within, and including the first base and third base lines, from home base to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. All foul lines are in fair territory.

A **FIELDER** is any defensive player.

**FIELDER’S CHOICE** is the act of a fielder who handles a fair grounder and, instead of throwing to first base to put out the batter-runner, throws to another base in an attempt to put out a preceding runner. The term is also used by scorers (a) to account for the advance of the batter-runner who takes one or more extra bases when the fielder who handles her safe hit attempts to put out a preceding runner; (b) to account for the advance of a runner (other than by stolen base or error) while a fielder is attempting to put out another runner, and (c) to account for the advance of a runner made solely because of the defensive team’s indifference (undefended steal).

A **FLY BALL** is a batted ball that goes high in the air in flight.

A **FORCE PLAY** is a play in which a runner legally loses her right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner.

Confusion regarding this play is removed by remembering that frequently the “force” situation is removed during the play. Example: Man on first, one out, ball hit sharply to first baseman who touches the bag and batter-runner is out. The force is removed at that moment and runner advancing to second must be tagged. If there had been a runner on third or second, and either of these runners scored before the tag-out at second, the run counts. Had the first baseman thrown to second and the ball then had been returned to first, the play at second was force out, making two outs, and the return to throw to first ahead of the runner would have made three outs. In that case, no run would score.

Example: Not a force out. One out. Runners on first and third. Batter flies out, two out. Runner on third tags up and scores. Runner on first tries to retouch before throw from fielder reaches first baseman, but does not get back in time and is out. Three outs. If, in umpire’s judgment, the runner from third touched home before the ball was held at first base, the run counts.

A **FORFEITED GAME** is a game declared ended by the umpire-in-chief in favor of the offended team by score of 7 to 0, (6-0 in 12U) for violation of the rules.

A **FOUL BALL** is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that, while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.

A foul fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on foul or fair territory at the time she touches the ball.

A batted ball not touched by a fielder, which hits the pitcher’s rubber and rebounds into foul territory, between home and first, or between home and third base is a foul ball.

**FOUL TERRITORY** is that part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines extended to the fence and perpendicularly upwards.

A **FOUL TIP** is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher’s hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher’s glove or hand.

A **GROUND BALL** is a batted ball that rolls or bounces close to the ground.

The **HOME TEAM** is the team on whose grounds the game is played, or if the game is played on neutral grounds, the home team shall be designated by mutual agreement.

**ILLEGAL (or ILLEGALLY)** is contrary to these rules.

An **ILLEGAL PITCH** is (1) a pitch delivered to the batter when the pitcher does not have her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate; (2) when the pitcher delivers the pitch with a foreign substance applied to the ball. Rosin can be applied to the hand; (3) a pitch not made in accordance with the pitching rule.

An **ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL** is (1) one hit by the batter with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter’s box, or (2) one hit with a bat which does not conform to Rule 1.10.

An **INFIELDER** is a fielder who occupies position in the infield.

An **INFIELD FLY** is a fair ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are

out. The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder who stations herself in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.

When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the baselines, the umpire shall declare "Infield Fly, if Fair."

The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.

If a declared Infield Fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched on to the ground outside the baseline and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly.

On the infield fly rule the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder – not by some arbitrary limitations such as the grass, or the base lines. The umpire must rule also that a ball is an infield fly, even if handled by an outfielder, if, in the umpire's judgment, the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder. The infield fly is in no sense to be considered an appeal play. The umpire's judgment must govern, and the decision should be made immediately.

When an infield fly rule is called, runners may advance at their own risk. If on an infield fly rule, the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball, the ball remains in play despite the provisions of Rule 6.05 (1). The infield fly rule take precedence.

**IN FLIGHT** describes a batted, thrown, or pitched ball which has not yet touched the ground or some object other than a fielder.

**IN JEOPARDY** is a term indicating that the ball is in play and an offensive player may be put out.

An **INNING** is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three putouts for each team. Each team's at bat is a half-inning.

## **INTERFERENCE**

- (a) Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.

In the event the batter-runner has not reached first base, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch.

- (b) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch.
- (c) Umpire's interference occurs (1) when an umpire hinders, impedes or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base, or, (2) when a fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before passing a fielder.
- (d) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands, or goes on the field, and touches a live ball.

On any interference, the ball is dead.

**THE LEAGUE** is a group of teams whose teams play each other in a pre-arranged schedule under these rules for the league championship.

The **LEAGUE PRESIDENT** shall enforce the official rules, resolve disputes involving the rules, and determine any protested games.

**LEGAL (or LEGALLY)** is in accordance with these rules.

A **LIVE BALL** is a ball which is in play.

A **LINE DRIVE** is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to a fielder without touching the ground.

The **MANAGER** is a person selected by the league to be responsible for the team's actions on the field, and to represent the team in communications with the umpire and the opposing team.

- (a) The manager may advise the umpire that he has delegated specific duties prescribed by the rules to a player or coach, and any action of such designated representative shall be official. The manager shall always be responsible for his team's conduct, observance of the official rules, and deference to the umpires.
- (b) If a manager leaves the field, he shall designate a coach as his substitute, and such substitute manager shall have the duties, rights and responsibilities of the manager.

**OBSTRUCTION** is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.

If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in flight directly toward and near enough to the fielder so she must occupy her position to receive the ball she may be considered "in the act of fielding a ball." It is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire as to whether a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball. After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and missed, she can no longer be in the "act of fielding" the ball. For example: an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball passes her and she continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, she very likely has obstructed the runner.

An **OUT** is one of the three required retirements of an offensive team during its time at bat.

An **OUTFIELDER** is a fielder who occupies a position in the outfield which is the area of the playing field most distant from home base.

**OVERSLIDE (or OVERSLIDING)** is the act of an offensive player when her slide to a base, other than when advancing from home to first base, is with such momentum that she loses contact with the base.

A **PASSED BALL** is a legally delivered ball that should have been held or controlled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

A **PENALTY** is the application of these rules following an illegal act.

The **PERSON** of a player or an umpire is any part of her body, her clothing or her equipment.

A **PITCH** is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher.

A **PITCHER** is the fielder designated to deliver the pitch to the batter.

The pitcher's **PIVOT FOOT** is that foot which must remain in contact with, or push off and drag away from, the pitcher's plate provided contact is maintained with the ground until the other foot, with which the pitcher steps toward home plate, has touched the ground.

"**PLAY**" is the umpire's order to start the game or to resume action following any dead ball.

A **QUICK RETURN** pitch is one made with obvious intent to catch a batter off balance.

**REGULATION GAME.** See Rules 4.10 and 4.11.

A **RETOUCH** is the act of a runner in returning to a base as legally required.



A **RUN (or SCORE)** is the score made by an offensive player who advances from batter to runner and touches first, second, third and home bases in that order.

A **RUN-DOWN** is the act of the defense in an attempt to put out a runner between bases.

A **RUNNER** is an offensive player who is advancing toward, or touching, or returning to any base.

“**SAFE**” is a declaration by the umpire that a runner is entitled to the base for which she was trying.

**SHOES** – Shoes with metal cleats or spikes are not permitted by any player, coach or manager.

A **STRIKE** is a legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which –

- (a) Is struck at by the batter and is missed;
- (b) Is not struck at, if any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone;
- (c) Is fouled by the batter when she has less than two strikes;
- (d) Touches the batter as she strikes at it;
- (e) Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone;
- (f) Becomes a foul tip; or
- (g) Is bunted foul (batter is out and ball is dead, if ball is bunted foul on third strike)

The **STRIKE ZONE** is that space over home plate which is between the batter’s armpits and the top of the batter’s knees when the players assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter’s usual stance when she swings at a pitch.

A **SUSPENDED GAME** is a called game which is to be completed at a late date.

A **TAG** is the action of a fielder in touching a base with her body while holding the ball securely and firmly in her hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with her hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in her hand or glove.

A **THROW** is the act of propelling the ball with the hand and arm to a given objective and is to be distinguished, always, from the pitch.

“**TIME**” is the announcement by an umpire of a legal interruption of play, during which the ball is dead.

**TOUCH** To touch a player or umpire is to touch any part of her body, her clothing or her equipment.

A **TRIPLE PLAY** is a play by the defense in which three offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, providing there is no error between putouts.

A **WILD PITCH** is one so high, so low, or so wide of the plate that it cannot be handled with ordinary effort by the catcher.

## **1.00 Game Preliminaries**

**3.01.** Before the game begins the umpire shall –

- (a). Require strict observance of all rules governing implements of play and equipment of players;
- (b) Be sure that all playing lines (heavy lines on Diagrams No. 1 and No. 2) are marked with lime, chalk or other white material easily distinguishable from the ground or grass;
- (c) Receive from the league a supply of regulation softballs which meet NPYL standards. The umpire shall be the sole judge of the fitness of the balls to be used in the game;
- (d) Be assured by the league that additional balls are immediately available for use if required;

- (e) Have in his possession at least two alternate balls and shall require replenishment of such supply of alternate balls as needed throughout the game. Such alternate balls shall be put in play when –
  - (1) A ball has been batted out of the playing field or into the spectator area;
  - (2) A ball has become discolored or unfit for further use;
  - (3) The pitcher requests such alternate ball.

The umpire shall not give an alternate ball to the pitcher until play has ended and the previously used ball is dead. After a thrown or batted ball goes out to the playing field, play shall not be resumed with an alternate ball until the runners have reached the bases to which they are entitled. After a home run is hit out of the playing grounds, the umpire shall not deliver a new ball to the pitcher or catcher until the batter hitting the home run has crossed the plate.

**3.02** No player shall intentionally discolor or damage the ball by rubbing it with soil, rosin, paraffin, licorice, sandpaper, emery paper or other foreign substance.

**PENALTY:** The umpire shall demand the ball and remove the offender from the game. In case the umpire cannot locate the offender, and if the pitcher delivers such discolored or damaged ball to the batter, the pitcher shall be removed from the game at once.

**3.03** A player, or players, may be substituted during a game at any time the ball is dead. A substitute player shall bat in the replaced player's position in the team's batting order. When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game at the same time, the manager shall, immediately before they take their position as fielders, designate to the umpire-in-chief such players' positions in the team's batting order and the umpire-in-chief shall so notify the official scorer. If this information is not immediately given to the umpire-in-chief, he shall have authority to designate the substitutes' place in the batting order.

A pitcher may change to another position only once during the same inning; e.g. the pitcher will not be allowed to assume a position other than a pitcher more than once in the same inning.

Any player other than a pitcher substituted for an injured player shall be allowed five warm-up throws. (See Rule 8.08 for pitchers).

**3.04** A player whose name is on her team's batting order may not become a substitute runner for another member of her team. **NOTE:** Any of the nine starting players may withdraw and re-enter once provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever she is in the line-up. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter. The starting pitcher is governed by the provisions of Rule 3.05 if withdrawn while on the mound pitching. The starting pitcher withdrawn while a batter or baserunner may re-enter the game immediately. If the starting pitcher is removed from the game because of a second trip in the same inning, she may re-enter the game in any position with the exception of pitcher.

If a player re-enters illegally as a pitcher, fielder or runner, there is no penalty except that she must be removed from the game immediately when discovered. If she re-enters illegally as a batter, such illegal re-entry is penalized according to NPYL Rule 6.07, Batting Out of Order.

