

# ABL OFFICIAL RULES

Wherever “he” or “him” or their related pronouns may appear in this rule book either as words or as parts of words, they have been used for literary purposes and are meant in their generic sense (i.e. To include all humankind, or both male and female sexes).

## **RULE 1: DEFINITION OF TERMS**

*(All definitions in Rule 1 are listed alphabetically)*

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

**An APPEAL PLAY** is a play upon which the umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a player. The appeal must be made before the next ball is delivered to the batter.

### **ALTERED BAT**

A bat is altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed. Examples of altering a bat are: replacing the handle of a metal bat with a wooden or other type handle, inserting material inside the bat, applying excessive tape (more than two layers) to the bat grip, or painting a bat at the top or bottom for other than identification purposes. Replacing the grip with another legal grip is not considered altering the bat. A “flare” or “cone” grip attached to the bat is considered an altered bat.

**NOTE:** *Engraved identification “ID” marking on the knob end only of a metal bat is not considered an altered bat. Engraved “ID” marking on the barrel end of a metal bat is considered an altered bat. Laser marking for “ID” purposes anywhere on the bat is not considered an altered bat.*

**A BASE** is one of four points which must be touched by a runner to score: usually applied to the canvas bags and the rubber plate which mark the base points

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

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

**A BASE RUNNER** is a player of the team at bat who has finished his turn at bat, reached first base, and has not yet been put out.

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

The umpire may award an intentional walk to the batter upon request of the manager.

When a batter receives a walk, the ball is dead—base runners may advance only if forced.

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

**A BATTER'S BOX** is the area in which the batter must stand during his time at bat.

**A BATTER-RUNNER** is a player who has finished a turn at bat but has not yet been put out or touched first base.

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

**The BATTING ORDER** is the order in which a team must come to bat.

- a. The batting order is established before the game starts and must include all players on the roster that are present and eligible to play.
- b. Any player arriving after the beginning of the game will be required to fill the last spot in the batting order.

**NOTE:** The starting batting order must be followed, but defensive changes may be made at any time. The scorekeeper need not be notified of any defensive changes.

**A BLOCKED BALL** is a batted, thrown, or pitched ball that is touched, stopped, or handled by a person not engaged in the game, or which touches any object that is not part of the official equipment or official playing area. A thrown ball touching a base coach accidentally (in or out of the coaches box) is not a blocked ball.

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

**A BENCH or DUGOUT** is the seating facility for players, substitutes and other team members when facing the pitcher. They are not actively engaged on the playing field.

**A CATCH** is the act of a defensive player in receiving and holding firmly in his hand or glove, a batted or thrown ball. It is not a catch however, if simultaneously or immediately following his contact with the ball, he collides with a player or wall, or if he falls down, and as a result of such collision or falling, drops the ball. If the player 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 player shall hold the ball long enough to prove that he has complete control of the ball and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

**The CATCHER'S BOX** is the area within which the catcher must stand until the pitcher delivers the ball. The pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, plate, or batter, or reaches the catcher's box. The lines are to be considered within the catcher's box. The catcher is considered within the box except when touching the ground outside the catcher's box.

**(The COACH** is a person who is responsible for the team's actions on the field and he represents the team in communications with the umpire and opposing team. A player may be designated as a coach in the event the coach is absent, or that player is a playing coach.)

- a. One shall be stationed near first base and one near third base and they are obligated to stay within the confines of their respective coach's box.

**EXCEPTION:** A coach may leave the coach's box to signal a runner to slide, advance or return to a base, or move out of a fielder's way, as long as he does not interfere with the play.

1. A base coach may address only his own team members.

2. One coach can have in his possession in the coach's box, a scorebook, pen or pencil and an indicator, all of which shall be used for score keeping or record keeping purposes only.
- b. A defensive team coach/manager is an eligible member of the team in the field, who may be either a non-playing coach who remains in the dugout, or playing coach who takes his place on the field. This coach may give direction and assistance to his team while they are playing defense.
- c. Coaches may not use language that will reflect negatively upon players, umpires, or spectators.
- d. No communication equipment is allowed between:
  1. The coaches on the field;
  2. The coaches and the dugout;
  3. The coaches and any player
  4. The spectator area and the field, including the dugout, coaches, and players.
- e. Coach is responsible for his spectators.

**A DEAD BALL** is a ball not in play and is not considered in play again until the pitcher holds it in pitching position and the umpire has called "PLAY BALL."

**The DEFENSIVE TEAM** is the team in the field.

**A DELAYED DEAD BALL** is a game situation in which the ball remains alive until the conclusion of a play. When the entire play is completed, the umpire shall rule a dead ball, and enforce the appropriate ruling.

**A DISPUTED CALL** is when any team member or spectator disputing any judgment decision by an umpire will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member

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

**A DUGOUT**—see **BENCH**.

**A FAIR BALL** is a batted ball that settles on fair territory 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, while on or over fair territory, touches the person of an umpire or player; or that while in fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.

NOTE: 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 he touches the ball.

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

**A FIELDER** is any defensive player.

**A FIELDER'S CHOICE** is the act of a fielder who handles a fair grounder and, instead of throwing to first base to retire the batter-runner, throws to another base in an attempt to retire a preceding base runner. The term is also used by scorers to:

- a. Account for the advance of a batter-runner who takes one or more extra bases when the fielder who handles his safe hit attempts to retire a preceding base runner.
- b. Account for the advance of a runner (other than by a stolen base or error) while a fielder is attempting to retire another runner.
- c. Account for the advance of 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 OUT** is an out which can be made only when a base runner loses the right to the base occupied by reason of the batter becoming a runner.

**A FORFEITED GAME** is a game declared ended by the umpire-in-chief for violation of rules. The score of a forfeited game will be seven to zero in favor of the offended team.

**A FOUL BALL** is a legally 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 a player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.

**NOTE:**

- a. 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 fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball.
- b. If a batter hits a pitched ball that hits fair territory immediately in front of home plate (within the front part of the batter's box) and rebounds striking the batter while both of the batter's feet remain in the batter's box, it shall be ruled a foul ball and the ball declared dead.

**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 hand 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 foul hit which rises higher than the batter's head shall not be a foul tip under this rule.

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

**An ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL** is a ball batted fair or foul in any way by the batter when either one or both of his feet are upon the ground outside the lines of the batter's box or one that is hit with an illegal bat or a bunted ball.

**An ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL** occurs when a field catches a batted or thrown ball with his cap glove, or any part of his uniform while it is detached from its proper place.

**An ILLEGAL PITCH**— see **RULE 7—PITCHING REGULATIONS**

**The INFIELD** is that portion of the field which is included within the diamond made by the baselines.

**An INFIELD FLY** is a fair ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second; or first, second, and third bases are occupied, before two men are out. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder who stations himself 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 the 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.

**NOTE:** 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 to the ground outside the base line and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an infield fly.

#### **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 base runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was in judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.
- b. Defensive interference is an act the 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 make a play on a base runner.
  2. When a fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before passing a fielder.
- d. Spectator interference occurs when a batted or thrown ball is touched, stopped, or handled by a person not engaged in the game. If the ball touches an object which is not part of the official equipment or playing area whether it was thrown or batted it shall be treated the same as spectator interference and shall carry the same penalty adjudged by the umpire. The penalty for spectator interference shall be the sole judgment of the umpire.

**A LEGAL TOUCH** occurs when a base runner or batter-runner that is not touching a base is touched, stopped, or handled by a person engaged in the game. If the ball touches an object which is not part of the official equipment or playing area whether it was thrown or batted it shall be treated the same as spectator interference and shall carry the same penalty adjudged by the umpire. The penalty for spectator interference shall be the sole judgment of the umpire.

**A LEGALLY CAUGHT BALL** occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball provided it is not caught in the fielder’s hat, cap, protectors, pockets, or other part of his uniform.

**LINE-UP CARDS AND ROSTERS**—Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the Official Scorer, or umpire, at the start of each game. The plate umpire retains the card for the duration of the game.

**A LINE DRIVE** is an aerial ball that is batted sharp and direct into the playing field.

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

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

**OFFENSIVE TEAM** is the team at bat.

**OVERSLIDE** is the act of an offensive player when his slide to a base, other than when advancing from home to first base, is with such momentum that he loses contact with the base, which act places him in jeopardy.

**An OVERTHROW** is a play in which the ball is thrown from one fielder to another to retire a runner who has not reached or is off base and which goes into foul or fair territory. (See RULE 7, Section 2)

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

**“PLAY”** is the umpire’s order to start the game or to resume action following any dead ball.

**PITCHING DISTANCE** shall be 42 feet.

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

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

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

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

**A WALK—see BASE ON BALLS.**

**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.

## **RULE 2: THE GAME—DIAMOND—EQUIPMENT**

### **THE GAME**

**Section 1:** **ABL SOFTBALL IS A GAME** between two teams of twelve (12) players each, under direction and control of a manager, played on an enclosed field in accordance with these rules, under jurisdiction of one or more umpires.

An ABL team must field eight (8) eligible players to start a game. Should an injury leave a team with less than eight (8) players, the game will be called.

- Section 2:** **A REGULATION GAME** shall consist of seven innings.
- a. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six innings or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning.
  - b. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued by playing additional innings, or until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
  - c. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs than the other team has scored in five or more innings. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other cause, which puts the spectators or players in peril.
  - d. A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more completed innings, or if the team second at bat has equaled the score of the first team at bat in the incomplete inning.
  - e. These provisions do not apply to any acts on the part of players or spectators, which might call for forfeiture of the game. The plate umpire may forfeit the game if any team member or spectator attacks any umpire physically.
  - f. The plate umpire shall declare a forfeit in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:
    1. If a team fails to appear on the field or, being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is schedule or assigned at the time scheduled or within a time set for forfeitures by the organization in which the team is playing.
    2. If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
    3. If, after the umpire has suspended play, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called “PLAY BALL.”
    4. If a team employs tactics designed to delay or to hasten the game.
    5. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
    6. If the order for the removal or ejection of a player or any person authorized to sit on the team bench is not obeyed within one minute.

7. If, because of the removal or ejection of the players from the game by the umpire or for any cause there aren't the required number of players on either team.
8. If a declared Ineligible Player re-enters the game and one pitch has been thrown.
9. If an ejected player/coach/manager is discovered participating in the game again.
- g. No new inning will begin after time limits.
- h. A game that is
  1. Not considered regulation, or
  2. A regulation tie game shall be replayed from the beginning. Original line-ups may be changed when the game is replayed

### MAJORS:

- a. **Limited innings**—A ten (10) run limit is in effect—tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) run scored and a ten (10) run lead will end the innings. Finish the play.
- b. **Gentleman's Rule**—Coaches should not coach players to wait until they have a strike before swinging. **Purpose:** This is in direct violation of our league motto "Christians First." The only reason persons would coach that way is to take advantage of another person's weakness for the purpose of getting easy base runners. This coaching method exposes the other team's pitcher as a weaker talent and results in landslide victories. Let's consider the well-being of all players and keep our priorities in order.
- c. **Time Limits:**
  1. Play will cease after 105 minutes. The official scorekeeper will keep the time.
    - a) *Since there is a time limit on ABL games there will be no infield practice between innings.*
  2. Catchers are to be ready and coaches must be aware of the catcher's position in the batting order to avoid a delay in starting the next half of the inning.
  3. Stalling will be considered a severe and willful act to violate our "Christians First," "Ball Players Second" motto which is the very essence of our league and its policy. Such acts will be dealt with on a case by case situation by the League Director.
- d. **Intentional Walks:**
  1. No intentional walks. Any intentional walk results in two (2) bases for all runners. (Batter to second, runner at second scores, etc.) The intentions of an intentional walk are up to the discretion of the umpire. First time warning. **Purpose:** We want all batters to hit and let the pieces fall where they may.

### MINORS:

- a. **Limited innings**—A five (5) run limit is in effect—fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) run scored and a five (5) run lead will end the inning. Finish the play.
- b. **Batting Limits**—Coaches will pitch to their own team. A batter will be allowed three (3) pitched balls. If the ball is not hit, one (1) swing from the tee will be allowed. If the ball is not hit fair it will be ruled an out. Striking the tee with the ball falling fair is considered a foul ball and the batter is out.
- c. **Fielders**—Defensive team will be allowed no players inside the infield square (area between 1st/3<sup>rd</sup> and Home/2<sup>nd</sup>). All players must be outside the base line at the time the ball is hit. At that time any player may charge the ball and make a play. Umpire may rule in favor of batter (i.e. Runner safe if ball played inside infield box).
- d. There will be no infield fly rule.

- e. **Time Limit**— Play will cease after 75 minutes. The official scorekeeper will keep the time.
- f. **Batting Tee**—The purpose for the tee is to help the batter to become a base runner not to be used to sandbag and hit triples and drive in runs. It is a confidence builder. Therefore, all players who use the tee will be allowed one base only and all runners are limited to advance no more than one (1) base.