- 3.05** (a) The pitcher named in the batting order handed the umpire-in-chief, as provided in Rules 4.01 (a) and 4.01 (b), shall pitch to the first batter or any substitute batter until such batter is put out or reaches first base, unless the pitcher sustains injury or illness which, in the judgment of the umpire-in-chief, incapacitates her from pitching.
- (b) If the pitcher is replaced, the substitute pitcher shall pitch to the batter then at bat, or a substitute batter, until such batter is put out or reaches first base, or until the offensive team is put out, unless the substitute pitcher sustains injury or illness which, in the umpire-in-chief's judgment, incapacitates her for further play as a pitcher.
- (c) If an improper substitution is made from the pitcher, the umpire shall direct the proper pitcher to return to the game until the provisions of this rule are fulfilled. If the improper pitcher is permitted to pitch, any play

that results is legal. The improper pitcher becomes the proper pitcher as soon as she makes her first pitch to the batter, or as soon as any runner is put out.

If a manager attempts to remove a pitcher in violation of Rule 3.05 (c) the umpire shall notify the manager of the offending club that it cannot be done. If, by chance, the umpire-in-chief has, through oversight, announced the incoming improper pitcher, he should still correct the situation before the improper pitcher pitches. Once the improper pitcher delivers a pitch she becomes the proper pitcher.

**3.06** The manager shall immediately notify the umpire-in-chief of any substitution and shall state to the umpire-in-chief the substitute's place in her batting order.

Players for whom substitutions have been made may remain with their team on the bench or may "warm-up" pitchers. If a manager substitutes another player for herself, she may continue to direct her team from the bench or the coach's box. Umpires should not permit players for whom substitutions have been made, and who are permitted to remain on the bench, to address any remarks to any opposing player manager, or to the umpires.

**3.07** The umpire-in-chief, after having been notified, shall immediately announce, or cause to be announced, each substitution.

**3.08** (a) If no announcement of a substitution is made, the substitute shall be considered as having entered the game when –

- (1) If a pitcher, she takes her place on the pitcher's plate;
- (2) If a batter, she takes her place in the batter's box;
- (3) If a fielder, she reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder she has replaced, and play commences;
- (4) If a runner, she takes the place of the runner she has replaced

(b) Any play made by, or on, any of the above mentioned unannounced substitutes shall be legal.

**3.09** Players in uniform shall not address or mingle with spectators, nor sit in the stands during a game.

**3.10** (a) The league shall be the sole judge as to whether a game shall be started because of unsuitable weather conditions or the unfit condition of the playing field.

(b) The umpire-in-chief shall be the sole judge as to whether and when play shall be suspended during a game because of unsuitable weather conditions or the unfit condition of the playing field; as to whether and when play shall be resumed after such suspension; and as to whether and when a game shall be terminated after such suspension. He shall not call the game until at least thirty minutes after play as been suspended. He may continue the suspension as long as he believes there is any chance to resume play.

The umpire-in-chief shall at all times try to complete a game. His authority to resume play following one or more suspensions of as much as thirty minutes each shall be absolute and he shall terminate a game only when there appears to be no possibility of completing it.

**3.11** When the umpire suspends play he shall call "Time." At the umpire's call of "Play," the suspension is lifted and play resumes. Between the call of "Time" and the call of "Play" the ball is dead.

**3.12** The league shall establish ground rules for its playing field. Should none be made known to the umpires prior to the start of the game the umpire-in-chief shall have the authority to make them.

**3.13** Members of the offensive team shall carry all gloves and other equipment off the field and to the dugout while their team is at bat. No equipment shall be left lying on the field, either in fair or foul territory.

**3.14** No person shall be allowed on the playing field during a game except players and coaches in uniform, managers, news photographer authorized by the league and umpires. In case of unintentional interference with play by any person herein authorized to be on the playing field (except members of the offensive team participating in the game, or a coach in the coach's box, or an umpire) the ball is alive and in play. If the interference is intentional, the ball shall be dead at the moment of the interference and the umpire shall impose such penalties as in his opinion will nullify the act of interference.

**NOTE:** See Rule 7.11 for individuals excepted above, also see Rule 7.08 (b).

The question of intentional or unintentional interference shall be decided on the basis of the person's action. For example: a bat boy/girl, ball attendant, policeman, etc., who tries to avoid being touched by a thrown or batted ball but still is touched by the ball, would be involved in unintentional interference. If, however, he kicks the ball or picks it up or pushes it, that is considered intentional interference, regardless of what his thought may have been.

**Play:** Batter hits ball to shortstop, who fields ball but throws wild past first baseman. The offensive coach at first base, to avoid being hit by the ball, falls to the ground and the first baseman on her way to retrieve the wildly thrown ball, runs into the coach; the batter-runner finally ends up on third base. The question is asked whether the umpire should call interference on the part of the coach. This would be up to the judgment of the umpire and if the umpire felt that the coach did all he could to avoid interfering with the play, no interference need be called. If it appeared to the umpire that the coach was trying to interfere, the umpire should rule interference.

**3.15** When there is spectator interference with any thrown or batted ball, the ball shall be dead at the moment of interference and the umpire shall impose such penalties as in his opinion will nullify the act of interference.

**APPROVED RULING:** If a spectator interference clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball, the umpire shall declare the batter out.

There is a difference between a ball which has been thrown or batted into the stands, touching a spectator thereby being out of play even though it rebounds onto the field and a spectator going onto the field or reaching over, under or through a barrier and touching a ball in play or touching or otherwise interfering with a player. In the latter case, it is clearly intentional and shall be dealt with as intentional interference as in Rule 3.14. Batter and runners shall be placed where, in umpire's judgment, they would have been had the interference not occurred.

No interference shall be allowed when a fielder reaches over a fence, railing, rope, or into a stand to catch a ball. She does so at her own risk. However, should a spectator reach out on the playing field side of such fence, railing or rope, and plainly prevent the fielder from catching the ball, then the batsman should be called out for spectator's interference.

Example: Runner on third base, one out and a batter hits a fly ball deep to the outfield (fair or foul). Spectator clearly interferes with the outfielder attempting to catch the fly ball. Umpire calls the batter out for spectator interference. Ball is dead at the time of the call. Umpire decides that because of the distance the ball was hit, the runner on third base would have scored after the catch if the fielder had caught the ball which was interfered with; therefore, the runner is permitted to score. This might not be the case if such fly ball was interfered with a short distance from home plate.

**3.17** Players and substitutes of both teams shall confine themselves to their team's benches unless actually participating in the play or preparing to enter the game, or coaching at first or third base. No one except players, substitutes, managers, coaches, trainers and bat boys/girls shall occupy a bench during a game.

**PENALTY:** For violation the umpire may, after warning, remove the offender from the field.

**3.18** The league shall provide police protection sufficient to preserve order. If a person, or persons, enter the playing field during a game and interfere in any way with the play, either team may refuse to play until the field is cleared.

## 4.00 Starting and Ending a Game

**4.01** The umpires shall proceed directly to home base where they shall be met by the managers of the opposing teams.

In sequence –

(a). First, the home manager shall give his batting order to the umpire-in-chief, in duplicate.

(b) Next, the visiting manager shall give his batting order to the umpire-in-chief, in duplicate.

(c) The umpire-in-chief shall make certain that the original and copies of the respective batting orders are identical, and then tender a copy of each batting order to the opposing manager. The copy retained by the umpire shall be the official batting order. The tender of the batting order by the umpire shall establish the batting orders. Thereafter, no substitutions shall be made by either manager, except as provided in these rules.

(d) As soon as the home team's batting order is handed to the umpire-in-chief, the umpires are in charge of the playing field, and from that moment they shall have sole authority to determine when a game shall be called, suspended resumed on account of weather or the condition of the playing field.

Obvious errors in the batting order, which are noticed by the umpire-in-chief before he calls "Play" for the start of the game, should be called to the attention of the manager or captain of the team in error, so the correction can be made before the game starts. For example, if a manager has inadvertently listed only eight players in the batting order, or has listed two players with the same last name but without identifying initial and the errors are noticed by the umpire before he calls "Play," he shall cause such error or errors to be corrected before he calls "Play" to start the game. Teams should not be "trapped" later by some mistake that obviously was inadvertent and which can be corrected before the game starts.

**4.02** The players of the home team shall take their defensive positions, the first batter of the visiting team shall take her position in the batter's box, the umpire shall call "Play" and the game shall start.

**4.03** When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory.

(a) The catcher shall station herself directly back of the plate. She may leave her position at any time to catch a pitch or make a play except that when the batter is being given an intentional base on balls, the catcher must stand with both feet within the lines of the catcher's box until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. **PENALTY:** Illegal pitch.

(b) The pitcher, while in the act of delivering the ball to the batter, shall take her legal position.

(c) Except the pitcher and the catcher, any fielder may station herself anywhere in fair territory.

(d) Except the batter, or a runner attempting to score, no offensive player shall cross the catcher's lines when the ball is in play.

**4.04** The batting order shall be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. In that case, the substitute shall take the place of the replaced player in the batting order.

**4.05** (a) The offensive team shall station two base coaches on the field during its term at bat, one near first base and one near third base.

(b) Base coaches shall be limited to two in number and shall (1) be in uniform, and (2) remain within the coach's box at all times.

**PENALTY:** The offending base coach shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field.

It has been common practice for many years for some coaches to put one foot outside the coach's box or stand astride or otherwise be slightly outside the coaching box lines. The coach shall not be considered out of the box unless the opposing manager complains, and then, the umpire shall strictly enforce the rule and require all coaches (on both teams) to remain in the coach's box to signal the player to slide, advance or return to a base. This may be allowed if the coach does not interfere with the play in any manner.

**4.06** (a) No manager, player, substitute, coach, trainer or bat boy/girl shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere –

(1) Incite, or try to incite, by word or sign a demonstration by spectators;

(2) Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an umpire, or any spectators;

(3) Make intentional contact with the umpire in any manner.

(b) No fielder shall take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.

**PENALTY:** The offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field.

**4.07** When a manager, player, coach or trainer is ejected from a game, he shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game. He may take a seat in the grandstand well removed from the vicinity of the team's bench or bullpen.

**4.08** When the occupants of a players' bench show violent disapproval of an umpire's decision, the umpire shall first give warning that such disapproval shall cease. If such action continues –

**PENALTY:** The umpire shall order the offenders from the bench. If he is unable to detect the offender, or offenders, he may clear the bench of all substitute players. The manager of the offending team shall have the privilege of recalling to the playing field only those players needed for substitution in the game.

#### **4.09 HOW A TEAM SCORES.**

(a) One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and home base before three players are put out to end the inning. **EXCEPTION:** A run is not scored if the runner advances to home base during a play in which the third out is made (1) by a batter-runner before she touches first base; (2) by any runner being forced out; or (3) by a preceding runner who is declared out because she failed to touch one of the bases.

(b) When the winning run is scored in the last half-inning of a regulation game, or in the late half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases full which forces the runner on third to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner forced to advance from third has touched home base and the batter-runner has touched base.

An exception will be if fans rush onto the field and physically prevent the runner from touching home plate or the batter from touching first base. In such cases, the umpires shall award the runner the base because of the obstruction by the fans.

**PENALTY:** If the runner on third refuses to advance to and touch home base in a reasonable time, the umpire shall disallow the run, call out the offending player and order the game resumed. If, with two outs, the batter-runner refuses to advance to and touch first base, the run shall count, but the offending player shall be called out.

**Approved Ruling:** No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made by the batter-runner before she touches first base. Example: One out, Jones on second, Smith on first. The batter, Brown, hits safely. Jones scores, Smith is out on the throw to plate. Two outs. But Brown misses first base. The ball is thrown to first, an

appeal is made, and Brown is out. Three outs. Since Jones crossed the plate during a play in which the third out was made by the batter-runner before she touched first base, Jones' run does not count.

**Approved Ruling:** Following runners are not affected by an act of a preceding runner unless two are out.

Here is a general statement that covers:

When a runner misses a base and a fielder holds the ball on a missed base, or on the base originally occupied by the runner if a fly ball is caught and appeals from the umpire's decision, the runner is out when the umpire sustains the appeal; all runners may score if possible, except that with two out the runner is out at the moment she misses the bag, if an appeal is sustained as applied to the following runners.

**Approved Ruling:** One out, Jones on third, Smith on first, and Brown flies out to right field. Two outs. Jones tags up and scores after the catch, Smith attempted to return to first but the right fielder's throw beats her to the base. Three outs. But Jones scored before the throw to catch Smith reached first base, hence Jones' run counts. It was not a force play.

- 4.10** (a) A regulation game consists of seven innings, unless extended because of a tie score, or shortened (1) because the home team needs none of its half of the seventh inning or only a fraction of it, or (2) because the umpire calls the game.
- (b) If the score is tied after seven completed innings, play shall continue until (1) the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning, or (2) the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning.
- (c) If a game is called, it is a regulation game:
- (1) If five innings have been completed;
  - (2) If the home team has scored more runs in four and a fraction half-innings than the visiting team has scored in five completed half-innings;
  - (3) If the home team scores one or more runs in its half of the fifth inning to tie the score.
- (d) If the team has the same number of runs when the game ends, the umpire shall declare it a "Tie Game."

**NOTE:** In the case of a "tie game," the results are entered into league records as a "tie game" and are so indicated in league standings. After the regular season is concluded, if the tie game affects league standing of either team involved, the game is replayed as a new game. Pitching eligibility in the 12U division for the replay is determined according to the calendar week in which the game is replayed. If no league standings are affected by the tie game it remains as originally recorded. In order for a game to be declared a tie game by the umpire it must be a regulation game, i.e. 4 1/2-5 innings must have been played. Note: This applies to local league play only. Local leagues also have the option to replay tie games as they occur.

- (e) If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, the umpire shall declare it "No Game."

**NOTE:** If a game fails to reach the regulation minimum limit of 4 1/2-5 innings played it is not a regulation game and must be replayed as a new game. According to rule 4.10 (e), it is declared "No Game" by the umpire, no records (pitching or otherwise) are kept and pitching eligibility, etc., is intact as it was prior to the beginning of the "No Game" situation. It is as if no pitch was thrown, no ball hit or caught. Note: This applies to local league play only.

**4.11** The score of a regulation game is the total number of runs scored by each team at the moment the game ends.

- (a) The game ends when the visiting team completes its half of the seventh inning if the home team is ahead.
- (b) The game ends when the seventh inning is completed, if the visiting team is ahead.

(c) If the home team scores the winning run in its half of the seventh inning (or its half of an extra inning after a tie), the game ends immediately when the winning run is scored.

**EXCEPTION:** If the last batter in the game hits a home run out of the playing field, the batter runner and all runners on base are permitted to score, in accordance with the base-running rules, and the game ends when the batter-runner touches home plate.

**APPROVED RULING:** The batter hits a home run out of the playing field to win the game in the last half of the seventh or an extra inning, but is called out for passing a preceding runner. The game ends immediately when the winning run is scored.

(d) A called game ends at the moment the umpire terminates play.

**NOTE:** Refer to rule 10.01 for recording records of called games.

**EXCEPTION:** If the game is called while an inning is in progress and before it is completed, the game becomes a SUSPENDED game in each of the following situations:

- (1) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score and the home team has not scored;
- (2) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead and the home team has not tied the score or retaken the lead.

#### 4.12 SUSPENDED GAMES

(a) A league shall adopt the following rules providing for completion at a future date of games terminated for any of the following reasons:

- (1) A curfew imposed by law;
- (2) A time limit permissible under league rules;
- (3) Light failure;
- (4) Weather, if the game is called while an inning is in progress and before it is completed, and one of the following situations prevails:
  - (i) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score, and the home team has not scored.
  - (ii) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead, and the home team has not tied the score or retaken the lead.

(b) Such games shall be known as suspended games. No game called because of curfew, weather, or a time limit shall be a suspended game unless it has progressed far enough to have been a regulation game under the provisions of Rule 4.10. A game called under the provisions of 4.12 (a) (3), shall be a suspended game at any time after it starts.

**NOTE:** Weather, darkness and similar conditions – 4.12(a) (1 through 4) – shall take precedence in determining whether a called game shall be a suspended game. A game can only be considered a suspended game if stopped for any of the four (4) reasons specified in Section (a). Any legal game called due to weather with the score tied [unless situation outlined in 4.12 (a) (i) prevails] is a tie game and can be replayed in its entirety.

(c) A suspended game can be resumed and can be completed as follows:

- (1) Immediately preceding the next scheduled game between the two teams;
- (2) If a suspended game has not been resumed and completed on the last day of the season and has no bearing on the league standings, it shall be called a game.



(d) A suspended game shall be resumed at the exact point of suspension of the original game. The completion of a suspended game is a continuation of the original game. The lineup and batting order of both teams shall be exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules governing substitution. Any player may be replaced by a player who had not been in the game prior to the suspension.

A player who was not with the team when the game was suspended may be used as a substitute, even if she has taken the place of a player no longer with the team who would not have been eligible because she had been removed from the lineup before the game was suspended.

If immediately prior to the call of a suspended game, a substitute pitcher has been announced but has not retired the side or pitched until the batter becomes a baserunner, such pitcher, when the suspended game is later resumed may, but is not required to start the resumed portion of the game. However, if she does not start she will be considered as having been substituted for and may not be used in the game.

**4.14** The umpire-in-chief shall order the playing field lights turned on whenever in his opinion darkness makes further play in daylight hazardous.

**4.15** A game may be forfeited to the opposing team when a team –

- (a) Being upon the field, refuses to start play within five minutes after the umpire has called “Play” at the appointed hour for beginning the game, unless such delayed appearance is, in the umpire’s judgment, unavoidable;
- (b) Employs tactics palpably designed to delay or shorten the game;
- (c) Refuses to continue to play during a game unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire;
- (d) Fails to resume play, after a suspension, within one minute after the umpire has called “Play”;
- (e) After warning by the umpire willfully and persistently violates any rules of the game;
- (f) Fails to obey within a reasonable time the umpire’s order for removal of a player from the game.

**4.17** A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team is unable or refuses to place nine players on the field.

**4.18** If the umpire declares a game forfeited he shall transmit a written report to the league president within twenty-four hours thereafter, but failure of such transmittal shall not affect the forfeiture.

**NOTE:** Refer to rule 10.01 for recording records of forfeited games.

**4.19 PROTESTING GAMES.** Each league shall adopt rules governing procedures for protesting a game, when a manager claims that an umpire’s decision is in violation of these rules. No protest shall ever be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire. In all protested games, the decision of the League President or his appointed committee shall be final.

Even if it is held that the protested decision violated the rules, no replay of the game will be ordered unless in the opinion of the League President or his appointed committee the violation adversely affected the protesting team’s chances of winning the game.

Whenever a manager protests a game because of alleged misapplication of the rules the protest will not be recognized unless the umpires are notified at the time the play under protest occurs and before the next pitch is made or a runner is retired (See Rule 11.05(2) regarding tournament play.)

## 5.00 Putting the Ball in Play. Live Ball

**5.01** At the time set for beginning of the game the umpire shall call “Play.”

**5.02** After the umpire calls “Play,” the ball is alive and in play and remains alive and in play until for legal cause, or at the umpire’s call of “Time” suspended play, the ball becomes dead. While the ball is dead no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of acts which occurred while the ball was alive (such as, but not limited to an overthrow, interference, or a home run or other fair hit out of the playing field.)

Should be a ball come partially apart in a game, it is in play until the play is completed.

**5.03** The pitcher shall deliver the pitch to the batter who may elect to strike the ball, or who may not offer at it, as she chooses.

**5.04** The offensive team’s objective is to have its batter become a runner and its runner advance.

**5.05** The defensive team’s objective is to prevent offensive players from becoming runners, and to prevent their advance around the bases.

**5.06** When a batter becomes a runner and touches all bases legally she shall score one run for her team.

A run legally scored cannot be nullified by subsequent action of the runner, such as but not limited to an effort to return to third base in the belief that she had left the base before a caught fly ball.

**5.07** When three offensive players are legally put out, the team takes the field and the opposing team becomes the offensive team.

**5.08** If a thrown ball accidentally touches a base coach, or a pitched or thrown ball touches an umpire, the ball is alive and in play. However, if the coach interferes with a thrown ball, the runner is out. (See Rule 3.14)

**5.09** The ball becomes dead and runners advance one base, or return to their bases, without liability to be put out, when –

- (a) A pitched ball touches a batter, or her clothing, while in her legal batting position; runners, if forced, advance;
- (b) The plate umpire interferes with the catcher’s throw; runners may not advance;

**NOTE:** *The interference shall be disregarded if the catcher’s throw retires the runner.*

- (c) An illegal pitch is committed, runners advance;
- (d) A ball is illegally batted; runners return;
- (e) A foul ball is not caught; runners return. The umpire shall not put the ball in play until all runners have retouched their bases;
- (f) A fair ball touches runner or an umpire on fair territory before it touches an infielder including the pitcher, or touches an umpire before it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher;

If a fair ball touches an umpire working in the infield after it has bounded past, or over, the pitcher, it is a dead ball. If a batted ball is deflected by a fielder in fair territory and hits a runner or an umpire while still in flight and then caught by an infielder it shall not be a catch, but the ball shall remain in play.

If a fair ball goes through, or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of her, or touches a runner after being deflected by an infielder, the ball is in play and the umpire shall not declare the runner out. In making such a decision the umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through, or by, the infielder and that no other infielder had the chance to make a play on the ball; runners advance, if forced;

(g) A pitched ball lodges in the umpire's or catcher's mask or paraphernalia, and remains out of play, runners advance one base.

**5.10** The ball becomes dead when an umpire calls "Time." The umpire-in-chief shall call "Time" –

(a) When in his judgment weather, darkness or similar conditions make immediate further play impossible;

(b) When light failure makes it difficult or impossible for the umpires to follow the play;

**NOTE:** *A league may adopt its own regulations governing games interrupted by light failure.*

(c) When an accident incapacitates a player or an umpire;

(1) If an accident to a runner is such as to prevent her from proceeding to a base to which she is entitled, as on a home run hit out of the playing field, or an award of one or more bases, a substitute runner shall be permitted to complete the play.

(d) When a manager requests "Time" for a substitution, or for a conference with one of her players;

(e) When the umpire wishes to examine the ball, to consult with either manager, or for any similar cause;

(f) When a fielder, after catching a fly ball, falls into a bench or stand, or falls across ropes into a crowd when spectators are on the field. As pertains to runners, the provisions of 7.04 (b) shall prevail.

If a fielder after making a catch steps into a bench, but does not fall, the ball is in play and runners may advance at their own peril;

(g) When an umpire orders a player or any other person removed from the playing field;

(h) Except in the cases stated in paragraphs (b) and (c) (1) of this rule, no umpire shall call "Time" while a play is in progress.

**5.11** After the ball is dead, play shall be resumed when the pitcher takes her place on the pitcher's plate with a new ball or the same ball in her possession and the plate umpire calls "Play." The plate umpire shall call "Play" as soon as the pitcher takes her place on her plate with the ball in her possession.

## **6.00 The Batter**

**6.01** (a) Each player of the offensive team shall bat in the order that her name appears in her team's batting order.

(b) The first batter in each inning after the first inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last player who legally completed her turn at bat in the preceding inning.

**6.02** (a) The batter shall take her position in the batter's box promptly when it is her time at bat.

(b) The batter shall not leave her position in the batter's box after the pitcher comes to Pitching Position or starts her windup.