**Section 3:** **THE OBJECTIVE OF EACH TEAM** is to win by scoring more runs than their opponent.

**Section 4:** **THE WINNER** of the game 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.

**Section 5:** **THE HOME TEAM** shall bat second.

**Section 6:** **A REGULATION GAME SHALL CONSIST OF SEVEN INNINGS**, unless the home team scores more runs in six innings than the visiting team scored in seven innings.

**Section 7:** **IT IS A REGULATION GAME** when the home team scores the winning run in the seventh inning before the third man is out.

**Section 8:** **IT IS A REGULATION GAME** if it is called by the umpire on account of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other cause which puts the spectators or players in peril provided four innings have been completed or if the home team has scored more runs in three and a fraction half-innings than the visiting team has scored in four complete half-innings. The game is considered completed also when the home team scored one or more runs in its half of the fourth inning to tie the score.

**Section 9:** **WHEN A GAME IS CALLED** in any inning after the fourth, the score shall be what it was at the time the game was called if the home team has more runs than the visiting team or if the home team in that inning tied. If the home team has less runs than the visiting team when the game is called, the score shall be that of the last completed inning by both side.

**Section 10:** **IF THE GAME IS TIED** at the end of seven innings, play shall be continued until one side has scored more runs than the other in an equal number of innings; provided that if the home team scored the winning run before the third man is out in any inning after the seventh, the game shall terminate and be a regulation game.

**Section 11:** **A REGULATION TIE GAME** shall be declared by the umpire if the score is equal on the last even inning played, when he terminates play in accordance with Section 7 of this rule after each team has played four or more complete innings. If the home team is at bat when the game is terminated, and has scored in the uncompleted inning the same number of runs as the other side, the umpire shall declare the game a tie without regard to the score of the last equal inning. If the home team shall, before the completion of its fourth inning, equal the score made by the visiting team in four complete innings, the game shall be declared a tie.

**Section 12: TIEBREAKER**—Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat in that respective half-inning being placed on second base. The player who is running can be substituted in accordance with the substitution rules.

**NOTE:** If an incorrect runner in the line-up is placed on second base, this error may be corrected as soon as it is noticed. There is no penalty.

**Section 13: SCORING OR RUNS**

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

**EXCEPTION:** When the tiebreaker is used, the runner starting at second base does not have to touch first base in order for a legal run to be scored.

b. A run shall not be scored if the third out of the inning is a result of:

1. The batter-runner being put out before legally touching first base.
2. A runner being forced out (including on an appeal play) due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
3. The runner fails to keep contact with the base to which he is entitled until a pitch is released.
4. The runner fails to keep contact with the base to which he is entitled until a pitch is batted or reached home plate.
5. A preceding runner being declared out.

**Section 14: FORFEITED GAMES.** A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases.

- a. If a team fails to appear upon the field, or being upon the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned at the time scheduled or within the time set for forfeitures by the organization in which the team is playing.
- b. If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- c. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side refuses to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called “PLAY BALL.”
- d. If a team employs tactics designed to delay or hasten the game.
- e. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
- f. If the order for the removal of a player is not obeyed within one minute.
- g. If, because of the removal of a player or players from the game by an umpire, or for any cause, there are less than eight players on either team.
- h. Game officials have the authority to forfeit a game when they feel the situation is such that physical harm may come to themselves, players, or spectators.

**Section 15: THE SCORE OF A FORFEITED GAME** shall be seven to nothing in favor of the offended team.

## THE DIAMOND

**Section 16: THE PLAYING FIELD** is the area in which the ball may be legally played or fielded. The field shall have a clear and unobstructed area within a radius of 200 feet from home plate between the foul lines.

**Section 17: GROUND OR SPECIAL RULES** establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed upon by leagues or opposing teams whenever backstops, fences, stands, vehicles, spectators, or other obstructions are within the prescribed area. Any obstruction less than 200 feet from home plate should be clearly marked for the umpire's information.

**Section 18: THE OFFICIAL DIAMOND** shall have 60-foot base lines with a pitching distance of 42 feet.

**Section 19: THE LAYOUT OF THE DIAMOND** is shown in the attached diagrams. To determine the position of home plate, draw a line in the direction it is desired to lay the diamond. Drive a stake at the corner of the home plate nearest the catcher. Fasten a cord to this stake and tie knots, or otherwise mark the cord 42 feet, 60 feet, 84 feet  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and at 120 feet.

Place the cord (without stretching) along the direction line and at the 42-foot marker place a stake—this will be the front line at the middle of the pitcher's plate. Along the same line drive a stake at the 84 feet  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches mark—this will be the center of second base.

Place the 120-foot marker at the center of second base and, taking hold of the cord at the 60-foot marker, walk to the right of the direction line until the cord is taut and drive a stake at the 60-foot marker, walk across the field and in like manner mark the outside corner of third base. Home plate, first and third bases are wholly inside the diamond.

To check the diamond, place the home plate end of the cord at the first base stake and the 120-foot marker at third base. The 60-foot marker should now check at home plate and second base.

Check all distances with a steel tape whenever possible.

**Section 20: THE THREE FOOT LINE** is drawn parallel to and three feet from the base line starting at a point halfway between home plate and first base and extending to a point three feet beyond first base.

**Section 21: THE BATTER'S BOX**, one on each side of home plate shall measure three feet by seven feet. The inside lines of the batter's box shall be six inches from home plate. The front line of the box shall be four feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home place.

**Section 22: THE CATCHER'S BOX** shall be ten feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be eight feet five inches wide.

- Section 23: THE COACH'S BOX** is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to 6 feet from the first and third baseline extending from the bases toward home plate.
- Section 24: THE PITCHER'S PLATE**, if used, shall measure 24 inches long and 6 inches wide, made of either wood or rubber. The top of the plate shall be level with the ground and the front line of the plate shall be level with the ground and the front line of the plate shall be 42 feet from the outside corner of home plate.
- Section 25: THE HOME PLATE** shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. It shall be a five-sided figure 17 inches wide across the edge facing the pitcher. The sides shall be parallel to the inside lines of the batter's boxes and shall be 8½ inches long. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long.
- Section 26: FITNESS OF DIAMOND.** The question of fitness of a diamond for play shall be determined in advance by the ABL Director or designated representative. If both teams and the umpire are on the field of play ready to begin a game, the question of the diamond for play shall be determined by the ABL Director or designated representative and the umpire. After play has been called by the umpire he alone shall be the judge as to the fitness of the diamond for continuing play.
- Section 27: BASES.** The base, other than home plate shall be 15 inches square and shall be made of canvas or other suitable material. The bases shall be securely fastened in position.
- Section 28: DOUBLE BASES.** The double base is approved for use at first base. This base is 38.1cm by 76.2cm (15 in by 30 in), made of canvas or other suitable material and no more than 12.7cm (5 in) in thickness. Half the base is secured in fair territory, and half the base (of a different solid contrasting color) is secured in foul territory
- NOTE:** The following rules apply to the double base:
- a. A batted ball hitting the fair portion is declared fair, and a batted ball hitting the foul portion only is declared foul.
  - b. A defensive player must use only the fair portion of the base at all times.  
**EXCEPTION:** On any live ball play made from first base foul territory, the batter-runner and the defensive player may use either base. When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory and if hit by a throw from the foul side of first base, it would not interference. If intentional interference is ruled, the batter-runner would be out.  
**NOTE:** The one-meter line is doubled on throws from foul territory.
  - c. After over-running the base, the batter-runner must return to the fair portion.
  - d. On balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch either portion of the base.
  - e. When tagging up on a fly ball, the fair portion must be used.
  - f. Once a runner returns to the fair portion, should he stand on the foul portion only, it is considered not in contact with the base and runner shall be called out, if
    1. He is tagged with the ball or,
    2. He leads off from the foul portion on a pitched ball.

## EQUIPMENT

### Section 29: THE OFFICIAL BAT:

- a. Shall be 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 parallel to the length of the bat.
- b. Shall be metal, bamboo, plastic, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic, or any other composite material approved by the ISF Equipment Standard Commission.
- c. Can be laminated, but must contain only wood or adhesive and have a clear finish (if finished).
- d. Shall be round and shall be smooth
- e. Shall not be more than 86.4cm (34 in) long, nor exceed 1077.0g (38 ounces) in weight.
- f. Shall not be more than 5.7cm (2<sup>1/4</sup> in) in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 0.80mm (1/32 in) is permitted to allow for expansion.
- g. If metal, may be angular.
- h. Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges, or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. A metal bat shall be free of burrs and cracks.
- i. If metal, shall not have a wooden handle.
- j. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape), or composition material. The safety grip shall not be less than 25.4cm (10 in) long and shall not extend more than 38.1cm (15 in) from the small end of the bat. Resin, pine tar, or spray substances placed on the safety grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only.  
**NOTE:** Tape applied to any bat must be continuously spiral. It does not have to be a solid layer of tape. It shall not exceed two layers
- k. If metal and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other material insert approved by the ISF Equipment Standards Commission, firmly secured at the large end of the bat.
- l. Shall have a safety knob of a minimum of 0.6cm (one fourth inch) protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded, or permanently fastened.  
**NOTE:** A “flare” or “cone” grip attached will be considered an altered bat.
- m. Shall be marked by the manufacturer in a prominent manner so as to be easily Visible: “OFFICIAL ISF APPROVED SOFTBALL” or other notification as may be selected and approved by the ISF Equipment Standards Commission. If the approval notice cannot be read due to wear on the bat, the bat may still be permitted in play if it is in compliance with ISF Rules in all other respects and that compliance is determinable with reasonable certainty.
- n. The weight, distribution of weight, or length of the bat must be permanently fixed at the time of manufacture and may not be altered in any way thereafter, except as otherwise except as otherwise specifically provided in these rules.
- o. The official bat shall not be an “Altered Bat.” The weight, distribution of weight, and length of the bat, as well as all other characteristic of the bat must be permanently fixed at the time of manufacture and may not be altered in any way thereafter, except as otherwise specifically provided in these rules, or a specification approved by the ISF Equipment Standards Commission.

**Section 30:** **THE OFFICIAL BALL** shall be a regular, smooth seam, concealed stitch, or flat-surfaced ball of any type. The ball shall be not less than 10 inches nor more than  $11\frac{1}{8}$  inches in circumference and shall weigh not less than six ounces nor more than  $6\frac{3}{4}$  ounces.

**Section 31: SPIKES.** Shoes of some sort must be worn; bare feet will not be permitted. Use of metal spikes or cleats similar to those in baseball will **NOT** be permitted. Cleats or spikes must be of molded rubber.

**NOTE:** Umpires shall require player to remove any spike or illegal shoe which in his opinion are dangerous or hazardous.

**Section 32: GLOVES.** Any player may wear a glove, but only the catcher and first baseman may use mitts. No top lacing, webbing, or other device between the thumb and body of the glove or mitt worn by a first baseman or catcher or a glove worn by any fielder, shall be more than 12.7cm (5 in) in length.

**SPECIFICATIONS:**

- a. Palm width (top) 20.3cm (8 in)
- b. Palm width (bottom) 21.6cm ( $8\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- c. Top opening of web 12.7cm (5 in)
- d. Bottom opening of web 11.5cm ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- e. Web top to bottom 18.4cm ( $7\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- f. 1<sup>st</sup> finger crotch seam 19.0cm ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- g. Thumb crotch seam 19.0cm ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- h. Crotch seam 44.5cm ( $17\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- i. Thumb top to bottom edge 23.5cm ( $9\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- j. 1<sup>st</sup> finger top to bottom edge 35.6cm (14 in)
- k. 2<sup>nd</sup> finger top to bottom edge 33.7cm ( $13\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- l. 3<sup>rd</sup> finger top to bottom edge 31.1cm ( $12\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- m. 4<sup>th</sup> finger top to bottom edge 27.9cm (11 in)

**Section 33: MASKS, CATCHER'S HELMET, CHEST PROTECTOR, and CHIN GUARDS must be worn by the catcher**

**Section 34: A BATTER'S HELMET** is mandatory on offense for batters, on-deck batters, batter-runners, youth age players who coach in the first and third base coaches box, and youth age representatives that participate as a bat boy or girl while on the field or in the dugout.

- a. Failure to wear the batting helmet when ordered to do so by the umpire shall cause said player to be declared out.

**EXCEPTION:** On-deck batters, youth age players in the coach's box or catchers, who will be ejected from the game after a warning.

- b. Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or deliberately removing the helmet during a live ball play, except on a home run hit over the fence, and seen by the umpire as a deliberate act shall cause the violator to be declared out immediately. The ball remains live.

**EXCEPTION:** If a thrown or batted ball contacts the deliberately removed helmet, the ball becomes dead and runners must return to the last base held at the time of such contact.