**PENALTY:** If the pitcher pitches, the umpire shall call "Ball" or "Strike," as the case may be.

The batter leaves the batter's box at the risk of having a strike delivered and called, unless she requests the umpire to call "Time." The batter is not at liberty to step in and out of the batter's box at will.

Once a batter has taken her position in the batter's box, she shall not be permitted to step out of the batter's box in order to use the rosin or the pine tar rag, unless there is a delay in the game action or in the judgment of the umpires, weather conditions warrant an exception.

Umpires will not call “Time” at the request of the batter or any member of her team once that pitcher has started her windup or has come to set position even though the batter claims “dust in my eyes,” “steamed glasses,” “Didn’t get the sign” or for any other cause.

Umpires may grant a hitter’s request for “Time” once she is in the batter’s box, but the umpire should eliminate hitters walking out of the batter’s box without reason. If umpires are not lenient, batters will understand that they are in the batter’s box and they must remain there until the ball is pitched.

If a pitcher delays once the batter is in her box and the umpire feels that the delay is not justified he may allow the batter to step out of the box momentarily.

If after the pitcher starts her wind-up or comes to the Pitching Position with a runner on, she does not go through with her pitch because the batter has stepped out of the box, it shall not be called an illegal pitch. Both the pitcher and batter have violated a rule and the umpire shall call time and both the batter and pitcher start over from “scratch.”

(c) If the batter refuses to take her position in the batter’s box during her time at bat, the umpire shall order the pitcher to pitch, and shall call “Strike” on each such pitch. The batter may take her proper position after any such pitch, and the regular ball and strike count shall continue, but if she does not take her proper position before three strikes are called, she shall be declared out.

**6.03** The batter’s legal position shall be with both feet within the batter’s box.

**APPROVED RULING:** The lines defining the box are within the batter’s box.

**6.04** A batter has legally completed her time at bat when she is put out or becomes a runner.

**6.05** A batter is out when –

- (a) Her fair or foul fly ball (other than a foul tip) is legally caught by a fielder;
- (b) A third strike is legally caught by the catcher; “Legally caught” means in the catcher’s glove before the ball touches the ground. It is not legal if the ball lodges in her clothing or paraphernalia; or if it touches the umpire and is caught by the catcher on the rebound.

If a foul-tip first strikes the catcher’s glove and then goes on through and is caught by both hands against her body or protector, before the ball touches the ground, it is a strike, and if third strike, batter is out. If smothered against her body or protector, it is a catch provided the ball struck the catcher’s glove or hand first.

- (c) A third strike is not caught by the catcher when first base is occupied before two are out;
- (d) She bunts foul on third strike;
- (e) An Infield Fly is declared;
- (f) She attempts to hit a third strike and the ball touches her;
- (g) Her fair ball touches her before touching a fielder;
- (h) After hitting or bunting a fair ball, her bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory. The ball is dead and no runners may advance. If the batter-runner drops her 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 ball is alive and in play;

If a bat breaks and part of it is in fair territory and is hit by a batted ball or part of it hits a runner or fielder, play shall continue and no interference called. If batted ball this part of broken bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

If a whole bat is thrown into fair territory and interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called, whether intentional or not.

In cases where the batting helmet is accidentally hit with a batted or thrown ball, the ball remains in play the same as if it had not hit the helmet.

If a batted ball strikes a batting helmet or any other object foreign to the natural ground while on foul territory it is a foul ball and the ball is dead.

If, in the umpire's judgment, there is intent on the part of a baserunner to interfere with a batted or thrown ball by dropping the helmet or throwing it at the ball, then the runner would be out, the ball dead and runners would return to last base legally touched.

(i) After hitting or bunting a foul ball, she intentionally deflects the course of the ball in any manner while running to first base. The ball is dead and no runners may advance;

(j) After a third strike or after she hits a fair ball, she or first base is tagged before she touches first base;

(k) In running the last half of the distance from home base to first base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, she runs outside (to the right of) the three-foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line, and in the umpire's judgment in so doing interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base; except that she may run outside (to the right of) the three-foot line or inside (to the left of) the foul line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball;

(l) An infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball or line drive, with first, first and second, first and third, or first, second and third base occupied before two are out. The ball is dead and runner or runners shall return to their original base or bases;

**APPROVED RULING:** In this situation, the batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball to drop untouched to the ground, except when the Infield Fly rule applies.

(m) A preceding runner shall, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally interfere with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or to throw a ball in an attempt to complete any play.

The objective of this rule is to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner in leaving the baseline for the obvious purpose of crashing the pivot man on a double play, rather than trying to reach the base. Obviously this is an umpire's judgment play.

**6.06** A batter is out for illegal action when –

(a) She hits an illegally batted ball;

If a batter hits a ball fair or foul while out of the batter's box, she shall be called out. Umpires should pay particular attention to the position of the batter's feet if she attempts to hit the ball while she is being intentionally passed. A batter cannot jump or step out of the batter's box and hit the ball

(b) She steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch;

(c) She interferes with the catcher's fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter's box or making any other movement that hinders the catcher's play at home base.

**EXCEPTION:** *Batter is not out if any runner attempting to advance put out, or if runner trying to score is called out for batter's interference.*

If the batter interferes with the catcher, the plate umpire shall call "interference." The batter is out and the ball dead. No player may advance on such interference (offensive interference) and all runners must return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference.

If, however, the catcher makes a play and a runner attempting to advance is put out, it is to be assumed there was no actual interference and that runner is out – not batter. Any other runners on the base at the time may advance

as the ruling is that there is no actual interference if a runner is retired. In that case play proceeds just as if no violation had been called.

If a batter strikes at a ball and misses and swings so hard she carries the bat all the way around and, in the umpire's judgment, unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball in back of her on the backswing before the catcher has securely held the ball, it shall be called a strike only (only interference). The ball will be dead, however, and no runner shall advance on the play.

(d) She uses or attempts to use a bat that, in the umpire's judgment, has been altered or tampered with in such a way to improve the distance factor or cause an unusual reaction on the softball.

No advancement of the bases will be allowed and any out or outs made during a play shall stand.

In addition to being called out, the player shall be ejected from the game and may be subject to additional penalties as determined by her League President.

#### **6.07 BATTING OUT OF TURN**

(a) A batter shall be called out, on appeal, when she fails to bat in her proper turn, and another batter completes a time at bat in her place.

(1) The proper batter may take her place in the batter's box at any time before the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and any balls and strikes shall be counted in the proper batter's time at bat.

(b) When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the first pitch to the next batter of either team, or before any play or attempting play, the umpire shall (1) declare the proper batter out; and (2) nullify any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise.

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

(c) When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and a pitch is made to the next batter of either team before an appeal is made, the improper batter thereby becomes the proper batter, and the results of her time at bat becomes legal.

(d) (1) When the proper batter is called out because she has failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter thus called out; (2) When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is made before the next pitch the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batting order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter.

The umpire shall not direct the attention of any person to the presence in the batter's box of an improper batter. This rule is designed to require constant vigilance by the players and manager of both teams.

There are two fundamentals to keep in mind: When a player bats out of turn, the proper batter is the player called out. If an improper batter bats and reaches base or is out and no appeal is made before a pitch to the next batter, or before any play or attempted play, that improper batter is considered to have batted in proper turn and established the order that is to follow.

**6.08** The batter becomes a runner and is entitled to first base without liability to be put out (provided she advances to and touches first base) when –

(a) Four "balls" have been called by the umpire;

A batter who is entitled to first base because of a base on balls must go to first base and touch the base before other base runners are forced to advance. This applies when bases are full and applies when a substitute runner is put into the game.

If, in advancing, the base runner thinks there is a play and she slides past the base before or after touching it, she may be put out by the fielder tagging her. If she fails to touch the base to which she is entitled and attempts to advance beyond that base, she may be put out by tagging her or the base she missed.

(b) She is touched by a pitched ball which she is not attempting to hit unless (1) The ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, or (2) The batter makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball;

If the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a strike, whether or not the batter tries to avoid the ball. If the ball is outside the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a ball if she makes no attempt to avoid being touched.

**APPROVED RULING:** When the batter is touched by a pitched ball which does not entitle her to first base, the ball is dead and no runner may advance.

(c) The catcher or any fielder interferes with her. If a play follows the interference, the manager of the offense may advise the plate umpire that she elects to decline the interference penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play. However, if the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batsman, or otherwise and all other runners advance at least one base, the play proceeds without reference to the interference.

If catcher's interference is called with a play in progress, the umpire will allow the play to continue because the manager may elect to take the play. If the batter-runner missed first base, or a runner misses her next base, she shall be considered as having reached the base, as stated in Note of Rule 7.04 (c).

Examples of plays in the manager might elect to take:

1. Runner on third, one out, batter hits fly ball to the outfield on which the runner scores but catcher's interference was called. The offensive manager may elect to take the run and have batter called out or have runner remain at third and batter awarded first base.
2. Runner on second base. Catcher interferes with batter as she bunts ball fairly sending runner to third base. The manager may rather have runner on third base with an out on the play than have runners on second and first.

In situations where the manager wants the "interference" penalty to apply, the following interpretation shall be made of 6.08 (c):

If the catcher (or any fielder) interferes with the batter, the batter is awarded first base. If, on such interference a runner is trying to score by a steal or squeeze from third base, the ball is dead and the runner on third scores and batter is awarded first base. If the catcher interferes with the batter with no runners trying to score from third on a squeeze or steal, then the ball is dead, batter is awarded first base and runners who are forced to advance, do advance. Runners not attempting to steal or not forced to advance remain on the base they occupied at the time of the interference.

If the catcher interferes with the batter before the pitcher delivers the ball, it shall not be considered interference on the batter under Rule 6.08 (c). In such cases, the umpire shall call "Time" and the pitcher and batter start over from "scratch."

(d) A fair batted ball strikes an umpire or a runner in fair territory before touching a fielder. If a fair ball touches an umpire or a runner after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or having touched a fielder, including the pitcher, the ball is in play.

If a runner is touching a base when touched by a fair batted ball, including an infield fly, the runner is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or an infielder making a play. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. If the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead and the batter is awarded a base hit. Only those runners forced to advance due to the batter being placed on first base shall be advanced one base.

**6.09** The batter becomes a runner when –

- (a) She hits a fair ball;
- (b) The third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing
  - (1) First base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs.

When a batter becomes a base runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher and starts for the dugout, or her position, and then realized her situation and attempts then to reach first base, she is not out unless she or first base is tagged before she reaches first base. If, however, she actually reaches the dugout or dugout steps, she may not then attempt to go to first base and shall be out.

- (c) A fair ball, after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or having been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, shall touch an umpire or runner on fair territory;
- (d) A fair ball passes over a fence or into the stands. Such hit entitles the batter to a home run when she shall have touched all bases legally;
- (e) A fair ball, after touching the ground, bounds into the stands, or passes through, over or under a fence, or through or under a scoreboard, or through or under shrubbery, or vines on the fence, in which case the batter and the runners shall be entitled to advance two bases;
- (f) Any fair ball which, either before or after touching the ground, passes through or under a fence, or through or under a scoreboard, or through the ground, passes through or under or through or under shrubbery, or vines on the fence, or which sticks in a fence or scoreboard, in which case the batter and the runners shall be entitled to two bases.
- (g) Any bounding fair ball is deflected by the fielder into the stands, or over or under a fence on fair or foul territory, in which case the batter and all runners shall be entitled to advance two bases;
- (h) Any fair fly ball is deflected by the fielder into the stands, or over the fence into foul territory, in which case the batter shall be entitled to advance to second base; but if deflected into the stands or over the fence in fair territory, the batter shall be entitled to a home run.