**NOTE:** Calling a runner out for removing a helmet deliberately does not cancel any force play situation.

- c. If a helmet is accidentally dislodged from its proper place on a batter, batter-runner or runner, there is no penalty and the ball remains live
- d. If a thrown or batted ball hits the helmet while it is detached from its proper place on his person and this contact interferes with the play being made, or a defensive player comes in contact with the helmet while it is on the ground and this contact prevents him from making a play, the ball is dead, the offensive player who was wearing the helmet shall be called out, even if he had scored and the run is nullified.

**Section 35:** **PENALTY FOR USE** of illegal equipment (with the exception of an illegal bat) shall be its removal from the game.

**Section 36:** **PENALTY FOR USE** of illegal bat shall be: batter declared out, ball declared dead, and the illegal bat removed from the game.

**NOTE:** When the batter hits the ball, (either fair or foul) the above penalty will be enforced. If the ball is not hit and the illegal bat is discovered, the penalty will be removal from the game.

**Section 37:** **EQUIPMENT ON PLAYING FIELD.** No equipment shall be left lying on the field, either in fair or foul territory.

## **RULE 3: TEAMS, PLAYERS, AND SUBSTITUTES**

- Section 1:** **TWELVE PLAYERS** shall constitute a team. No team shall start or continue a game with less than eight (8) players. With the exception of the pitcher and catcher, the team in the field may be stationed at any desirable point on fair ground.
- Section 2:** **A SUBSTITUTE** is not allowed in ABL Softball. All eligible players present at the game must be actively involved as player in the game. Defensive changes may be made freely.
- Section 3:** **A MANAGER MAY HAVE ANOTHER PLAYER RUN** for an injured base runner. The most previous batter that is not on base will be the pinch runner. The batter must have achieved first base and play completed before a pinch runner may be used for the batter.
- Section 4:** **IN RELIEVING A PITCHER**, the new pitcher shall, unless incapacitated, continue to pitch until either the batter has been put out, achieved first base, or the side has been retired.
- Section 5:** **WHEN PLAYERS MUST LEAVE THE GAME** the following rules will apply:
- If a player becomes injured or is ejected from the game or must leave the game early for any reason, his spot in the batting order will be skipped with no further penalty.
  - If the player leaving the game, for any reason, is a base runner **RULE 3, Section 3** will apply when determining the pinch runner. If no player meets the criteria of **RULE 3, Section 3**, the umpire will designate the pinch runner.
  - Both Managers and the League Director or designated representative must give approval, prior to the start of a game, for a player to leave the game and return at a later time. A player who does this must be returned to his original spot in the batting order.
  - If a player leaving a game for injury leaves his team with less than eight (8) players, the game will be called (**RULE 2, Sections 1 and 9**). If a player is removed from the game by the umpire and leaves his team with less than eight (8) players, the game will be forfeited (**RULE 2, Section 14**). If a player leaves a game for any other reason, the game will be forfeited.
- Section 6:** **A RELIEF PITCHER** is considered to have replaced the previous pitcher when he takes his place on the pitching plate. (See **RULE 3, Section 4**)
- Section 7:** **THE OFFENSIVE TEAM** shall be allowed two coaches only, one near first base and one near third base, who shall remain within the coach's box at all times.
- Section 8:** **THE DEFENSIVE TEAM** is allowed one coach, who must position himself in foul territory in the outfield portion of the playing field. A batted or thrown ball which strikes a defensive coach will be ruled in favor of the batter, batter-runner, or base runner.
- Section 9** **DUGOUT CONDUCT**—Coaches, players, substitutes, or other bench personnel shall not be outside the designated bench dugout area, except when the rule allows or considered justified by the umpire.
- Section 10:** No manager, player, coach, bat boy, or other representative of the team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, or on the playing field, or elsewhere:
- Incite or try to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators;

- b. Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an umpire, or any spectator;
- c. 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.
- d. Take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.

**NOTE:** Persons who lead or participate in "Cheering for a team" will be considered team representatives for the purpose of this Section.

**PENALTY:** The offender shall be removed from the game and/or will leave the playing field and associated area.

## **RULE 4: COACHES, PLAYERS, AND SUBSTITUTES**

### **Section 1: COACHES.**

- a. The Head Coach is responsible for signing the line-up card.
- b. Coaches must be neatly attired, including the wearing the team cap, suitable footwear, and dressed in team uniform in accordance with the color code of the team.
- c. An offensive team coach (base coach) is an eligible member of the team at bat who takes his place on the field, within the coach's box.
  1. Two coaches are allowed to give words of assistance and direction to the members of their team while at bat.
  2. One shall be stationed near first base and one near third base and they are obligated to stay within the confines of their respective coach's box.

**Exception:** A coach may leave the coach's box to signal a runner to slide, advance or return to a base, or move out of a fielder's way, as long as he does not interfere with the play.
  3. A base coach may address only his own team members.
  4. One coach can have in his possession in the coach's box, a score book, pen or pencil and an indicator, all of which shall be used for score keeping or record keeping purposes only.
- d. A defensive team coach/manager is an eligible member of the team in the field, who may be either a non-playing coach who remains in the dugout, or a playing coach who takes his place on the field. This coach may give direction and assistance to his team while they are playing defense.
- e. Coaches may not use language that will reflect negatively upon players, umpires, or spectators.
- f. No communication equipment is allowed between:
  1. The coaches on the field;
  2. The coaches and the dugout;
  3. The coaches and any player;
  4. The spectator area and the field, including the dugout, coaches, and players.

**EFFECT:** Section 1 e-f:  
Any infraction will result in the ejection of the coach after a warning.
- g. Coach is responsible for his/her spectators

### **Section 2: LINE-UP CARDS AND ROSTERS.**

- a. Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the Official Scorer, or umpire, at the start of each game. The plate umpire retains the card for the duration of the game.
  1. A player's name shall not be on the starting line-up, unless the player is present in the team area and in uniform.
  2. All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place, by their last name and first name.
  3. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list at any time during the game.
  4. The name of the head coach/manager must be listed on the line-up card.

**Section 3: PLAYERS**

A team shall consist of players in the following positions:

- a. Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first baseman (F3), second baseman (F4), third baseman (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left center fielder (F8), right fielder (F9), and right center fielder (F10).

**NOTE:** All players will field. No substitutes allowed.

- b. With an Extra Player (EP). Eleven players: same as slow pitch plus an EP who bats in the line-up.

**EXCEPTION:** A team may play with an uneven number of male and female players.

**EFFECT—**Section 3b: The game is forfeited.

**EXCEPTION:** The game is not forfeited, but an out must be declared when two players of the same sex bat back-to-back.

**EXCEPTION:** Minors—Coach will pitch (player will field from baseline after ball is in play).

**Section 4: STARTING PLAYERS**

A starting player shall be official when the line-up card is inspected, and approved, by the plate umpire and team representative at the pre-game meeting.

- a. The names may be entered on the official line-up card in advance of this meeting.
- b. However, in case of injury or illness, changes may be made at the pre-game meeting with the umpires. A listed substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in his team's batting order. He would then be considered the starting player.
- c. The player so replaced at the meeting could enter the game, as a substitute, at any time later in the game.

**Section 5: EXTRA PLAYER—**All players must bat and field in ABL.

**Section 6: RE-ENTRY**

- a. Any of the starting players, may be withdrawn and re-enter once, provided such players occupy the same batting position whenever they are in the line-up.

**EXCEPTION:** If the starting player (currently not in the line-up) is brought into the line-up as a Replacement Player.

**NOTE:** The original player and the substitute(s) cannot be in the line-up at the same time.

- b. If a manager/coach removes a substitute from the game and re-enters the same substitute later in the game, this is considered an Illegal Re-Entry.

**EXCEPTION:** When the substitute is used as a Replacement Player.

- c. When a starting player re-enters the game and occupies a different position in the offensive line-up, it is considered an Illegal Re-entry.

**EFFECT—**Section 6 a-c:

1. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as an appeal, which may be made at any time while the Illegal Substitute is in the game.
2. The appeal need not be made prior to the next pitch; however, all plays that occurred while the Illegal Substitute was in the game shall stand.
3. The penalty for an Illegal Re-Entry is: the ejection of both the manager/coach (whose name appears on the line-up card) and the Illegal Substitute.

**NOTE:** If the Illegal Re-Entry also violates the unreported substitute ruling (Rule 54, Section 8g) those penalties would also be in effect.

4. The name of the new coach who is to assume responsibility for the team must be provided to the umpire.

**Section 7: SUBSTITUTES/ILLEGAL PLAYER**

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

- a. The coach or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time the substitute enters. The plate umpire shall report the change to the scorer. A substitute is not officially in the game until a pitch has been thrown or a play made.
- b. If a substitute enters the game without reporting, and after a pitch has been thrown (legal or illegal), or after a play has been made, the player will be "Declared Ineligible" when discovered. The use of an unreported substitute, an illegal substitute, an unannounced replacement player, or the unannounced return of a withdrawn player, under the Replacement Player rule, is handled as an appeal by the offended team and must be brought to the attention of the umpire while such player is in the game. If the team manager or the player in violation informs the umpire prior to the offended team's appeal, there is no violation regardless of how long the player or players were illegally in the game. All action prior to the discovery is legal. If the team in violation has no substitutes to replace the player "Declared Ineligible" (or if the starter has re-entered one time), the game is forfeited.

**EXCEPTION (8b)**

1. If an Unreported Substitution on offense bats and reaches base safely, and then is discovered and appealed before a pitch to the next batter, or if at the end of the game and before the umpires leave the field, all runners (including the batter) will return to the base occupied on the batted ball, and the Unreported Substitute is "Declared Ineligible" and called out. All outs that occur on this play will stand.
  2. If the Substitute is an Illegal Player for any reason, the substitute will be subject to the penalty for that violation.  
**NOTE:** The use of an Illegal Substitute, an unannounced Replacement Player, or the unannounced return of a withdrawn player under the Replacement Player rule, is an appeal play that must be brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team, while the Illegal Substitute or player in violation of the Replacement Player rule, is in the game.
- c. Any player may be substituted from the game during any dead ball.
  - d. If an injury to a batter-runner (or runner) prevents them from proceeding to an awarded base, and the ball is dead, the batter-runner (or runner) may be substituted for. The substitute will be allowed to proceed to any awarded base(s). The substitute must legally touch any awarded or missed base(s) not previously touched.
  - e. A player substituted from the game shall not participate in the game again, except as a coach.

**EXCEPTION:** The starting line-up may re-enter once only.

- f. Multiple substitutions can be made for the player listed on the starting line-up, but no substitute can return to the game after being withdrawn from the line-up, except as a Replacement Player.

**NOTE:** the provisions of rule 5, Section 8 will not apply in the event of the required use of a "Replacement Player," unless such player is legally appealed for failure to report to the umpire (See Rule 5, Section 11).

- g. An Illegal Player is a player who takes a position in the line-up, either on offense or defense, which does not have a legal right to that position. A player will not violate the Illegal Player rule until one pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown or a play made.

**EFFECT**—Section, 7g:

**ILLEGAL PLAYERS INCLUDE:**

1. **ILLEGAL PITCHER.** An illegal pitcher is a player who returns to pitch after being removed from the pitching position by the umpire. **PENALTY:** Once discovered, the Illegal Pitcher shall be **EJECTED**.

**NOTE:** A pitcher, who has been removed from the pitching position as a result of the defensive team exceeding their limit of charged conferences, or for pitching with excessive speed, may re-enter, but not as a pitcher.

2. **ILLEGAL RUNNER** An Illegal Runner occurs when the offensive team places a player already in the line-up as a runner for another offensive runner.
3. **ILLEGAL RE-ENTRY/UNREPORTED SUBSTITUTE** An illegal re-entry occurs:

- a) A starting player re-returns to the game a second time after being substituted twice.
- b) A starting player re-returns to the game, but is not in his starting position in the batting order.

**OFFENSE:** If the Illegal player/Unreported substitute is discovered by the defense:

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

**DEFENSE:** If the Illegal Player/Unreported Substitute is discovered by the offense:

- a) After the Illegal Player makes a play and before the next legal or illegal pitch, before the defense has left the field, and before the umpires have left the game, the Illegal Player is “Declared Ineligible and the offensive team has the option of:
  1. Taking the result of the play, or

2. Having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count the batter had, prior to the discovery of the Illegal Player. Each runner would return to the base occupied prior to the play.
- b) After a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, the Illegal Player is “Declared Ineligible,” and all play stands.

**NOTE:** The provisions of Rule 4, Section 8 will not apply in the event of the required use of a Replacement Player, **unless such player is legally appealed for failure to report to the umpire.** (See Rule 4, Section 10)

## **Section 8      DISPUTED CALLS**

Any team member or spectator disputing any judgment decision by an umpire will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.

## **Section 9      DUGOUT CONDUCT**

Coaches, players, substitutes, or other bench personnel shall not be outside the designated bench dugout area, except when the rule allows or considered justified by the umpire.