## **7.00 The Runner**

**7.01** A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when she touches it before she is out. She is then entitled to it until she is put out, or forced to vacate it for another runner legally entitled to that base.

If a runner legally acquires title to a base, and the pitcher assumes her pitching position, the runner may not return to a previously occupied base.

**7.02** In advancing, a runner shall touch first, second, third, and home base in order. If forced to return, she shall retouch all bases in reverse order, unless the ball is dead under any provision of Rule 5.09. In such cases, the runner may go directly to her original base.

**7.03** Two runners may not occupy a base, but if, while the ball is alive, two runners are touching a base, the following runner shall be out when tagged. The preceding runner is entitled to the base.

**7.04** Each runner, other than the batter, may without liability to be put out, advance one base when –



(a) The batter's advance without liability to be put out forces the runners to vacate her base, or when the batter hits a fair ball that touches another runner or the umpire before such ball has been touched by, or has passed a fielder, if the runner is forced to advance.

A runner forced to advance without liability to be put out may advance past the base to which she is entitled only at her peril. If such a runner, forced to advance, is put out for the third out before a preceding runner, also forced to advance, touches home plate, the run shall score.

PLAY. Two out, bases full batter walks but runner from second is over-zealous and runs past third base toward home and is tagged out on a throw by the catcher. Even though two are out, the run would score on the theory that the run was forced home by the base on balls and that all the runners needed to do was proceed and touch the next base.

(b) A fielder, after catching a fly ball, falls into a bench or stand, or falls across ropes into a crowd when spectators are on the field;

A fielder or catcher may reach or step into, or go into the dugout with one or both feet to make a catch, and if she holds the ball, the catch shall be allowed. Ball is in play.

If the fielder or catcher, after having made a legal catch should fall into a stand or among spectators or into the dugout after making a legal catch, or fall while in the dugout after making a legal catch, the ball is dead and runner advance one base without liability to be put out.

(c) While she is attempting to steal a base, the batter is interfered with by the catcher or any other fielder.

**NOTE:** When a runner is entitled to a base without liability to be put out, while the ball is in play, or under any rules in which the ball is in play after the runner reaches the base to which she is entitled, and the runner fails to touch the base to which she is entitled before attempting to advance to the next base, the runner shall forfeit her exemption from liability to be put out, and she may be put out by tagging the base or by tagging the runner before she returns to the missed base.

**7.05** Each runner including the batter-runner may, without liability to be put out, advance –

(a) To home base, scoring a run, if a fair ball goes out of the playing field in flight and she touches all bases legally; or if a fair ball which, in the umpire's judgment, would have gone out of the playing field in flight, is deflected by the act of a fielder in throwing her glove, cap, or any article of her apparel;

(b) Three bases, if a fielder deliberately touches a fair ball with her cap, mask or any part of her uniform detached from its proper place on her person. The ball is in play and the batter may advance to home base at her peril;

(c) Three bases, if a fielder deliberately throws her glove at and touches a fair ball, the ball is in play and the batter may advance to home base at her peril;

(d) Two bases, if a fielder deliberately touches a thrown ball with her cap, mask or any part of her uniform detached from its proper place on her person, that ball is in play;

(e) Two bases if a fielder deliberately throws her glove at and touches a thrown ball. The ball is in play.

In applying (b-c-d-e) the umpire must rule that the thrown glove or detached cap or mask has touched the ball. There is no penalty if the ball is not touched.

Under (c-e) this penalty shall not be invoked against a fielder whose glove is carried off her hand by the force of the batted or thrown ball, or when her gloves flies off her hand as she makes an obvious effort to make a legitimate catch.

(f) Two bases, if a fair ball becomes or is deflected into the stands outside the first or third base foul lines; or if it goes through or under a field fence, or through or under a scoreboard or through or under shrubbery or vines on the fence; or if it sticks in such fence, scoreboard, shrubbery or vines;

(g) Two bases when, with no spectators on the playing field, a thrown ball goes into the stands, or into a bench (whether or not the ball rebounds into the field), or over or under or through a field fence, or on a slanting part of the screen above the backstop, or remains in the meshes of a wire screen protecting spectators. The ball is dead. When such wild throw is the first play by an infielder, the umpire, in awarding such bases, shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the ball was pitched; in all other cases the umpire shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the wild throw was made.

**APPROVED RULING:** If all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one base when an infielder makes a wild throw on the first play after the pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made.

In certain circumstances it is impossible to award a runner two bases. Example: Runner on first. Batter hits fly to short right. Runner holds up between first and second and batter comes around first and pulls up behind her. Ball falls safely. Outfielder, in throwing to first, throws ball into stand.

**APPROVED RULING:** Since no runner, when the ball is dead, may advance beyond the base to which she is entitled, the runner originally on first base goes to third base and the batter is held at second base.

The term “when the wild throw was made” means when the throw actually left the player’s hand and not when the thrown ball hit the ground, passes a receiving fielder or goes out of play into the stands.

The position of a batter-runner at the time the wild throw left the thrower’s hand is the key in deciding the award of bases. If the batter-runner has not reached first base, the award is two bases at the time the pitch was made for all runners. The decision as to whether the batter-runner has reached first base before the throw is a judgment call.

If an unusual play arises where a first throw by an infielder goes into stands or dugout but the batter did not become a runner (such as catcher throwing ball into stands in attempt to get runner from third trying to score on passed ball or wild pitch) award of two bases shall be from the position of the runners at the time of the throw. (For the purpose of Rule 7.05 (g) a catcher is considered an infielder).

**PLAY.** Runner on first base, batter hits a ball to the shortstop, who throws to second base too late to get runner at second, and second baseman throws toward first base after batter has crossed first base. Ruling – Runner at second scores. (On this play, only if batter-runner is past first base when throw is made is she awarded third base.)

(h) One base, if a ball, pitched to the batter, or thrown by the pitcher from her position on the pitcher’s plate to a base to catch a runner, goes into a stand or a bench, or over or through a field fence or backstop. The ball is dead;

**APPROVED RULING:** When a wild pitch or passed ball goes through or by the catcher, or deflects off the catcher, and goes directly into the dugout, stands, above the break, or any area where the ball is dead, the awarding of bases shall be one base. One base shall also be awarded if the pitcher while in contact with the rubber throws to a base and the throw goes directly into the stands or into any area where the ball is dead.

If, however the pitched or thrown ball goes through or by the catcher or through the fielder, and remains on the playing field, and is subsequently kicked or deflected into the dugout stands or other area where the ball is dead, the awarding of bases shall be two bases from position of runners at the time of the pitch or throw.

(i). One base, if the batter becomes a runner on Ball Four or Strike Three, when the pitch passes the catcher and lodges in the umpire’s mask or paraphernalia.

If the batter becomes a runner on a wild pitch which entitles the runners to advance one base, the batter-runner shall be entitled to first base only.

The fact a runner is awarded a base or bases without liability to be put out does not relieve her of the responsibility to touch the base she is awarded and all intervening bases. For example: batter hits a ground ball which an infielder throws into the stands but the batter-runner missed first base. She may be called out on appeal for missing first base after the ball is put in play even though she was “awarded” second base.

If a runner is forced to return to a base after a catch, she must retouch her original base even though, because of some ground rule or other rules, she is awarded additional bases. She may retouch while the ball is dead and the award is then made from her original base.

**7.06** When obstruction occurs, the umpire shall call or signal “Obstruction.”

(a) If a play is being made on the obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before she touches first base, the ball is dead and all runners shall advance without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, if there had been no obstruction. The obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base she has last legally touched before the obstruction. Any preceding runners, forced to advance by the award of bases as the penalty for obstruction, shall advance without liability to be put out.

When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, the umpire shall signal obstruction in the same manner that he calls “Time,” with both hands overhead. The ball is immediately dead when this signal is given; however, should a thrown ball be in flight before the obstruction is called by the umpire, the runners are to be awarded such bases on wild throws as they would have been awarded had no obstruction occurred. On a play where a runner was trapped between second and third and obstructed by the third baseman going into third base while the throw is in flight from the shortstop, if such throw goes into the dugout the obstructed runner is to be awarded home base. Any other runners on base in this situation would also be awarded two bases from the base they last legally touched before obstruction was called.

(b) If no play is being made on the obstructed runner, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire shall then call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, as in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction.

Under 7.06 (b) when the ball is not dead on obstruction and an obstructed runner advances beyond the base which, in the umpire’s judgment, she would have been awarded because of being obstructed, she does so at her own peril and may be tagged out. This is a judgment call.

**NOTE:** The catcher, without the ball in her possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when she is fielding a ball or when she already has the ball in her hand.

**7.08** Any runner is out when –

(a) (1) She runs more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged, unless her action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball; or (2) after touching first base, she leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning her effort to touch the next base.

Any runner after reaching first base who leaves the baseline heading for her dugout or her position believing that there is no further play, may be declared out if the umpire judges the act of the runner to be considered abandoning her efforts to run the bases. Even though an out is called, the ball remains in play in regard to any other runner.

This rule also covers the following and similar plays. Less than two out, score tied last of seventh inning, runner on first, batter hits a ball out of park for winning run, the runner on first passes second and thinking the home run automatically wins the game, cuts across diamond toward her bench as batter-runner circles bases. In this case,

the base runner would be called out “for abandoning her effort to touch the next base” and batter-runner permitted to continue around bases to make her home run valid. If there were two out, home run would not count (see Rule 7.12). This is not an appeal play.

**PLAY.** Runner believing she is called out on a tag at first or third base starts for the dugout and progresses a reasonable distance still indicating by her actions that she is out, shall be declared out for abandoning the bases.

In the above two plays the runners are considered actually abandoning their base paths and are treated differently than the batter who struck out as described. **APPROVED RULING OF 7.08 (a).**

**APPROVED RULING:** When a batter becomes a runner on third strike not caught, and starts for her bench or position, she may advance to first base at any time before she enters the bench. To put her out, the defense must tag her or first base before she touches first base.

(b) She intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball;

A runner who is adjudged to have hindered a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball is out whether it was intentional or not.

If, however, the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when she hinders the fielder, she shall not be called out unless, in the umpire’s judgment, such hindrance, whether it occurs on fair or foul territory, is intentional. If the umpire declares the hindrance intentional, the following penalty shall apply: With less than two out, the umpire shall declare both the runner and batter out. With two out, the umpire shall declare the batter out.

If, in a run-down between third base and home plate, the succeeding runner had advanced and is standing on third base when the runner in a run-down is called out for offensive interference, the umpire shall send the runner standing on third base back to second base. This same principle applies if there is a run-down between second and third base and succeeding runner has reached second (the reasoning is that no runner shall advance on an interference play and a runner is considered to occupy a base until she legally has touched the next succeeding base).

(c) She is tagged, when the ball is alive, while off her base. **EXCEPTION:** A batter-runner cannot be tagged out after overrunning or over sliding first base if she returns immediately to the base;

**APPROVED RULING:** (1) If the impact of a runner breaks a base loose from its position, no play can be made on that runner at that base if she had reached the base safely.

**APPROVED RULING:** (2) If a base is dislodged from its position during a play, any following runner on the same play shall be considered as touching or occupying the base if, in the umpire’s judgment, she touches or occupies the point marked by the dislodged bag.

(d) She fails to retouch her base after a fair or foul ball is legally caught before she, or her base, is tagged by a fielder. She shall not be called out for failure to retouch her base after the first following pitch, or any play or attempted play. This is an appeal play;

Runners need not “tag up” on a foul tip. They may steal on a foul tip. If a so-called tip is not caught, it becomes an ordinary foul. Runners then return to their bases.

(e) She fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags her or the base, after she has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner. However, if a following runner is put out on a force play, the force is removed and the runner must be tagged to be put out. The force is removed as soon as the runner touches the base to which she is forced to advance, and if she over slides or overruns the base, the runner must be tagged to be put out. However, if the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and she can again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced;

PLAY. Runner on first and three balls on batter; Runner steals on the next pitch, which is fourth ball, but after having touched second she over slides or overruns that base. Catcher's throw catches her before she can return. Ruling is that runner is out. (Force out is removed.)

Over sliding and overrunning situations arise at bases other than first base. For instance, before two are out, and runners on first and second, or first, second and third, the ball is hit to an infielder who tries for the double play. The runner on first beats the throw to second base but over slides the base. The relay is made to the first base and the batter-runner is out. The first baseman, seeing the runner at second base off the bag, makes the return throw to second and the runner is tagged off the base. Meanwhile runners have crossed the plate. The question is: Is this a force play? Was the force removed when the batter-runner was out at first base? Do the runs that crossed the plate during this play and before the third out was made when the runner was tagged at second, count? Answer: The runs score. It is not a force play. It is a tag play.

(f) She is touched by a fair ball in fair territory before the ball has touched or passed an infielder. The ball is dead and no runner may score, nor runners advance, except runners forced to advance.

EXCEPTION: If a runner is touching her base when touched by an Infield Fly, she is not out, although the batter is out.

If two runners are touched by the same fair ball, only the first one is out because the ball is instantly dead.

If runner is touched by an Infield Fly when she is not touching her base, both runner and batter are out.

(g) She attempts to score on a play in which the batter interferes with the play at home base before two are out. With two out, the interference puts the batter out and no score counts;

(h) She passes a preceding runner before such runner is out.

(i) After she had acquired legal possession of a base, she runs the bases in reverse order for the purpose of confusing the defense or making a travesty of the game. The umpire shall immediately call "Time" and declare the runner out;

If a runner touches an unoccupied base and then thinks the ball was caught or is decoyed into returning to the base she has last touched, she may be put out running back to that base, but if she reaches the previous occupied base safely, she cannot be put out while in contact with that base.

(j) She fails to return at once to first base after overrunning or over sliding that base. If she attempts to run to second she is out when tagged. If, after overrunning or over sliding first base she starts toward the dugout, or toward her position, and fails to return to first base at once, she is out, on appeal, when she or the base is tagged.

Runner who touches first base in overrunning and is declared safe by the umpire has, within the intent of Rule 4.09 (a) "reached first base" and any run which scores on such a play counts, even though the runner subsequently becomes the third out for failure to return "at once," as covered in Rule 7.08 (j).

(k) In running or sliding for home base, she fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in her hand, while touching home base, and appeals to the umpire for the decision.

This rule applies only where runner is on her way to the bench and the catcher would be required to chase her. It does not apply to the ordinary play where the runner misses the plate and then immediately makes an effort to touch the plate before being tagged. In that case, runner must be tagged.

**7.09** It is interference by a batter or a runner when –

(a) After a third strike she hinders the catcher in her attempt to field the ball;

(b) After hitting or bunting a fair ball, her bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory. The ball is dead and no runners may advance. If the batter-runner drops her 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 ball is alive and in play;

(c) She intentionally deflect the course of a foul ball in any manner;

(d) Before two are out and a runner on third base, the batter hinders a fielder in making a play at home base; the runner is out;

(e) Any member or members of the offensive team stand or gather around any base to which a runner is advancing, to confuse, hinder or add to the difficulty of the fielder. Such runner shall be declared out for the interference of her teammate or teammates;

(f) Any batter or runner who has just been put out hinders or impedes any following play being made on a runner. Such runner shall be declared out for the interference of her teammate;

If the batter or a runner continues to advance after she has been put out, she shall not by that act alone be considered as confusing, hindering to impeding the fielders.

(g) If, in the judgment of the umpire, a base runner willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the ball is dead. The umpire shall call the runner out for interference and also call out the batter-runner because of the action of her teammate. In no event may bases be run or runs scored because of such action by a runner.

(h) If, in the judgment of the umpire, a batter-runner willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball, with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the ball is dead; the umpire shall call the batter-runner out for interference and shall also call out the runner who had advanced closest to the home plate regardless where the double play might have been possible. In no event shall bases be run because of such interference.

(i) In the judgment of the umpire, the base coach at third base, or first base, by touching or holding the runner physically assists her in returning to or leaving third base or first base;

(j) With a runner on third base, the base coach leaves her box and acts in any manner to draw a throw by a fielder;

(k) In running the last half of the distance from home base to first base while the ball is being fielded to first base, she runs outside (to the right of) the three-foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base, or attempting to field a batted ball;

The lines marking the three foot lane are a part of that "lane" but the interpretation to be made is that a runner is required to have both feet within the three foot "lane" or on the lines marking the "lane."

(l) She fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball, provided that if two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball, and the runner comes in contact with one or more of them, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of this rule, and shall not declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such a ball;

When a catcher and batter-runner going to first base have contact when the catcher is fielding the ball, there is generally no violation and nothing should be called. "Obstruction" by a fielder attempting to field a ball should be called only in very flagrant and violent cases because the rules give him the right of way, but of course such "right of way" is not a license to, for example, intentionally trip a runner even though fielding the ball. If the catcher is

fielding the ball and the first baseman or pitcher obstructs a runner going to first base, “obstruction” shall be called and the batter-runner awarded first base.

(m) A fair ball touches her on fair territory before touching a fielder. If a fair ball goes through, or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of her, or touches the runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the umpire shall not declare the runner out for being touched by a batted ball. In making such decision the umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through, or by, the fielder, and that no other infielder had the chance to make a play on the ball. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the runner deliberately and intentionally kicks such a batted ball on which the infielder has missed a play, then the runner shall be called out for interference.

**PENALTY FOR INTERFERENCE:** The runner is out and the ball is dead.

**7.10** Any runner shall be called out, on appeal, when –

(a) After a fly ball is caught, she fails to retouch her original base before she or her original base is tagged;

“Retouch,” in this rule, means to tag up and start from a contact with the base after the ball is caught. A runner is not permitted to position herself behind and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball.

(b) With the ball in play, while advancing or returning to a base, she fails to touch each base in order before she, or a missed base is tagged.

**APPROVED RULING:** (1) No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored. (2) When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one she has left after she has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base.

**PLAY.** (a) Batter hits ball out of park or ground rule double and misses first base (ball is dead) – she may return to first base to correct her mistake before she touches second but if she touches second she may not return to first and if defensive team appeals she is declared out at first.

**PLAY.** (b) Batter hits ball to shortstop who throws wild into stand (ball is dead) – batter-runner misses first base but is awarded second base on the overthrow. Even though the umpire has awarded the runner second base on the overthrow, the runner must touch first base before she proceeds to second base. These are appeal plays.

(c) She overruns or over slides first base and fails to return to the base immediately, and she or the base is tagged;

(d) She fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return to that base, and home base is tagged.

Any appeal under this rule must be made before the next pitch, or any play or attempted play. If the violation occurs during a play which ends a half-inning, the appeal must be made before the defensive team leaves the field.

An appeal is not to be interpreted as a play or an attempted play.

Successive appeal may not be made on a runner at the same base. If the defensive team on its first appeal errs, a request for a second appeal on the same runner at the same base shall not be allowed by the umpire. (Intended meaning of the word “err” is that the defensive team in making an appeal threw the ball out of play. For example, if the pitcher threw to first base to appeal and throw the ball into the stands, no second appeal would be allowed.)

Appeal plays may require an umpire to recognize an apparent “fourth out.” If the third out is made during a play in which an appeal play is sustained on another runner, the appeal play decision takes precedence in determining the out. If there is more than one appeal during a play that ends a half-inning, the defense may elect to take the out that gives it the advantage. For the purpose of this rule, the defensive team has “left the field” when the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the bench or clubhouse.

If two runners arrive at home base about the same time and the first runner misses home plate but a second runner legally touches the plate, the first runner will be called out on appeal. If there are two out, and the first runner

is tagged out on her attempt to come back and touch the base or is called out, on appeal then she should be considered as having been put out before the second runner scored and being the third out. Second runner's run shall not count, as provided in Rule 7.12.

If a pitcher makes an illegal pitch when making an appeal, such act shall be a play. An appeal should be clearly intended as an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that unmistakably indicates an appeal to the umpire. A player, inadvertently stepping on the base with a ball in her hand, would not constitute an appeal. Tie is not out when an appeal is being made.

**7.11** The players, coaches or any member of an offensive team shall vacate any space (including both dugouts) needed by a fielder who is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball.

**PENALTY:** Interference shall be called and the batter or runner on whom that play is being made shall be declared out.

**7.12** Unless two are out, the status of a following runner is not affected by a preceding runner's failure to touch or retouch a base. If, upon appeal, the preceding runner is the third out, no runners following her shall score. If such third out is the result of a force play, neither preceding nor following runners shall score.

**7.13** When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive the delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball is released.

**PENALTY:** For violation, base runner will be called out. The ball will be dead and "No Pitch" declared. However, if the pitcher does not allow sufficient time to runner to return to a base, the runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the ball. The runner may advance as though the base was left legally.

**NOTE:** When a base runner is legitimately off base, i.e., moving off a base after a pitch or rounding a base after a hit or walk, the pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the runner to return; however, once the pitcher has the ball within a radius of eight feet from the center of the pitcher's plate, the runner is obligated to move directly toward the next base or the base last touched without any motion or recognition by the pitcher. The runner may not stand motionless, or after returning to the base may not move off that base even though the pitcher is standing off the pitcher's plate. Failure of the runner to respond as indicated shall cause the umpire to signal the runner out. The ball be declared dead. However, if the ball is not in the 16-foot circle or a fake throw is made, the runners are not governed by this note.

**7.14 CONTACT RULE** – If a runner attempting to reach home plate intentionally and maliciously runs into a defensive player in the area of home plate, she will be called out on the play and ejected from the game. The objective of this rule is to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner for the obvious purpose of crashing the defensive player, rather than trying to reach home plate. Obviously, this is an umpire's judgment call.

## **8.00 The Pitcher**

**8.01** The pitcher shall take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with both feet in contact with, but not off the side of the pitcher's plate.

(a) Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in either or both hands. Pitcher shall take signs from the catcher while standing on the pitcher's plate.

**PENALTY:** After a warning by the umpire for not taking the sign, the pitcher, on the next offense, shall be removed from the mound as a pitcher for the remainder of the game.

(b) The pitcher shall hold the ball in either or both hands for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball.



(c) The pitcher shall not be considered in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

(d) The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or astride the pitcher's plate without having the ball in her possession.

NOTE: To indicate to the pitcher that she may not start the pitch, the umpire should raise one hand with the palm facing the pitcher, "NO PITCH" shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire has her hand in said position.

PENALTY: Illegal pitch in (a) and (b).

**8.02** The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter, and simultaneous with the delivery of the ball to the batter. Toward the batter is interpreted as within the 24" length of the pitcher's plate until the other foot with which the pitcher steps toward home plate has touched on the ground. The pivot foot must remain in contact with, or push off and drag away from, the pitcher's plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot maintains contact with the ground.

**NOTE:** It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the pitcher's plate.

**8.03** A legal delivery shall be a ball which is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

(a) The release of the ball and the follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward past the straight line of the body.

(b) The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.

(c) The pitch is completed with a step toward the batter.

(d) The catcher must be within the outside lines of the catcher's box when the pitch is released.