**NOTE:** This includes players other than the on-deck batter (who must remain in the on-deck circle) at the start of the game, between innings, or when a new pitcher is warming up.

**EFFECT:** Section 8: The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.

## **Section 10     REPLACEMENT PLAYER**

In the event of any player bleeding during the game, that player must be withdrawn from the game if the bleeding cannot be stopped within a reasonable time, or his uniform becomes covered with blood. The withdrawn player shall not return to the game until all bleeding ceases, the injury cleaned and covered and, if necessary, his uniform replaced.

- a. The withdrawn player shall be replaced by a Replacement Player, who may act for the withdrawn player for the remainder of the inning in progress (i.e. until the end of the inning of the team batting second), AND for the following complete inning.
- b. The umpire **MUST** be advised that a Replacement Player is entering the game.

**EFFECT:** Section 10 a-b:

1. The use of an ineligible “Replacement Player” shall be considered on Illegal Re-Entry with the relevant penalties to apply.
2. Failure to notify the umpire of the use of a “Replacement Player” shall, upon a legal appeal, subject the player to the provisions of the “Unreported Substitute” rule.
- c. The Replacement Player shall be permitted to bat in the turn of the withdrawn player and field for the withdrawn player under all circumstances that would apply to the withdrawn player.
- d. The withdrawn player may return to the game at any time during the period of time as describer in (a) above without being treated as a substitution
- e. The umpire **MUST** be advised that the withdrawn player is returning to the game.

**EFFECT—**Section 10 d-e:

1. Should the withdrawn player not be able to return to the game after being out for the time described in (a) above, the Replacement Player must be treated as a substitute in accordance with the provisions of the substitute rule.
2. If the replacement player is one who has previously been in the game then he must be replaced by a legal substitute who has not yet been in the game.
3. Should the team not have a legal substitute available, the game will be forfeited.

4. Failure to notify the umpire of the return of the withdrawn player shall, upon a legal appeal, subject the player to the provisions of the Unreported Substitute rule.
- f. The withdrawn player may subsequently re-enter the game after the expiry of the time described in (a) above, subject to the provisions of the Re-entry rule.
- g. When a “Replacement Player” is used, the player must be of the same sex as the injured and bleeding player.
- h. The use of a “Replacement Player” is not subject to the provisions of the “Substitute Rule” (except when unannounced to the umpire), provided the “Withdrawn Player” returns to the game within the time permitted.

## **RULE 5 THE GAME**

### **Section 1 CHOICE OF TURN AT BAT**

The choice of the first or last bat in the inning shall be decided by a toss of a coin, unless otherwise stated in the rules of the organization under which the schedule of games is being played.

### **Section 2 FITNESS OF GROUND**

The fitness of the ground for a game shall be decided solely by the plate umpire.

### **Section 3 REGULATIONAL GAME**

A regulation game shall consist of seven innings.

- a. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six innings or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning.
- b. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued by playing additional innings, or until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
- c. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs than the other team has scored in five or more innings. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other cause, which puts the patrons or players in peril.
- d. A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more completed innings, or if the team second at bat has equaled the score of the first team at bat in the incomplete inning.
- e. These provisions do not apply to any acts on the part of players or spectators, which might call for forfeiture of the game. The plate umpire may forfeit the game if any team member or spectator attacks any umpire physically.
- f. The plate umpire shall declare a forfeit in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:
  1. If a team fails to appear on the field or, being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned at the time scheduled or within a time set for forfeitures by the organization in which the team is playing.
  2. If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
  3. If, after the umpire has suspended play, one side fails to resume playing with two minutes after the umpire has called "PLAY BALL."
  4. If a team employs tactics designed to delay or to hasten the game.
  5. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
  6. If the order for the removal or ejection of a player or an person authorized to sit on the team bench is not obeyed within one minute.
  7. If, because of the removal or ejection of the players from the game by the umpire or for any cause there are less 10 or 11 players on either team.
  8. If a declared Ineligible Player re-enters the game and one pitch has been thrown.
  9. If an ejected player/coach/manager is discovered participating in the game again.

- g. A game is:
  - 1. Not considered regulation, or
  - 2. A regulation tie game shall be replayed from the beginning. Original line-ups may be changed when the game is replayed.  
**EXCEPTION:** When the Tournament Umpire-in-Chief suspends a game of Olympic, World or Continental Championship, this game shall be resumed at the exact point where the game was suspended.

#### **Section 4 WINNER OF GAME**

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

- a. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the team second at bat has scored more runs than the first team at bat in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- b. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated. A regulation tie game shall be replayed from the point of ending.
- c. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

#### **Section 5 RUN AHEAD RULE**

- a. A run ahead rule must be used at all ISF Championships.
- b. Complete innings must be played unless the team second at bat scores the required number of runs while at bat. When the team first at bat reaches the required number of runs in the top half of the inning, the team second at bat must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

#### **Section 6 TIE-BREAKER**

Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat in that respective half-inning being placed on second base. The player who is running can be substituted in accordance with the substitution rules.

**NOTE:** If an incorrect runner in the line-up is placed on second base, this error may be corrected as soon as it is noticed. There is no penalty.

#### **Section 7 SCORING OF RUNS**

- a. One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches first, second, third bases and home plate before the third out of the inning.  
**EXCEPTION:** When the tiebreaker is used, the runner starting at second base does not have to touch first base in order for a legal run to be scored.
- b. A run shall not be scored if the third out of the inning is result of
  - 1. The batter-runner being put out before legally touching first base.
  - 2. A runner being forced out (including on an appeal play) due to the batter becoming a batter-runner..
  - 3. The runner fails to keep contact with the base to which he is entitled until a pitch is batted or reached home plate.
  - 4. A preceding runner being declared out.

## Section 8

### CHARGED CONFERENCES

- a. Offensive Conferences. There shall only be one charged offensive conference in an inning.

**NOTE:**

1. This includes the batter, runner, on-deck batter, and the coaches among themselves.
2. It is not a charged conference when a pitcher is putting on a warm-up jacket while on base, or if the offense confers while the defensive team is in conference, provided the offense is ready to play when the defense is ready.
3. Umpires should not permit any such conferences in excess of one per inning.

- b. Defensive Conferences. There shall only be three charged defensive conferences in a seven-inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning

**NOTE:**

1. A conference includes players in the field leaving their position and going to the dugout for instructions, regardless of whether "Time" has been requested or not.
2. Should a manager/coach from the dugout report a change to the umpire, this is not considered a charged defensive conference. After making the change, the manager then may cross the foul line to talk with any defensive player.
3. The conference is over when the manager/coach crosses the foul line returning to the dugout.
4. Conferences are accumulative and do not start over with a new pitcher entered into the game.
5. If all three conferences are not used in the first seven innings, they are lost and a team must then follow the one per extra inning rule.
6. It is not a charged conference for the defense if:
  - a) They confer during a charged offensive conference, provided they are ready to play when the offense is ready.
  - b) They shout instructions from the dugout.
  - c) A manager playing in the game confers with any defensive player, however an umpire may control meetings between a playing manager and a pitcher by first issuing a warning and then ejection the playing manager.

- c. Conferences will not be charged if they take place at any time when the umpire has suspended play.

## **RULE 6 PITCHING REGULATIONS (Slow Pitch Only)**

**N.B. The EFFECT for all Sections 1 to 6 follow at end of Section 6:**

### **Section 1 PRELIMINARIES**

Before commencing the delivery (pitch), the pitcher

- a. Shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- b. Must take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- c. Must come to a full and complete stop with the ball held in one or both hands in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be held for not less than one second and not more than ten seconds before starting the delivery.

### **Section 2 STARTING THE PITCH**

- a. The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his windup after the required stop. Prior to the required stop, any motion may be used.

### **Section 3 LEGAL DELIVERY**

- a. The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. The windup must be a continuous motion.
- c. The pitcher must not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- d. The pitcher must deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip with an underhanded motion.
- e. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it can be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- f. The pitcher shall not pitch the ball
  1. Behind his back, or
  2. Through his legs, or
  3. From the glove.
- g. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. 45 mph.  
**NOTE:** The speed is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire. The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, he shall be declared an Illegal Pitcher and may not pitch again for the remainder of the game.
- h. The pitcher may not continue to windup after he releases the ball.
- i. The pitcher has 10 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball, or after the umpire indicates, "play ball."

**Section 4 DEFENSIVE POSITIONING**

- a. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all defensive players, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box, are positioned in fair territory.
- b. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.

**NOTE** A pitch does not have to be released. The offending player shall be ejected from the game.

**Section 5 FOREIGN SUBSTANCE**

- a. No member of the defensive team shall, at any time during the game, be permitted to use any foreign substance on the ball.

**NOTE:** If any defensive team member continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, the pitcher shall be ejected from the game.

- b. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands.
- c. Applying resin to the ball, or into the glove and then placing the ball in the glove, is an illegal act. Resin must be kept on the ground behind the pitcher's plate when not in use.
- d. The pitcher may not use any foreign substance on the pitching hand or fingers.
- e. The pitcher shall not wear a batting glove on the pitching hand.

**Section 6 THE CATCHER**

- a. Must remain within the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, plate, or batter, or reaches the catcher's box.
- b. Shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, including after a foul ball.

**EXCEPTION:** This does not apply after a strikeout or put out made by the catcher.

**Section 7 QUICK PITCH**

The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball:

- a. Before the batter has taken his position, or
- b. When the batter is off balance as a result of a pitch.

**EFFECT:** Sections 1-7:

Any infraction of Sections 1-7 is an Illegal Pitch.

1. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal.
2. A ball shall be called on the batter.
3. Runners are not advanced.

**Section 8 NO PITCH**

No pitch shall be declared when:

- a. The pitcher pitches during a suspension of play
- b. A runner is called out for leaving his base before the pitched ball reaches home plate, is batted, or touches the ground before home plate.
- c. The pitcher pitches before a runner has retouched his base after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.
- d. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during his windup or during the back swing.
- e. A player, manager, or coach:
  1. Calls "Time," or,
  2. Employs any other word or phrase, or,

3. Commits any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.

**NOTE:** A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game

**EFFECT:** Section 8 a-e:

The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is cancelled

## **Section 9 ILLEGAL PITCHER**

The pitcher, who has been declared an Illegal Pitcher as a result of:

- a. The team exceeding the charged defensive conference limit, or
- b. Pitching with excessive speed, may not return to the pitching position at any time for the remainder of the game.

**EFFECT:** Section 9:

If the Illegal Pitcher has returned and thrown one pitch, either legal or illegal, he is ejected from the game. If the pitch is hit and he is discovered prior to the next pitch, the manager of the offensive team has the option of:

1. Taking the result of the play or,
2. Having the play nullified, with
  - a) That batter returning to bat and assuming the ball and strike count he had prior to the discovery of the Illegal Pitcher, and
  - b) Each runner returning to the base held at the time of the pitch.

## **Section 10 FREE SUBSTITUTION OF PITCHER**

### **MAJORS**

- a. The pitcher must throw an underhand pitch.
- b. An overhand or side arm is not allowed.
- c. Pitcher may not double pump a pitch.

The ball's speed and placement is at the discretion of the pitcher, but not to exceed 45 mph. **PENALTY:** shall be called a ball at the umpire's discretion. Pitcher will receive a warning.
- c. The pitcher's motion must start on or behind the pitching rubber. The pitching rubber must be touched by one foot during the release of the ball.

**PENALTY:** Batter advances one base.

### **MINORS**

- a. Coaches pitch to their team.
- b. Three (3) pitches and 4th is from the tee.
- c. On the tee, the batter gets one practice swing before the ball is placed.

**PENALTY:**

1. Warning
2. Out

Batter and runners may advance only one base on tee.

## RULE 7 BATTING

### Section 1 THE ON-DECK BATTER

- a. At the start of an inning, is the lead off batter, who must remain in his on-deck circle until, called to the batter's box.
- b. Once an inning has started, is the offensive player who in the batting line-up is the next player to enter the batter's box.
- c. Shall take position within on-deck circle nearest his bench.
- d. May loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved wary-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two.

**NOTE:** A bat with which the On-Deck Batter is loosening up may not have anything attached to it other than an ISF approved bat attachment.

**EFFECT:** Section 1c:

When using other than a legal bat while loosening up, the illegal equipment must be removed from the game. Continued use of the equipment after removal would subject the player using such equipment to ejection from the game.

- e. May leave the on-deck circle
  1. When he becomes the batter, or
  2. To direct runners advancing from third to home plate, or
  3. To avoid possible interference on fly ball or overthrown ball.
- f. May not interfere with the defensive player's opportunity to make a play

**EFFECT:** Section 1f

The ball is dead and if this interference is:

1. With a defensive fielder's attempt to retire a runner,
  - a. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be called out, and
  - b. Other runners are returned to the last base held at the time of the interference, unless forced because the batter became a runner.
2. With a defensive fielder attempting to catch a fly ball, or with a fly ball that a fielder is attempting to catch,
  - a) The batter-runner shall be called out, and
  - b) Runners are returned to the base held at the time of the pitch.

### Section 2 BATTING ORDER

- a. The batting order of each team must be on the score sheet/line-up card and must be delivered before the game by the manager or captain to the plate umpire. He shall submit it to the inspection of the manager or captain of the opposing team.
- b. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is replaced by:
  1. A substitute. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.
- c. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the preceding inning.

**EFFECT:** Section 2 b-c

Batting out-of-order is an appeal play that may be made by the manager, coach, or player of the defensive team only. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal for batting out-of-order when all fielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout.

1. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat:
  - a) The correct batter may legally take his place, and assume the ball and strike count of the incorrect batter.
  - b) Any runs scored or bases run while the incorrect batter is at bat shall be legal.
2. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to another batter:
  - a) The player who should have batted is out.
  - b) Any advance or score made as a result of the improper batter-runner shall be nullified. Any out that is made prior to discovering this infraction, remains out.
  - c) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. If the next player was the incorrect batter who was called out, go to the next person in the line-up.
  - d) If the batter declared out under these circumstances is the third out, the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put out by ordinary play.
  - e) If the third out is made on a runner prior to the discovery of the infraction, an appeal may still be made in order to reinstate the correct batting order. This appeal, if made, does not result in an additional out.
3. If the error is discovered after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter:
  - a) The turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal.
  - b) All runs scored and bases run are legal.
  - c) The next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter.
  - d) No one is called out for failure to bat.
  - e) Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.
4. No runner shall be removed from the base he is occupying to bat in his proper place. He merely misses his turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following him in the batting order becomes the legal batter.
- d. When the third out in an inning is made before the batter has completed the turn at bat, that batter shall be the first batter in the next inning, and the ball and strike count shall be cancelled.

### **Section 3      BATTING POSITION**

- a. The batter must take his position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the umpire has declared "Play Ball."

**EFFECT:** Section 3a:

The umpire *shall* call a strike. A pitch does not need to be thrown and the ball *becomes* dead.

- b. An offensive team member may not, under any circumstances, deliberately erase the lines of the batter's box at any time during a game. This includes a coach erasing the lines during the pre-game meeting.

**EFFECT:** Section 3b

If a batter erases the lines, the umpire shall call a strike. A pitch does not need to be thrown and the ball becomes dead. If the coach or a non-playing team member erases the lines, a strike shall be called on the next scheduled batter (or his substitute) in the line-up.

**NOTE:** Should any person continue to deliberately erase a line after a first offense, that person shall be ejected.

- c. The batter must have both feet completely within the batter's box prior to the start of the pitch. He may touch the lines, but no part of his foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.

**Section 4 A STRIKE IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE**

- a. For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone before touching the ground and at which the batter does not swing.
- b. For each pitched ball including an illegal pitch, struck at and missed by the batter.
- c. For each foul tip the batter is out if it is the third strike. The ball is dead on any strike.
- d. For each foul ball when the batter has less than two strikes.
- e. For each foul ball, including the third strike.
- f. For each pitched ball struck at and missed which touches any part of the batter.
- g. When any part of the batter's person or clothing is hit with his own-batted ball when he is in the batter's box and he has less than two strikes.
- h. When a pitched ball hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.
- i. When the batter fails to enter the batter's box within 10 seconds after the umpire calls "PLAY BALL."
- j. When an offensive team member deliberately erases the lines of the batter's box.
- k. In World Championship and Olympic Play when, between pitches, the batter leaves the batter's box illegally or does not return to the batter's box. No pitch has to be thrown.  
**EFFECT:** Section 4 d-k:  
The ball is dead and runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out.

**Section 4 A BALL IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE**

- a. For each legally pitched ball that:
  1. Does not enter the strike zone.
  2. Touches the ground before reaching home plate.
  3. Touches home plate and at which the batter does not swing.
  4. The batter swings at, after the ball hits the ball hits the ground or home plate.  
**EFFECT:** Section 5b:  
The ball is dead. Runners may not advance.
- b. When a delivered ball by the pitcher hits the batter outside of the strike zone.
- c. For each excessive warm-up pitch.  
**EFFECT:** Section 5 b-c  
The ball is dead. Runners may not advance.
- d. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
- e. When the pitcher fails to pitch the ball within 10 seconds.  
**EFFECT:** Section d-e  
The ball is dead and runners may not advance.

**Section 5 THE BATTER IS OUT**

- a. When the third strike is:
  1. Swung at and missed and the ball touches any part of the batter's person.
  2. Not swung at and the pitched ball hits the batter while the pitch is in the strike zone.
- b. When a batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an altered bat.  
**NOTE:** The batter is also ejected from the game.
- c. When the batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an illegal bat.  
**NOTE:** Section b-c: The bat is removed from the game.

- d. When his foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and touching the ground, or any part of a foot is touching home plate when he hits the ball fair or foul.
- e. When he leaves the box to gain a running start, but has returned to the box when he makes contact with the ball.

**EXCEPTION:** If no contact is made with the pitched ball there is no penalty. If the batter swings and misses, the ball remains dead.

- f. When a third strike is called, including an uncaught foul ball that is hit after two strikes.
- g. When he bunts or chops the ball downward.
- h. When he hits a fair ball with the bat a second time over fair territory.

**EXCEPTION:** Section 6 h

1. If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in his hands, a foul ball is ruled, even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.
2. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat over fair territory, and in the umpire's judgment there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball should be ruled fair or foul depending on where it comes to rest or is first touched by a player.

- i. When he steps directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch, or anytime thereafter prior to the release of the pitch.

**EFFECT:** Section a-j

The ball is dead and each runner must return to the base that, in the umpire's judgment, was touched at the time of the pitch.

- j. When he:

1. Hinders the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or
2. Intentionally hinders the catcher while standing within the batter's box, or
3. Intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in or out of the batter's box.

**EFFECT:** Section 6k

The ball is dead and each runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was touched at the time of the interference.

## RULE 8 BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

### Section 1 THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER

- a. When he legally hits a fair ball.
- b. When four balls have been called by the plate umpire.  
**EFFECT:** Section 1b  
The batter is awarded one base without liability to be put out, provided he advances to and touches first base, no appeal will be honored on the first.
  1. The ball is dead and runners may not advance unless forced.  
**EXCEPTION:** With two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat.  
**NOTE:** Should the female batter-runner pass a male batter-runner when choosing to walk, no out shall be called during this dead ball period.
- c. When the catcher or any other defensive player obstructs, hinders, or prevents the batter from striking at, or hitting a pitched ball.  
**EFFECT:** Section 1c
  1. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal with the ball remaining live until the end of play.
  2. The manager of the offensive team has the option of:
    - a) Taking the award for “catcher obstruction,” or
    - b) Taking the result of the play.
  3. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, “catcher obstruction” is cancelled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given.  
**NOTE:** Once a runner has passed a base, even if he misses it, he is considered to have reached that base.
  4. If the manager does not take the result of the play, “catcher obstruction” is enforced by awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced.
- d. When a fair ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of the umpire or a runner.  
**EFFECT:** Section 1e  
If the contact is made:
  1. After touching a fielder (including the pitcher), the ball is in play.
  2. After passing a fielder, other than the pitcher, and no other fielder had a chance to make an out, the ball is in play.
  3. Before passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher, without being touched, the ball is dead.
- e. When a fair batted fly ball:
  1. Goes over the fence, or
  2. Goes directly off the fielder’s glove or body and over the fence in fair territory, or makes contact with the top of the fence and goes over the fence in fair territory, or
  3. Contacts the foul pole above the fence line.  
**EFFECT:** Section 1e  
The batter-runner is awarded a home run and must touch all bases in regular order.
- f. When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and interferes with
  1. A fair batted ground ball, or
  2. A fielder about to field or catch a thrown ball, or
  3. A fielder about to throw a ball, or

4. A ball thrown by a fielder.

**EFFECT:** Section 1f

The ball is dead and the batter-runner shall be awarded the base or base she would have made, in the umpire's judgment, had the interference not occurred.

## **Section 2 BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT**

- a. When a fielder legally catches a fly ball before it touches the ground, or any object or person other than a defensive player.
- b. When, after hitting a fair ball, he is tagged while off base or thrown out prior to reaching first base.
- c. When he fails to advance to first base and instead enters his team area:
  1. After a fair ball is hit, or
  2. After a base on balls is issued, or
  3. Anytime that he may legally advance to first base.
- d. When an Infield Fly is declared.

**EFFECT:** Section 1 a-d

The ball is in play and runners may advance at their own risk.

**EXCEPTION:** When the ball is dead on a base on balls, the batter-runner is not out and runners cannot advance unless forced.
- e. When, after he hits a fair ball, he touches only the fair portion of the double base on his first attempt at that base and a play is made at the base.

**EFFECT:** Section 2f

This is an appeal play and the defensive team loses the privilege of putting the batter-runner out, if the appeal is not made before he returns to first base, after over-running the base.
- f. When he:
  1. Runs outside the one meter (3 ft) lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with
    - a) The fielder taking the throw at first base, or
    - b) The thrown ball, preventing a fielder from making a play at first base.

**NOTE:** A thrown ball striking a batter-runner does not necessarily constitute interference.
  2. Interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

**NOTE:** The batter-runner may run outside the one-meter line to avoid a fielder attempting to field the batted ball.
  3. Interferes with a fielder attempting to throw a ball.
  4. Intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.
  5. Interferes with a fair-batted ball (out of the batter's box) before reaching first base.

**NOTE:** Section 2f 1-5: If this interference is, in the umpire's judgment, an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall also be called out.
- g. When he interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at the plate.

**NOTE:** The runner is also out.
- h. When he steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
- i. If, when using the double base in a force play situation, he touches only the fair portion of the base and collides with a fielder who is about to catch a thrown ball and who is also using the fair portion of the base.
- j. When a member of the team at bat interferes with a player attempting to field a batted foul fly ball.

**EXCEPTION:**

1. If this interference occurs while there are runners on base, then the runner closest to home at the time of the interference is out.
2. If a runner creates the interference, then the runner out.

**NOTE:** In both EXCEPTIONS the batter-runner returns to bat with an additional strike on the foul ball, provided the count prior to hitting the ball was less than two strikes.

- a) If this is the third strike, the batter-runner is also out, unless the third out of the inning was the runner interference call, in which case the batter-runner shall be deemed to have completed his turn at bat.

**EFFECT:** Section 2 f-j

The ball is dead and all runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the pitch.

**EXCEPTION:** If a play is made on a runner prior to the interference, and

1. An out is made on the runner, the result of that play shall stand.
2. No out is made on the runner, the result of that play shall stand, unless the interference by the batter-runner is the third out. Other runners not played on must return to the last base legally held at the time of the pitch.

- k. When, with less than two outs and a runner on first base, a fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball (including a line drive or a bunt) that could be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, after it is controlled with a hand or a glove.

**NOTE:** A trapped ball, or a fly ball allowed to bounce, shall not be considered a shaving been intentionally dropped.

**EFFECT:** Section 2k:

The ball is dead and the runners must return to last base held at the time of the pitch.

**NOTE:** Section 1: If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

- l. When the immediate preceding runner who is not yet out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to:
  1. Catch a thrown ball, or
  2. Throw a ball in an attempt to complete the play.

**EFFECT:** Section 2 l:

The ball is dead and the runner shall also be called out. All other runners must return to the last base legally held at the time of the interference.

- m. When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and interferes with
  1. A fielder about to catch a fly ball, or
  2. A fly ball that a defensive player, in the judgment of the umpire, is able to catch.

**EFFECT:** Section 2m:

The ball is dead and runners may be awarded a base or bases they would have made, in the umpire's judgment, had the interference not occurred.

**Section 3**

**THE BATTER-RUNNER IS NOT OUT**

When a fielder makes a play on a batter-runner while using an illegal glove.

**EFFECT:** Section 3:

The manager of the offended team has the option of:

1. Taking the result of the play, or
2. Having the player resume batting, assuming the ball and strike count prior to the pitch, with other runners returned to the base held at the time of the pitch.

#### **Section 4 TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER**

Runners must touch bases in legal order (i.e. first, second, third, and home plate).