(e) The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch except after a strike out, or put out made by the catcher. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch.

EXCEPTION: 8.03 (e) does not apply with runners on base.

PENALTY: 8.03 (e) – An additional "ball" is awarded the batter.

**8.04** The pitcher may use any wind-up desired providing:

(a) No motion to pitch is made without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

(b) The pitcher does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in pitching position, removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.

(c) The pitcher does not use a wind-up in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.

(d) The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the pitching arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion.

(e) The pitcher does not continue to wind-up after taking the forward step which is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

EXCEPTION: 8.03 (e) does not apply with runners on base.

PENALTY: 8.03 (e) – An additional "ball" is awarded the batter.

**8.05** The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball while in pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it.

**8.06** The pitcher shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use tape or other substances upon the ball, the pitching hand or fingers, nor shall any player apply a foreign substance to the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hand. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist or arm, or thigh which may be distracting to the batter.

**NOTE:** Batting glove may not be worn on the pitching hand.

**PENALTY:** Rules 8.01, 8.02, 8.03, 8.04, 8.05, and 8.06. Any infraction is an illegal pitch with the exception of 8.03 (e) which is covered separately. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal by extending his or her left arm horizontally. A ball is called on the batter. Baserunners are entitled to advance one base without liability to be put out. **EXCEPTION:** If the pitcher completes the delivery of the ball to the batter and the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely and all baserunners advance at least one base, then the play stands, and the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. Otherwise, the manager has the option to take the result of the play, or the illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

**NOTE:** An illegal pitch shall be called immediately, when it becomes illegal. If called by the plate umpire, it shall be called in a voice so that the catcher and the batter will hear it. The plate umpire will also give the delayed dead ball signal. If called by the base umpire, it shall be called so that the nearest fielder shall hear it. The base umpire shall also give the delayed dead ball signal. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

**NOTE:** The pitcher shall not, at any time, intentionally pitch at the batter.

If, in the umpire's judgment, such a violation occurs, the umpire may elect either to:

1. Expel the pitcher, or the manager and the pitcher, from the game, or
2. May warn the pitcher and the manager of both teams that another such pitch will result in the immediate expulsion of that pitcher (or a replacement) and the manager.

If, in the umpire's judgment, circumstances warrant, both teams may be officially "warned" prior to the game or at any time during the game. (League Presidents may take additional action under authority provided in Rule 9.05.)

To pitch at a batter's head is unsportsmanlike and highly dangerous. It should be – and is - condemned by everybody. Umpires should act without hesitation in enforcement of this rule.

**8.07** No pitch shall be declared when:

- (a) The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play; or
- (b) The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch; or
- (c) The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon; or
- (d) The pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched the base occupied after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.

**PENALTY:** 8.07 (a thru d) – The ball is dead and all subsequent action on that pitch is cancelled.

**8.08** At the beginning of each inning or when a pitcher relieves another, no more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than five balls to the catcher or other teammate. Play shall be suspended during this game.

For excessive warm-up pitches a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five.

**NOTE:** Umpire is authorized to allow more pitches when weather is inclement or if pitcher was removed due to an injury.

**8.09** If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the deliver, a ball is declared on the batter, the ball will remain in play and the runners may advance at their own risk.

**8.10** The pitcher shall not throw to a base while a foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after having taken the pitching position.

**PENALTY:** Illegal pitch, the ball is dead, a ball is called on the batter and all runners advance one base.

**NOTE:** The pitcher can be removed from the pitching position by stepping backwards off the pitcher's plate. Stepping forward or sideways constitutes an illegal pitch. It is an illegal pitch if the fielder takes up 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.

**8.11** No player, manager or coach shall call "Time" or 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.

**PENALTY:** No pitch shall be declared and a warning issued to the offending team. A repeat of this type act by the team warned shall result in the offender being removed from the game.

**8.12** The following rule pertained to the visit of the manager or coach to the pitcher shall be used:

- (a) This rule limits the number of trips a manager or coach may make to any one pitcher in any one inning;
- (b) A second trip to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause this pitcher's automatic removal from the game as a pitcher;
- (c) The manager or coach is prohibited from making a second visit to the mound while the same batter is at bat, but
- (d) if a pinch hitter is substituted for this batter, the manager or coach may make a second visit to the mound, but must remove the pitcher.

A manager or coach is considered to have concluded her visit to the mound when she leaves the 8-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber.

If the manager or coach goes to the catcher or infielder and that player then goes to the mound or the pitcher comes to her at the position before there is an intervening play (a pitch or other play) that will be the same as the manager or coach going to the mound.

Any attempt to evade or circumvent this rule by the manager or coach going to the catcher or an infielder and then that player going to the mound to confer with the pitcher shall constitute a trip to the mound.

If the coach goes to the mound and removes a pitcher and then the coach goes to the mound to talk with the new pitcher, that will constitute one trip to that new pitcher that inning.

In a case where a manager has made her first trip to the mound and then returns the second time to the mound in the same inning with the same pitcher in the game and the same batter at bat, after being warned by the umpire that she cannot return to the mound, the manager shall be removed from the game and the pitcher required to pitch to the batter until she is retired or gets on base. After the batter is retired, or becomes a base runner, then this pitcher must be removed from the game. The manager should be notified that her pitcher will be removed from the game after she pitches to the next hitter, so she can have a substitute pitcher warmed up.

## **9.00 The Umpire**

- 9.01** (a) The league president shall appoint one or more umpires to officiate at each league game. The umpires shall be responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with these official rules and for maintaining discipline and order on the playing field during the game.
- (b) Each umpire is a representative of the league and is authorized and required to enforce all of these rules. Each umpire has authority to order a player, coach, manager or league officer to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce the prescribed penalties.
- (c) Each umpire has authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager or substitute for objecting to decision or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play.
- (d) Each umpire has authority to his discretion to eject from the playing field any person, manager, coach, player or substitute from the playing field.

- 9.02** (a) Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, or whether a pitch is a strike or a ball or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. No player, manager, coach or substitute shall object to any such judgment decisions.

Players leaving their position in the field or on base, or managers or coaches leaving the bench or coaches box, to argue BALLS AND STRIKES will not be permitted. They should be warned if they start for the plate to protest the call. If they continue, they will be ejected from the game.

- (b) If there is reasonable doubt that any umpire's decision may be in conflict with the rules, the manager may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made. Such appeal shall be made only to the umpire who made the protested decision.
- (c) If a decision is appealed, the umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize, seek to reverse or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked to do so by the umpire making it.

The manager or the catcher may request the plate umpire to ask his partner for help on a half swing when the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball, but not when the pitch is called a strike. The manager may not complain that the umpire made an improper call, but only that he did not ask his partner for help. Field umpires must be alerted to the request from the plate umpire and quickly respond. Managers may not protest the call of a ball or strike on the pretense they are asking for information about a half swing.

Appeals on a half swing may be made only on the call of ball and when asked to appeal, the home plate umpire must refer to a base umpire for his judgment on the half swing. Should the base umpire call the pitch a strike, the strike call shall prevail.

Base runners must be alert to the possibility that the base umpire on appeal from the plate umpire may reverse the call of a ball to the call of a strike, in which event the runner is in jeopardy of being put out by the catcher's throw. Also, a catcher must be alert in a base stealing situation if a ball call is reversed to strike by the base umpire upon appeal from the plate umpire. The ball is in play on appeal on a half swing.

On a half swing, if the manager comes out to argue with first or third base umpire and if after being warned she persists in arguing, she can be ejected as she is now arguing over a called ball or strike.

- (d) No umpire may be replaced during a game unless he is injured or becomes ill.

- 9.03** (a) If there is only one umpire, he shall have complete jurisdiction in administering the rules. He may take any position on the playing field which will enable him to discharge his duties (usually behind the catcher, but sometimes behind the pitcher if there are runners.)
- (b) If there are two or more umpires, one shall be designated umpire-in-chief and the others field umpires.

**9.04** (a) The umpire-in-chief shall stand behind the catcher. (He usually is called the plate umpire.)

His duties shall be to:

- (1) Take full charge of, and be responsible for, the proper conduct of the game;
- (2) Call and count ball and strikes;
- (3) Call and declare fair balls and fouls except those commonly called by field umpires;
- (4) Make all decisions on the batter;
- (5) Make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the field umpires;
- (6) Decide when a game shall be forfeited;
- (7) If a time limit has been set, announce the fact and the tie set before the game starts;
- (8) Inform the official scorer of the official batting order, and any changes in lineups and batting order, on request;
- (9) Announce any special ground rules, at his discretion.

(b) A field umpire may take any position on the playing field he thinks best suited to make impending decisions on the bases. His duties shall be to:

- (1) Make all decisions on the bases except those specifically reserved to the umpire-in chief;
- (2) Take concurrent jurisdiction with the umpire-in-chief in calling "Time," illegal pitches, or defacement or discoloration of the ball by any player.
- (3) Adds the umpire-in-chief in every manner in enforcing the rules, and excepting the power to forfeit the game, shall have equal authority with the umpire-in-chief in administering and enforcing the rules and maintaining discipline.

(c) If different decisions should be made on one play by different umpires, the umpire-in-chief shall call all the umpires into consultation, with no manager or player present. After consultation, the umpire-in-chief (unless another umpire may have been designated by the league president) shall determine which decision shall prevail based on which umpire was in best position and which decision was most likely correct. Play shall proceed as if only the final decision had been made.

**9.05** (a) The umpire shall report to the league president all violations of rules and other incidents worthy of comment, including the disqualification of any manger, coach or player, and the reasons therefore.

(b) When any manager, coach or player is disqualified for a flagrant offense such as the use of obscene or indecent language, or an assault upon an umpire, manager, coach or player, the umpire shall forward full particulars to the league president.

(c) After receiving the umpire's report that a manger, coach or player has been disqualified, the league president or his appointed committee shall impose such penalty as he deems justified, and shall notify the person penalized.

## **10.00 Recording Records for Called and Forfeited Games**

**10.01** If a regulation game is called, include the record of all individual and team actions up to the moment the game ends, as defined in Rules 4.10 and 4.11. If it is a tie game, do not enter a winning or losing pitcher.

If a regulation game is forfeited, include the record of all individual and team actions up to the time of forfeit. If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time of forfeit, enter as winning and losing pitchers the players who

would have qualified if the game had been called at the time of forfeit. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or if the score is tied at the time of forfeit, do not enter a winning or losing pitcher. If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, include no records. Report only the fact of the forfeit.

## **Local League Options**

### **DUAL PARTICIPATION**

NPYL may adopt a local league rule, prior to the beginning of the season, prohibiting any player playing in that league from also participating on a team or in a league of any other softball program.

### **RE-ENTRY OF USED PLAYER**

NPYL will allow re-entry of already used players if all substitutes have been used and an injury occurs or a player is ejected. Selection of this substitute must be made by the opposing manager. This type of re-entry can only take place when an injury prevents a player from continuing in the game or a player is ejected. The injured or ejected player, once removed from the game, cannot re-enter.

### **MINOR LEAGUES**

NPYL sanctions, approves and charters "Minor Leagues" in the 12U divisions provided the league has chartered a minimum of 4 (four) 12U "Major" teams. T-Ball (recommended for players age 5-6), Rookie (recommended for players ages 7-8), and Minor (10U) league rules are located at the end of this book.

### **PITCHING DISTANCE**

Exception to Rule 1.07: In the 12U division, a league may elect to pitch from 35 feet. If a league uses this option, it is recommended that the pitching distance be gradually increased through the season as pitchers develop. Pitching distance for 12U tournament competition is 40 feet.