**EXCEPTION:** If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing the runner from touching that base.

- a. When a runner is returning to:
  1. The base left before a caught fly ball is first touched, or
  2. The missed base, while the ball is in play, he must touch the bases in reverse order.  
**EFFECT:** Section 4a:  
The ball is in play and runners must return with liability to be put out.
- b. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, he is entitled to hold the base until he has legally touched the next base in order, or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.
- c. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position neither he nor succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position.  
**EFFECT:** Section 4 b-c:  
The ball is in play and runners may advance, or return, with liability to be put out.
- d. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.  
**EFFECT:** Section 4d  
The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out, by being touched with the ball.
- e. Failure of a preceding runner to touch a base, or to leave a base legally on a caught fly ball and who is declared out does not affect the status of a succeeding runner who touches bases in proper order.  
**EXCEPTION:** If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no succeeding runner may score a run.
- f. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left illegally, after a following runner has scored, or he leaves the field of play.
- g. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.
- h. Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.  
**EXCEPTION** Unless a runner is obstructed at a base preventing the runner from touching that base.  
**EFFECT:** Section 4 e-h  
The runner shall be declared out, if the defense makes a legal appeal before the next legal or illegal pitch.

#### **Section 5 RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT**

- a. When a pitched ball is batted.
- b. On a thrown ball or fair batted ball that is not blocked
- c. On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.
- d. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- e. When a fair batted ball:
  1. Strikes an umpire or a runner after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or
  2. Has been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher.
- f. When a live ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.  
**EFFECT:** Section 5 a-f

## Section 6

### **A RUNNER FORFEITS HIS EXEMPTION FROM LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT**

- a. If, at any time, he fails to touch a base he is entitled to before attempting to make the next base.  
**EXCEPTION:** If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing the runner from touching that base.
- b. If, after overrunning first base, he attempts to continue to second base.
- c. If, after dislodging a base, he attempts to continue to the next base.
- d. When advancing beyond an entitled base due to:
  1. A fielder intentionally contacting a thrown ball with detached equipment.
  2. A fielder intentionally contacting a fair-batted ball with detached equipment.
- e. When advancing beyond a protected or awarded base when he has been obstructed.

## Section 7

### **RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT**

- a. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.  
**EFFECT:** Section 7a  
The ball is dead
- b. When a fielder prevents the runner from making a base, or impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases: if the fielder is:
  1. Not in possession of the ball, or
  2. Not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or
  3. Making a fake tag without the ball.
  4. In possession of the ball and he pushes a runner off a base in an attempt to gain an out, or
  5. In possession of the ball, but not in the act of making a play on the runner which intentionally impedes the progress of that runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases.  
**EFFECT:** Section 7b  
When any obstruction occurs (including a rundown)
    - a) A Delayed Dead Ball should be signaled, with the ball remaining alive until the end of the play.
    - b) The obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, will always be awarded the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. If the umpire feels there is justification, a defensive player making a fake tag could be ejected from the game.
    - c) If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base he would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base, or bases, they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment had obstruction not occurred.
    - d) An obstructed runner may never be called out between the two bases where he was obstructed:  
**EXCEPTION:**
      1. If the obstructed runner commits an act of interference after the obstruction is ruled, or the runner is legally appealed for:
        - a. Missing a base, unless the runner has been obstructed at that base and the obstruction prevents him from touching the base, or
        - b. Leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched, or
        - c. After

2. If the obstructed runner safely obtains the base he would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgment, and there is a subsequent play on a different runner, the obstructed runner is not longer protected between the bases where the runner was obstructed, and may be put out. The ball remains alive.
- e) Catcher obstruction on the batter is covered under Rule 9, Section 1d  
**NOTE:** Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in proper order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.  
**EXCEPTION:** If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing the runner from touching that base.
- c. When a fielder intentionally contacts, or catches a fair batted, thrown, or pitched ball with his cap, helmet, mask, protector, pocket, detached glove, or any part of his uniform that is detached from its proper place on his person.  
**EFFECT:** Section 7c  
All runners, including the batter-runner, shall be entitled to:
  1. Three bases from the time of the pitch if on a fair batted ball, or  
**EXCEPTION:** Section 7c: If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the umpire's judgment, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, the batter-runner shall be awarded a home run.
  2. Two bases from the time of the throw if on a thrown ball.
- d. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked  
**EFFECT:** Section 7d  
All runners, including the batter-runner, shall be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. Runners may return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball, or a missed base. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.  
**EXCEPTION:**
  1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked.
  2. If a runner touches the next base and returns to his original base, the original base he left is considered the "last base touched" for purposes of an overthrown award.
  3. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive team equipment, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, the runner being played on is called out. (If this player has scored prior to the blocked ball being ruled, the runner closest to home is called out).
- e. When a fair-batted fly ball:
  1. Goes over the fence.
  2. Goes directly off the fielder's glove or body and over the fence in fair territory, or makes contact with the top of the fence and goes over the fence in fair territory, or
  3. Contacts the foul pole above the fence level.  
**EFFECT:** Section 7e  
The ball is dead and all runners shall be entitled to advance to home plate.  
**EXCEPTION:** If
    - a) The ball passes out of the grounds at a distance less than those prescribed in Rule 2, Section 1, or

- b) A fair-batted fly ball goes off a fielder's glove, or body, and over the fence in foul territory, or
  - c) A fair-batted fly ball that goes off the fence, deflects off the fielder and then over the fence, then runners shall be awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.
- f. When a fair ball bounces over, or rolls under or through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field.  
Also, if it deflects off
- 1. A defensive player or an umpire, or
  - 2. A runner, after passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher, and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out and goes out of play in foul territory.
- EFFECT:** Section 7f  
The ball is dead and all runners are awarded two bases from time of pitch.
- g. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory.  
**NOTE:** A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have unintentionally carried it there.  
**EFFECT:** Section 7g  
The ball is dead and all runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered dead ball territory
- h. When, in the umpire's judgment, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes, or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead ball territory.
- i. When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and interferes with
- 1. A fielder about to catch a fly ball, or
  - 2. A fly ball that a defensive player is able to catch, or
  - 3. A fair ball ground ball, or
  - 4. A fielder about to field or catch a thrown ball, or
  - 5. A fielder about to throw a ball, or
  - 6. A ball thrown by a fielder.
- EFFECT:** Section 7i  
The ball is dead and runners may advance to the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had the interference not occurred.
- j. When a ball is lodged in:
- 1. Umpire gear or clothing, or
  - 2. In offensive player's clothing.
- EFFECT:** Section 7j: The ball is dead and the runners are advanced to the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had the ball not been lodged.

## **Section 8 A RUNNER MUST RETURN TO HIS BASE**

A runner must return to his base, but need not touch the intervening bases:

- a. When a batted ball is declared foul.
- b. When the umpire declares the ball to have been illegally batted.
- c. When a batter-runner is called out for interference.
- d. When the on-deck batter, or any other non-playing team member, creates interference.
- e. When, with less than two out and a runner on first base, a fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball (including a line drive or a bunt) that could be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, after it is controlled with a hand or a glove.

**NOTE:** If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

**EFFECT:** Section 8 a-e

The ball is dead and he must return, without liability to be put out, to the last base legally held at the time of the pitch, unless forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner.

- f. When a batter, or runner, is called out for interference.

**EFFECT:** Section 8f

The ball is dead and he must return, without liability to be put out, to the last base legally held at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner.

- g. When a runner steals a base. Under no conditions is a runner permitted to steal a base when a pitched ball is not batted. The runner must return to his base.

**EFFECT:** Section 8g

Base stealing is not allowed.

## Section 9

### THE RUNNER IS OUT

- a. When, while running to any base in regular or reverse order, he runs more than 0.91m (3 ft) from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.

- b. When, while the ball is in play and he is not in contact with a base, he is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.

- c. When, on a force play, a fielder:

1. While holding the ball, contacts the base to which the runner is forced to advance.
2. Touches the ball to the base before the runner reaches the base.
3. Tags the runner before he reaches the base.

**NOTE:** If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base he had last occupied, the force play is reinstated.

- d. When, while the ball is in play, he fails to return to touch the base he previously occupied or missed and a legal appeal is made.

- e. When anyone, other than another runner, physically assists him while the ball is in play.

**NOTE:** If a fly ball is caught on the play, the batter-runner will also be out.

**EFFECT:** Section 9 a-e

The ball remains in play.

- f. When he physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been called out.

**EFFECT:** Section 9f

The runner remains in play.

**EXCEPTION:** When the runner passes a preceding runner during a dead ball play, the ball will remain dead.

- g. When he leaves his base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder.

- h. When he fails to touch the intervening base, or bases, in regular or reverse order.

**EXCEPTION:** If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing the runner from touching that base.

- i. When the batter-runner becomes a runner by touching first base, passes it, then attempts to run to second base and is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder, while off base.

- j. When, in running or sliding for home plate, he fails to touch it, makes no attempt to return to it and a fielder holds the ball in his hand(s), while touching the plate, and appeals to the umpire for a decision.

**EFFECT:** Section 9g-j

These are appeal plays and the runner will not be out unless the appeal is made legally.

1. Appeals may be made while the ball is alive or dead, but the defensive team loses the privilege of making an appeal if it is not made:
  - a) Before the next legal, or illegal, pitch
  - b) Before all fielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area. If a fielder makes the appeal, the fielder must be in the infield when making the appeal.
  - c) In the case of the last play of the game, before the umpires have left the field of play.
2. **DEAD BALL APPEAL.** Once the ball has been returned to the infield and “Time” has been called, or the ball becomes dead, any defensive team member in the infield, with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base, or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire should acknowledge the appeal, and then make a decision on the play. No runner may leave his base during this period, as the ball remains dead until the next pitch. **EXCEPTION:** A runner who has left a base too soon on a caught fly ball, or who has missed a base, may attempt to return to such base while the ball is dead. **NOTE:**
  - a) If the ball goes out of play, the dead ball appeal cannot be made until the plate umpire places a new ball into the game.
  - b) If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitching plate when making a verbal appeal, no Illegal Pitch is called.
  - c) If the umpire has declared “Play Ball” and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call “Time” and allow the appeal process.
3. Additional out appeals may be made after the third out as long as they are made properly and are made to remove a run, or made to reinstate the correct batting order.
- k. When he is struck with an untouched fair-batted ball in fair territory while off base, and in the umpire’s judgment, any fielder had an opportunity to make an out.
- l. When he intentionally kicks a ball that an fielder has missed.
- m. When he interferes with a fielder attempting to field a fair-batted ball, regardless of whether the ball has first been touched by another fielder, including the pitcher, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. **NOTE:** Section 9 k-m: If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out.
- n. When, after a runner, batter or batter-runner has been declared out, or after a runner has scored, the runner, batter or batter-runner interferes with a defensive player’s opportunity to make a play on another runner. A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw will be considered a form of interference. **NOTE:** The runner closest to home plate, at the time of the interference, will be called out.
- o. When one or more members of the offensive team stand at, or collect around, a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. **NOTE:** Members of a team include batboy or any other person authorized to sit on the team’s bench.
- p. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline, while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. **NOTE:** It is the runner closes to home plate that shall be called out.

- q. When a coach or any other non-playing team member:
  - 1. Intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in the coach's box, or
  - 2. Interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner, or batter-runner.
 

**NOTE:** It is the runner closest to home plate, at the time of the interference, which shall be declared out.
- r. When a defensive player has the ball, and is waiting for the runner, and the runner remains on his feet and deliberately crashes into the defensive player.
 

**NOTE:** If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected.

**EFFECT:** Section 9 k-r  
The ball is dead and other runners must return to the last base legally held at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner.
- s. When he runs bases in reverse order either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.
 

**EFFECT:** Section 9s  
The ball is dead and all other runners must return to the last base legally held at the time of the runner being declared out, unless forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner.
- t. When he fails to keep contact with the base to which he is entitled, until a pitched ball touches the ground, reaches home plate, or is batted.
- u. When he abandons a base and enters his team area, or leaves the field of play, while the ball is alive.
- v. When he positions himself behind, and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball.
 

**EFFECT:** Section 9 u-v  
The ball remains live.
- w. When a batter-runner, interferes with a play at home plate, in an attempt to prevent an obvious out on an advancing runner at the plate.
 

**EFFECT:** Section 9w  
The ball is dead, the batter-runner is also declared out, and the other runners must return to the last base held at the time of the pitch.
- x. When following an offensive conference, base runners switch positions on the bases they occupied prior to the conference.
 

**EFFECT:** Section 9x  
Each runner on an improper base shall be declared out. In addition, the head coach shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. **NOTE:** This can be brought to the umpire's attention anytime until all runners are in the dugout or the inning is over. If one improper runner is on a base, both he and all runners who had switched bases will be out, even if they had scored, and any run(s) scored by improper base runners will be nullified.

## Section 10

### THE RUNNER IS NOT OUT

- a. When he runs behind, or in front of the field and outside the base path, in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the batted ball in the base path.
- b. When he does not run in a direct line to the base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in his possession.
- c. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.
- d. When he is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball while off base, that in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had an opportunity to make an out.