### **10U-12U BASE RUNNING**

Exception to Rule 7.13 – For the regular season, a league may elect to adopt the following rule: In the 12U division, base runners shall not leave their bases until the pitched ball has reached the batter. For violation, base runner will be called out. For tournament competition, Rule 7.13 will apply and the base runner may leave the base upon the pitcher's release of the ball.

### **10 RUN RULE**

A game may be terminated once becoming regulation if one team is ahead by 10 or more runs and has had equal time at bat or the home team is leading.

### **TIME LIMIT**

No new inning may start after an hour and a half. Games called because of the time limit will be considered a regulation game regardless of the number of innings played.

## **11.00 Tournament Regulations**

### **11.02 TEAM COMPOSITION**

1. Each tournament team in the 12U and younger and 14U may consist of fifteen (15) players, one (1) manager and two (2) coaches.

a. Each tournament team may consist of any players from the league or division played during the regular season.

b. Managers and coaches must be selected from registered team rosters from the league or division in which they manage or coach.

**NOTE:** At no time is it permissible for a player, manager or coach to appear on more than one official NPYL team roster in the same calendar year.

**NOTE:** Players, manager and coaches may be replaced in accordance with Rule 11.03, 1 (b) between tournament levels, but the teams may not add players after submitting a team roster at the first level of tournament play.

### **11.03 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

1. Players listed on team rosters or revisions thereto shall be eligible for the tournament team provided that birth documents are in the custody of the proper tournament authority before the start of the competition. Players listed on a 10U, 8U or 6U League roster are not eligible for 12U tournament competition.

a. IN NO CASE shall a player be allowed to participate in tournament competition unless said birth document is presented to the tournament officials.

b. Due to death, injury, or if a player, manager or coach leaves the team on her own accord, she may be replaced upon presentation of written approval from the Tournament Director. The replacement player, manager or coach is eligible beginning at the next level of tournament competition. The player, manager or coach replaced is not eligible for further tournament competition and replacements must meet all tournament eligibility requirements.

c. To be eligible to compete in tournament play, a player, manager or coach must be listed on league and tournament rosters. The player is eligible for tournament competition in the official age division in which she participated during regular local season play.

d. To be eligible for tournament play, a player must have played in at least one-half (1/2) of her team's scheduled league games played prior to the start of tournament play. Each team must play a minimum of 10 games.

**NOTE:** When an odd number of games are involved the player receives the benefit – i.e. for eligibility one-half (1/2) of thirteen games played is six games. If a player is unable to meet the above because of injury or participation in scholastic sports, contact NPYL.

The last tournament game played shall, at any time upon discovery, be forfeited for use of an ineligible player.

### **11.04 DOCUMENTS**

1. The tournament team manager must place in the custody of the tournament officials the following documents prior to the start of competition:

a. Birth documents or records for each of the tournament team players.

b. Consent for Treatment forms (starting at First level of Play).

- c. Team photo uploaded with the roster online. Copy of the same photo must be placed in the team credential books.
- d. Coaching Certification I.D. Card or Certificate. Tournament Managers and Coaches must complete coaching education and certification prior to the start of their first level of tournament competition.
- e. Accord Certificate of Coverage of group accident insurance policy.
- f. Accord Certificate of Coverage of league liability insurance policy.

**NOTE:** These documents must stay in the possession of Tournament Director during each tournament level. These same documents shall accompany the teams as they advance in tournament competition.

## **11.05 SPEICAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

All NPYL Tournament Rules and Regulations are in addition to NPYL Rules listed in this book.

**NOTE:** The official tiebreakers issued by NPYL for pool play formats must be used.

All 14U tournament games shall be seven (7) complete innings, unless the home team leads at the end of 6½ innings of lay. All 12U, 10U, 8U, and 6U tournament games shall be six (6) complete innings, unless the home team leads at the end of 5½ innings of play. In the event a game is called before completion, it shall be completed from the point of discontinuance.

NPYL will allow re-entry of already used players if all substitutes have been used and an injury occurs or a player is ejected. Selection of this substitute must be made by the opposing manager. This type of re-entry can only take place when an injury prevents a player from continuing in the game or a player is ejected. The injured or ejected player, once removed from the game, cannot re-enter.

Any NPYL tournament game must be terminated once becoming regulation if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs and has had equal times at bat, or the home team is leading.

No tournament team may play in more than three games in a day. If a team plays in three tournament games in one day, there shall be a minimum 30-minute rest period between each game.

A team may elect to add a tenth hitter to the batting order for tournament games. Prior to the beginning of the game, this player will be indicated in the line-up as the “EH.” The “EH” will be treated as another starter, and cannot be eliminated during the course of the game.

No pitcher in 12U tournament play shall be allowed to pitch in more than nine (9) innings in any two (2) successive tournament games within the same tournament level. (e.g.) All players have full pitching eligibility beginning at each level of tournament competition.) 10U and younger level tournament play shall be allowed to pitch in no more than 6 innings in any two successive games. There are no pitching limitations in NPYL games for 14U.

Games in which an ineligible pitcher has been used, as specified in paragraph 12, shall be declared forfeited.

**NOTE:** If a pitcher delivers one (1) pitch in an inning that pitcher shall be charged for one (1) inning pitched.

## **11.07 – 10U**

All NPYL 12U division softball rules and regulations shall apply for 10U post-season tournament competitions with clarification/addition and/or the exception of the following:

- a. Team composition shall consist of nine (9) players as follows: Pitcher, Catcher, 1<sup>st</sup> Baseman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baseman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baseman, Shortstop, Leftfielder, Centerfielder and Rightfielder.



The team may select to use an extra hitter (EH). If the Extra Hitter option is used, there will be ten (10) batters listed in the batting order, and nine (9) defensive players in the field. If a team starts the game with ten (10) batters, it must end with ten batters.

- b. The batter may not advance on a dropped third strike.
- c. Stealing bases is permitted in tournament play, on release of the pitch.
- d. The playing field shall be as described in the Rule 1.04, however, the pitching distance will be set at thirty-five (35) feet.
- e. All 10U tournament games shall be six (6) innings, unless the home team leads at the end of 5 ½ innings of play. Any NPYL tournament game must be terminated once becoming regulation if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs and has had equal times at bat, or the home team is leading.
- f. A 10U pitcher shall be allowed to pitch in no more than six (6) innings in any two successive games. If a pitcher delivers one (1) pitch in an inning that pitcher shall be charged for one (1) inning pitched.

#### **11.07 – 8U COACH PITCH OR PITCHING MACHINE SECTION**

ALL NPYL Softball 8U post-season tournament rules and regulations shall comply with applicable NPYL 12U rules and regulations AND 10U tournament rules, as approved the clarification/addition of the following:

- a. No time limit per game. Game will be played to completion or when 10 run rule is applicable.
- b. There will be five (5) runs per inning limit with an open 6<sup>th</sup> inning.
- c. Team composition shall consist of nine (9) players as follows: Pitcher, Catcher, 1<sup>st</sup> Baseman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baseman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baseman, Shortstop, Leftfielder, Centerfielder, and Rightfielder. The team may select to use an extra hitter (EH).
- d. If the extra hitter option is used, there may be ten (10) batters listed in the batting order for tournament games.
- e. Tournament teams will use coach pitch. The coach pitcher shall remain silent while on the mound, and may not give hand signals nor make body movements that may be considered a coaching signal. The coach pitcher must start with both feet on the 35 ft. rubber. The coach pitcher must make an attempt to get out of the defensive player's way when fielding or throwing.
- f. If the coach pitcher, by standing straight up or not moving out of the field of play, forces a player to throw over the coach or intentionally hinders the player fielding or throwing the ball, interference may be called and a penalty applied.
- g. Even though the team will utilize coach pitch, the player fielding the pitching position must take a defensive position in line with, or slightly behind the pitching rubber and within the pitching circle.
- h. Each batter will have three (3) swinging strikes or a maximum of six (6) pitches. There are no called balls or strikes on the batter. (An out will be recorded if the batter fails to put the ball in play after six (6) pitches.) If the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch is hit foul (or successive pitch(es) fouled off), the batter will receive another pitch.
- i. Although the tournament team composition shall be a minimum of 12 or maximum of 15 players, Manager and two (2) coaches, the team's scorekeeper may set up at the outside of the dug-out and assist with control of the team players while the coach pitcher is on the mound and the other two in the coaching boxes.
- j. There is no "stealing" at the 8U level, therefore, the baserunner(s) must maintain contact with the base until the pitched ball reaches the plate.
- k. The playing field shall be as described in Rule 1.04 with the following exception: the pitching rubber will be set at thirty five (35) feet.
- l. No infield fly rule.

#### **11.07 – 8U PLAYER PITCH SECTION**

All NPYL Softball 8U post-season tournament rules and regulations shall comply with applicable 12U rules and regulations AND 10U tournament rules, as approved the clarification/addition and/or of the following:

- a. No time limit per game. Game will be played to completion or when 10 run rule is applicable.
- b. There will be a five (5) runs per inning limit with an open 6<sup>th</sup> inning.
- c. Team composition shall consist of nine (9) players as follows: Pitcher, Catcher, 1<sup>st</sup> Baseman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baseman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baseman, Shortstop Leftfielder, Centerfielder, and Rightfielder. The team may select to use an extra hitter (EH).
- d. If the extra hitter option is used, there may be ten (10) batters listed in the batting order for tournament games.
- e. There is no “stealing” at the 8U level, therefore, the baserunner(s) must maintain contact with the base until the pitched ball reaches the plate.
- f. The playing field shall be as described in Rule 1.04 with the following exception: the pitching rubber will be set at thirty five (35) feet.
- g. No infield fly rule.
- h. Player pitch is not used in all regional tournaments.

## **DETERMINATION OF POOL PLAY STANDINGS**

At the end of the pool play schedule, a pre-determined number of teams from each division will advance to the single-elimination competition. Participating teams will be advised, in writing, prior to the start of tournament competition how many teams will advance to the double-elimination round.

Pool play standings will be determined as follows:

### **1) WIN – LOSS RECORD**

The tie breakers are used in order to advance or seed ONE team at a time. Each time a tie is broken to advance one team, leaving a tie between two or more teams, the situation reverts to criterion #2. (Head-to-head results).

If still tied:

### **2) RESULTS OF HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION**

Example: Three teams are tied with identical records for the first place at the end of pool play. Teams A, B and C played against each other once in pool play. Team A won all of its games against Team B and Team C during pool play. Result – Team A advances, which then creates a two-way tie between Team B and Team C. That tie then is broken by reverting to criterion #2.

If still tied:

### **3) FEWEST RUNS GIVEN UP**

If the results of the head-to-head matchup(s) of the teams that are involved in the tie cannot break the tie (because no team defeated each of the other teams in the tie each time they played, or because no team has defeated all of the other teams involved in the tie, or because the teams involved in the tie did not play one another during pool play), then the tie is broken using criterion #3. The remaining teams’ tie is broken by reverting to criterion #2.

If still tied:

### **4) RUN DIFFERENTIAL WITH A MAXIMUM OF 10 PER GAME**

In the event a tie is created by virtue of a forfeited game, and the tie cannot be broken by criterion #2, the order of criteria #3 and #4 will be reversed and applied to the tie. Since the number of runs which might have been scored during the game may have affected the fewest runs allowed standing (and the awarding of the forfeit gives the “winning team” no additional runs given up”, this order will better adjust for that event.

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**\*\*All of this information came from the book called, Babe Ruth League, Inc. Softball Rules and Regulations & Official Playing Rules\*\***

## **Resources**

Ripken, C. (2013). *Babe Ruth League, Inc. Softball Rules and Regulations & Official Playing Rules*. Trenton, NJ: Babe Ruth League, Inc.