- e. When he is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball over foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had an opportunity to make an out.
- f. When he is hit with a fair-batted ball after it touches, or is touched by, any fielder, including the pitcher, and he could not avoid contact with the ball.
- g. When he is touched while off base:
  - 1. With a ball not securely held by a defensive player, or
  - 2. With a hand or glove of a defensive player and the ball is in the other hand.
- h. When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or until after all fielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout.
- i. When a batter-runner becomes a runner, by touching first base, passes it and then returns directly to the base.
- j. When he is not given sufficient time to return to a base. He will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball and he may advance as though having left the base legally.
- k. When he has legally started to advance. He may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, nor by the pitcher stepping onto the plate while holding the ball.
- l. When he holds his base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- m. When he is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball while in contact with his base, unless he intentionally interferes with the ball, or a fielder making a play.  
**NOTE:** The ball will become dead or remains alive, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.
- n. When he slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.  
**NOTE:** A runner reaching a base safely will not be out for being off that base, if it becomes dislodged. He may return to that base without liability to be put out when the base has been replaced. A runner forfeits this exemption, if he attempts to advance beyond the dislodged base before it is again in proper position.
- o. When a fielder makes a play on a runner while using an illegal glove.  
**NOTE:** A pitch by the pitcher is not considered making a play.  
**EFFECT:** Section 10  
 The manager of the offended team has the option of
  - 1. Taking the result of the play, or
  - 2. Having the entire play nullified, with runners returning to the last base held at the time of the play.  
**EXCEPTION:** If the play was the result of the completion of the batter's turn at bat, that player resumes batting, assuming the ball and strike count he had prior to completing his turn at bat, and runners are returned to the bases held at the time of the pitch.

## RULE 10 DEAD BALL—BALL IN PLAY

### Section 1 THE BALL IS DEAD

The ball is dead and not in play in the following circumstances.

- a. When the ball is batted illegally.
- b. When the batter steps from one box to another when the pitcher steps on the pitching plate.
- c. When “no pitch” is declared.
- d. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter’s person or clothing whether the ball is struck at or not.
- e. When a foul fly ball is not caught.
- f. When the offensive team causes interference.
- g. When a fair-batted ball strikes an umpire, or runner
  1. Before touching a fielder, including the pitcher, and
  2. Before passing a fielder, other than the pitcher, without being touched, or
  3. After passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the umpire’s judgment another fielder had a chance to make an out.
- h. When the ball is outside the established playing limits of the playing area.
- i. When an accident to a batter-runner or runner prevents him from proceeding to the awarded base, he may be substituted. The substitute will be allowed to proceed to any awarded bases. The substitute must legally touch all awarded or missed bases not previously touched.
- j. When the batter bunts or chops the pitched ball.
- k. When the umpire calls “Time.”
- l. When any part of the batter’s person is hit with his own-batted ball, while still in the batter’s box.
- m. When a runner runs bases in reverse order, either to confuse the fielders, or to make a travesty of the game.
- n. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate, on or near the baseline, while the fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- o. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect at, or around, a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making a play.
- p. When a runner fails to keep contact with the base to which he is entitled, until a legally pitched ball has reached home plate.
- q. After each strike or ball.
- r. When a blocked ball is declared.
- s. When a batter enters the batter’s box with, or uses, an altered bat.
- t. When a batter enters the batter’s box with, or uses, an illegal bat.
- u. When, with less than two out and a runner on first base, a fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball (including a line drive that could be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, after it is controlled with a hand or glove).

**NOTE:** If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.
- v. When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- w. When “Time” has been called and a defensive player is making an appeal.
- x. When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and creates interference.

- y. When the batter fails to enter the batter's box within 10 seconds after the umpire calls "PLAY BALL."
- z. When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and creates interference.
- aa. When the batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
- bb. When an offensive team member deliberately erases the lines of the batter's box.
- cc. When the pitcher issues an Intentional Walk to a batter.

## **Section 2 THE BALL IS IN PLAY**

The ball is in play in the following circumstances.

- a. At the start of the game and each half inning, when the pitcher has the ball while standing in his pitching position and the plate umpire has called "PLAY BALL."
- b. When the Infield Fly rule is enforced.
- c. When the thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
- d. When a fair ball strikes an umpire, or runner, on fair ground after
  1. Passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher, and no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or
  2. Touching a fielder, including the pitcher.
- e. When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- f. When the runners have reached the bases to which they are entitled, after the fielder illegally fields a batted, thrown, or pitched ball.
- g. When a runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.  
**EXCEPTION:** When a runner is called out for passing a preceding runner while the ball is dead, the ball will remain dead.
- h. When no play is being made on an obstructed runner, the ball shall remain alive until the play is over.
- i. When a fair ball is legally batted.
- j. When a runner must return in reverse order, while the ball is in play.
- k. When a runner acquires the right to a base, by touching it before being put out.
- l. When a base is dislodged, while runners are progressing around the bases.
- m. When a runner runs more than 0.91m (3 ft) from his base path in regular, or reverse order, to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder.
- n. When a runner is tagged, or forced out.
- o. When the umpire calls the runner out for failure to return and touch the base when play is resumed after a suspension of play.
- p. When a live ball appeal play is legally being made.
- q. When the batter hits the ball.
- r. When a live ball strikes a photographer, groundskeeper, policeman, etc., assigned to the game.
- s. When a fly ball has been legally caught.
- t. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
- u. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball.
- v. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- w. Whenever the ball is not dead, as provided in Section 1 of this rule.
- x. When a thrown ball accidentally strikes a coach.
- y. As long as there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This includes a subsequent appeal play.
- z. When a runner is called out for getting a running start from a base on any fly ball.

- aa. When a runner abandons a base, does not attempt to advance to the next base, enters his team area, or leaves the field of play and is called out.
- bb. When a runner is called out for being physically assisted by anyone other than another runner.  
**EXCEPTION:** When assisted on a foul ball not caught, the ball will remain dead.
- cc. The ball remains live until the umpire calls “Time”; this should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield and, in the opinion of the umpire, all play has ceased.

**Section 3      DELAYED DEAD BALL**

There are four situations when a violation of the rule occurs. An umpire recognizes it and the ball remains live until the conclusion of the play. These situations are:

- a. An illegal pitch.
- b. Catcher’s obstruction.
- c. Obstruction.
- d. Detached equipment contacting a thrown ball, a pitched ball, or a fair-batted ball.

## RULE 11 UMPIRES

### Section 1 POWER AND DUTIES

The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization by which they have been assigned to a particular game, and as such, are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. They have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or omit to do any act which in their judgment is necessary to give force and effect to one or all of these rules and to inflict penalties as herein prescribed.

The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.

### GENERAL INFORMATION FOR UMPIRES

- a. The umpire shall not be a member of either team. Examples: player, coach, manager, officer, scorer or sponsor
- b. The umpire should be sure of the date, time, and place for the game and should arrive at the playing field 20-30 minutes ahead of time, start the game on time and leave the field when the game is over.
- c. Umpires must not wear exposed jewelry that may pose a hazard.  
**EXCEPTION:** Medical Alert Bracelets and/or necklaces.
- d. The umpires should introduce themselves to the captains, managers, and scorers.
- e. The umpires should inspect the playing field boundaries, equipment and clarify all ground rules to both teams and their coaches.
- f. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed any time during play until the game is over.
- g. Neither umpire has the authority to set aside or question decisions made by the other within the limits of their respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- h. An umpire may consult his associate at any time. However, the final decision shall rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it was to make the decision and who requested the opinion of the other.
- i. In order to define their respective duties, the umpire judging balls and strikes shall be designated as the "Plate Umpire," the umpire judging base decisions as the "Base Umpire."
- j. The plate umpire or base umpire shall have equal authority to:
  1. Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon.
  2. Call "TIME" for suspension of play.
  3. Remove, or eject, a player, coach, or manager from the game for violation of rules.
  4. Call all illegal pitches.
- k. The umpire shall declare the batter or runner out without waiting for an appeal for such decision in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules.  
**NOTE:** Unless appealed to, the umpire does not call a player out for having failed to touch base, leaving a base too soon on a fly ball, batting out of order, being an unreported substitute, being an Illegal Re-Entry, the replacement player or returning withdrawn player do not report, or making an attempt to go to second after reaching first base, as provided in these rules.
- l. Umpires shall not penalize a team for infraction of a rule when imposing the penalty would be to the advantage of the offending team.
- m. Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 12 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for umpires.

**Section 2 THE PLATE UMPIRE**

- a. Shall take a position in back of the catcher. He shall have full charge of, and be responsible for, the proper conduct of the game.
- b. Shall call all balls and strikes.
- c. Shall, by agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire, call plays, hit balls, fair or foul, legal or illegal caught balls. On plays that would necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield, the plate umpire shall assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.
- d. Shall determine and declare whether:
  1. A batter bunts, or chops, a ball.
  2. A batted ball touches the person, or clothing, of the batter.
  3. A fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.
- e. Shall render base decisions when required to do so.
- f. Shall determine when a game is forfeited.
- g. Shall assume all duties, when assigned as a single umpire to a game.

**Section 3 THE BASE UMPIRE**

- a. Shall take such positions on the playing field as required in accordance with the relevant umpire systems.
- b. Shall assist the plate umpire in every way, to enforce the rules of the game.

**Section 4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SINGLE UMPIRE**

If only one umpire is assigned, his duties and jurisdiction shall extend to all points. The umpire's starting position for each pitch shall be from behind home plate. On each batted ball or play that develops, the umpire shall move out from behind the plate and into the infield to obtain the best position for any play that develops.

**Section 5 CHANGE OF UMPIRES**

Umpires cannot be changed during a game by the consent of the opposing teams, unless an umpire is incapacitated by injury, or illness.

**Section 6 UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT**

There shall be no appeal from any decision of any umpire, on the grounds that he was not correct in his conclusion as to whether a batted ball was fair or foul a runner safe or out, a pitched ball a strike or ball, or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. No decision rendered by any umpire shall be reversed; except that he is convinced it is in violation of one of these rules. In case the manager, captain, or either team does seek a reversal of a decision based solely on a point of the rules, the umpire whose decision is in question shall, if in doubt, confer with his associate before taking any action. But under no circumstances shall any player or person, other than the manager or the captain of either team, have any legal right to protest on any decision and seek its reversal, on a claim that it is in conflict with rules

Under no circumstances shall any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by his associates, nor shall any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of his associates, unless asked to do so by him.

The umpires, in consultation, may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision, or a delayed call by an umpire, places a batter-runner or runner in jeopardy, or places the defensive team at a disadvantage.

**NOTE:** This correction is not possible after one legal, or illegal, pitch has been thrown, or if all players on the defensive team have abandoned fair territory.

## **Section 7 SIGNALS**

- a. To indicate that play shall begin, or be resumed; the umpire shall call "PLAY BALL" and, at the same time, motion the pitcher to deliver the ball.
- b. A STRIKE shall be indicated by raising the right hand upward, indicating the number of strikes by the fingers and, at the same time, calling "STRIKE" in a clear and decisive voice, followed by calling the number of the strike.
- c. To indicate a BALL, no arm signal is used. The number of the ball follows the call of "BALL."
- d. To indicate the total COUNT of balls and strikes, the balls are called first.
- e. To indicate a FOUL, the umpire shall call "FOUL BALL" and extend an arm horizontally away from the diamond, according to the direction of the ball.
- f. To indicate a FAIR BALL, the umpire shall extend an arm toward the center of the diamond, using a pumping motion.
- g. To indicate a batter or runner OUT, the umpire shall raise the right hand upward above the right shoulder, with fist closed.
- h. To indicate that a player is SAFE, the umpire shall extend both arms horizontally to the side of the body, with palms toward the ground.
- i. To indicate suspension of play, the umpire shall call "TIME" and, at the same time, extend both arms above the head. The other umpires shall immediately acknowledge the suspension of play, with similar action.
- j. To indicate a DELAYED DEAD BALL, the umpire shall extend the left arm horizontally with fist closed.
- k. To indicate a TRAPPED BALL, the umpire shall extend both arms horizontally to the side of the body, with palms toward the ground.
- l. To indicate a GROUND RULE DOUBLE, the umpire shall extend the right hand above the head and at the same time indicate, with two fingers, the number of bases awarded.
- m. To indicate a HOME RUN, the umpire shall extend the right hand, with closed fist closed, above the head and circle the arm in a clockwise movement.
- n. To indicate an INFIELD FLY, the umpire shall call "INFIELD FLY, IF FAIR, THE BATTER IS OUT." The umpire shall extend one arm above the head.
- o. To indicate NOT TO 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 his hand in said position.

## **Section 8 SUSPENSION OF PLAY**

- a. An umpire may suspend play when, in his judgment, conditions justify such action.
- b. Play shall be suspended whenever the plate umpire leaves his position to brush the plate, or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
- c. The umpire shall suspend play whenever a batter, or pitcher, steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- d. An umpire shall not call "TIME," after pitcher has started the windup.
- e. An umpire shall not call "TIME," while any play is in progress.

- f. In case of injury, except in the umpires' judgment with a serious injury (which may put the player in danger), "TIME" shall not be called until all plays in progress have been completed, or runners have been held at their base.

**EFFECT:** Section 8f

In the case of injury, when time is called, the ball is dead and runner(s) may be awarded a base or bases that they would have made, in the umpire's judgment, had the injury not occurred.

- g. Umpires shall not suspend play at the request of players, coaches, or managers, until all action in progress by either team has been completed.
- h. When, in the opinion of an umpire, all immediate play is apparently completed, "TIME" should be called.

## **Section 9**

### **VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES**

- a. Players, coaches, or managers shall not make disparaging, or insulting, remarks to, or about, opposing players, officials, or spectators, or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
- b. The penalty for violations by a player is either prompt REMOVAL, or EJECTION, of the offender from the game.
- c. The penalty for violations by a manager, coach or other team official shall be:
  - 1. For a first offense, the offender may be warned.
  - 2. For a second offense, or if a first offense is considered serious enough by the umpire, the offender is EJECTED.

**NOTE:** In the event the Head Coach is ejected from a game, he shall submit to the umpire the name of the person who is to assume the Head Coach duties for the remainder of the game.

- d. A player REMOVED from the game may sit on the bench but shall not participate further in the game except as a coach.
- e. A player, manager, coach, or other team official EJECTED from the game, shall go directly to the dressing room for the remainder of the game, or leave the grounds.
- f. Failure of a person so REMOVED or EJECTED, to leave the game immediately, will warrant a forfeiture of the game.

## **RULE 12 PROTESTS**

### **Section 1 PROTESTS THAT WILL NOT BE RECEIVED**

Protests shall not be received, or considered, if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an umpire, or if the team lodging the protest won the game.

Examples of protest that will not be considered are:

- a. Whether a batted ball was fair, or foul.
- b. Whether a runner was safe, or out.
- c. Whether a pitched ball was a strike, or a ball.
- d. Whether a pitch was legal, or illegal.
- e. Whether a runner did, or did not, touch a base.
- f. Whether a runner left the base too soon on a caught fly ball.
- g. Whether a fly ball was, or was not, caught legally.
- h. Whether it was, or was not, an Infield Fly.
- i. Whether there was, or was not, an interference.
- j. Whether there was, or was not, an obstruction.
- k. Whether a player, or live ball, did or did not, enter a dead ball area, or touch some object or person in a dead ball area.
- l. Whether a batted ball did, or did not, clear the fence in flight.
- m. Whether the field is fit to continue, or resume, play.
- n. Whether there is sufficient light to continue play.
- o. Any other matter involving only the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

### **Section 2 PROTESTS THAT WILL BE RECEIVED**

Protests that shall be received and considered include matters of the following types.

- a. Misinterpretation of a playing rule.
- b. Failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule to a given situation.
- c. Failure to impose the correct penalty for a given violation.

**NOTE:**

1. Protests for the above must be made before the next pitch, or before all infielders have left fair territory or, if on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
2. After one pitch has been thrown (legal or illegal), no change can be made on any umpire's ruling.

**NOTE:** Protests for the above are to be submitted to the appropriate authority (not the umpires) and may be made at any time, subject to the provisions of Rule 13, Section 2.

### **Section 3 PROTESTS INVOLVING JUDGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OF RULE**

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

An example of a situation of this type follows: With one out and the runners on second and third bases, the batter flied out. The runner on third tagged up after the catch, the player on second did not. The runner on third crossed the plate before the ball was played at second base for the third out. The umpire did not allow the run to score. The questions as to whether the runners left their bases before the catch and whether the play at second was made before

the player on third crossed the plate are solely matters of judgment and are not protestable. The failure of the umpire to allow the run to score was a misinterpretation of a playing rule and was a proper subject for protest.

#### **Section 4 NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO LODGE PROTEST**

The notification of intent to protest must be made immediately before the next pitch.

**EXCEPTION:** Player ineligibility.

- a. The manager or acting manager, of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being continued under protest. The plate umpire shall, in turn, notify the opposing manager and official scorekeeper.
- b. All interested parties shall take notice of the conditions surrounding the making of the decision that will aid in the correct determination of the issue.

**NOTE:** On appeal plays, the appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal or before the defensive team has left the field. For the purpose of this rule, the defensive team has “left the field” when the pitcher and all players have left fair territory, on the way to the bench or dugout area.

#### **Section 5 TIME TO LODGE AN OFFICAL PROTEST**

The official written protest must be filed within a reasonable time.

- a. In the absence of a league or tournament rule fixing the time limit for filing a protest, a protest should be considered if filed within a reasonable time, depending upon the nature of the case and the difficulty for obtaining the information on which to base the protest.
- b. Within 48 hours after the scheduled time of the contest is generally considered a reasonable time.

#### **Section 6 INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR WRITTEN PROTEST**

The formal written protest should contain the following information:

- a. The date, time, and place of the game.
- b. The names of the umpires and scorers.
- c. The rule and section of the Official Rules, or local rules, under which the protest is made.
- d. The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision.
- e. All essential facts involved in the matter protested.

#### **Section 7 RESULT OF PROTEST**

The decision made on a protested game must result in one of the following:

- a. The protest is found invalid and the game score stands as played.
- b. When a protest is allowed for misinterpretation of a playing rule, the game is replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made, with the decision corrected.
- c. When a protest for ineligibility of a team roster member is allowed, the game shall be forfeited by the offending team.

## RULE 13 SCORING

### Section 1 THE OFFICIAL SCORER

- a. Shall keep records of each game as outlined in the following rules.
- b. Shall have the sole authority to make all decisions involving judgment. For example, it is the scorer's responsibility to determine whether a batter's advance to first base is the result of a hit, or an error. However, a scorer shall not make a decision which conflicts with the Official Playing Rules, or with an umpire's decision.

### Section 2 THE BOX SCORE

- a. Each player's name and the position, or positions to be played, shall be listed in the order in which he batted, or would have batted, unless the player is legally substituted, ejected, or removed from the game, or the game ends before his turn at bat.  
**NOTE:** (Blood Ruling) Any statistics accrued by the Replacement Player while he is in the game, are credited to that player, even if he is a listed substitute who does not eventually enter the game as a substitution for another player.
  1. The Extra Player (EP) is optional, but if one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the score sheet in the regular batting order. Eleven names (twelve for Co-ed) will be on the official batting order and all will bat.  
**NOTE:** If an EP is used, he must be used the entire game. Failure to complete the game with an EP results in forfeiture of the game.
- b. Each player's batting and fielding record must be tabulated.
  1. The first column shall show the number of times at bat by each player, but a time at bat shall not be charged against the player when that player:
    - a) Hits a sacrifice fly that scores a runner.
    - b) Is awarded a base on balls.
    - c) Is awarded first base because of obstruction
  2. The second column shall show the number of runs by each player.
  3. The third column shall show the number of base hits made by each player. A base hit is a batted ball that permits the batter to reach the base safely.
    - a) When a batter-runner reaches first base, or any succeeding base, safely on a fair ball that settles on the ground, clears the fence, or strikes the fence before being touched by a fielder.
    - b) When a batter-runner reaches first base safely on a fair ball which is hit with such force, or such slowness, or which takes an unnatural bounce, making it impossible to field with ordinary effort in time to retire the batter-runner.
    - c) When a fair ball, which has not been touched by a fielder, becomes "dead" because of touching the person, or clothing, of a runner or umpire.
    - d) When the fielder unsuccessfully attempts to retire a preceding runner and, in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner would not have been retired at first base by perfect fielding.
    - e) When the batter ends the game with a base hit that drives in a sufficient number of runs to give his team the lead, the batter shall be credited with only as many bases as were advanced by the runner scoring the winning run, provided the batter runs a similar number of bases.  
**EXCEPTION:** When the batter ends the game with an out of the park home run, he shall be credited with a home run and all runners, including him, shall be allowed to score.

4. The fourth column shall show the number of opponents put out by each player.
  - a) A putout is credited to a fielder each time he
    1. Catches a fly ball or line drive.
    2. Catches a thrown ball that retires a batter or runner.
    3. Touches a runner with the ball when a runner is off the base to which he is entitled.
    4. Is nearest the ball when a runner is declared out for being struck by a fair ball, or interfering with the fielder.
    5. Is nearest the unreported substitute, who is declared out in accordance with Rule 4, Section 5, Section 8g OFFENSE (1B).
    6. Is nearest a runner, who is called out for running out of the base path.
  - b) A putout is credited to the catcher
    1. When a third strike is called.
    2. When the batter bunts, or chops the ball downward.
    3. When the batter fails to bat in correct order.
    4. When the batter interferes with the catcher.
    5. When the batter hits a third strike foul ball.
    6. When the batter is called out, for batting illegally.
    7. When the batter is declared out, for using an illegal or altered bat.
    8. When the batter is called out for changing batter's box.
5. The fifth column shall show the number of assists made by each player. An assist shall be credited:
  - a) To each player who handles the ball in any series of plays which results in the putout of the runner. Only one assist and no more shall be given to any player who handles the ball in any putout. A player, who has aided in a rundown or other play of the kind, may be credited with both an assist and a putout.
  - b) To each player who handles, or throws, the ball in such a manner that a putout would have resulted, except for an error of a teammate.
  - c) To each player who, by deflecting a batted ball, aids in a putout.
  - d) To each player who handles the ball in a play which results in a runner being called out for interference, or for running out of base line.
6. The sixth column shall show the number of errors made by each player. Errors are recorded in the following situations:
  - a) For each player who commits a misplay which prolongs the turn at bat of the batter, or life of the present runner.
  - b) For the fielder, who fails to touch the base after receiving the ball to retire the runner on a force-out, or when a runner is compelled to return to base.
  - c) For the catcher, if a batter is awarded first base for obstruction.
  - d) For the fielder, who fails to complete a double play because of dropping the ball.
  - e) For the fielder, if a runner advances a base, because of his failure to stop, or try to stop, a ball accurately thrown, the scorer must determine which player gets the error.

**Section 3**      **BASE HITS SHALL NOT BE RECORDED**

A base hit shall not be scored in the following cases:

- a. When a runner is forced out by a batted ball, or would have been forced out, except for a fielding error.
- b. When a player fielding a batted ball retires a preceding runner with ordinary effort.
- c. When a fielder fails in an attempt to retire a preceding runner and, in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.
- d. When a batter-runner reaches first base safely, as a result of a preceding runner being called out for interfering with a batted ball, or a defensive player.

**EXCEPTION:** If, in the judgment of the scorer, the batter would have reached first base safely had the interference not occurred, a safe hit shall be credited to the batter.

**Section 4**      **SACRIFICE FLY BALLS**

A sacrifice fly is scored when, with less than two outs,

- a. The batter scores a runner with a fly ball which is caught, or
- b. The ball, or the line drive, handled by an outfielder (or an infielder running in the outfield) is dropped and a runner scores and, in the scorer's judgment, the runner could have scored after the catch, had the fly ball been caught.

**Section 5**      **RUNS BATTED IN**

A run batted in is run scored because of one of the following reasons:

- a. A safe hit.
- b. A sacrifice bunt or sacrifice fly.
- c. A foul fly caught.
- d. An infield putout, or fielder's choice.
- e. A runner forced home because of obstruction, the batter being hit with a pitched ball, or being given a base on balls.
- f. A homerun and all runs scored as a result.

**Section 6**      **PITCHER CREDITED WITH A WIN**

A pitcher shall be credited with a win in the following situations:

- a. When he is the starting pitcher, and has pitched at least four innings, and his team was not only in the lead when he is replaced but remains in the lead for the remainder of the game.
- b. When a game is ended after five innings of play, and the starting pitcher has pitched at least three innings, and his team scores more runs than the other team when the game is terminated.

**Section 7**      **PITCHER CHARGED WITH A LOSS**

A pitcher shall be charged with a loss, regardless of the number of innings he has pitched, if he is replaced when his team is behind in the score and his team thereafter fails to tie the score, or gain the lead.

**Section 8**      **GAME SUMMARY**

The summary shall list the following items in this order:

- a. The score by innings and the final score.
- b. The runs batted-in and by whom hit.
- c. Two-base hits and by whom hit.

- d. Three-base hits and by whom hit.
- e. Home runs and by whom hit.
- f. Sacrifice flies and by whom hit.
- g. Double plays and players participating in them.
- h. Triple plays and players participating in them.
- i. Number of walks given by each pitcher.
- j. Number of batters struck out by each pitcher.
- k. Number of hits and runs allowed by each pitcher.
- l. The name of the winning pitcher.
- m. The name of the losing pitcher.
- n. The time of the game.
- o. The names of the umpires and scorers.

**Section 10 RECORDS OF FORFEITED GAMES**

All records of a forfeited game shall be included in the official records, except that of a pitcher's won-lost record.