2026-2027

more than just a game...

Official Senior Softball-USA Rulebook

Official ISA Senior Rulebook

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PLAYING RULES

2026 - 2027

These rules replace and supersede any rules published by Senior Softball World Championships, Inc., or Senior Softball-USA, LLC, prior to the date of this publication. For any rule or interpretation not covered in this rulebook, default to the USA Softball rule book for guidance.

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SECTION 1

DEFINITIONS

NOTE: Wherever '"he" or "him" or "their" related pronouns appear in this rule book either as words or as parts of words, they have been used in their generic sense to include both male and female sexes.

1.1 • APPEAL PLAY

An appeal play is a play on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, before an intentional walk or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.

A. Types of appeal plays:
   1. Missing a base.
   2. Leaving a base early on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
   3. Batting out of order.
   4. Attempting to advance to second base after making a turn at first base (umpire's judgment).
   5. After the third out in order to nullify a run.
   6. Illegal substitute – must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.

B. Use of recording devices to challenge or appeal a call is prohibited.

1.2 • BASE ON BALLS

A base on balls permits a batter to gain first base without liability to be put out and is awarded to a batter by the umpire when four pitches are judged to be balls. If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, he may do so by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base. Only one batter at a time can be intentionally walked. (See §8.2 B NOTE)

1.3 • BASE LINE / PATH

A base line is an imaginary line directly between the bases. A base path is the 6-foot-wide (1.83 m) path directly between a base and the runner at the time a defensive player is attempting to tag that runner.

1.4 • BATTED BALL

A batted ball is any ball that hits the bat or is hit by the bat and lands either in fair or foul territory. No intent to hit the ball is necessary.

1.5 • BATTER'S BOX

The batter's box is the 3-foot by 7-foot area to which the batter is restricted. The lines are considered as being within the batter's box. At least some portion of both feet of the batter must be on the line or within the batter's box. (See §7.3)

1.6 • BATTER-RUNNER

A batter-runner is a player who has finished his turn at bat but has not yet been put out or touched first base.

1.7 • BATTING ORDER

The batting order is the official listing on the lineup card of offensive players by last name, first initial and uniform number. Players will be listed in the order in which they come to bat.

1.8 • BLOCKED BALL

A blocked ball is a batted or thrown ball that is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game, or that touches any object that is not part of the official equipment or official playing area. Official tournament photographer(s), umpire equipment attached to and hanging on fences and boxed reserve softball supply behind home plate are considered part of the playing field and the ball will remain live.

1.9 • BLOOD RULE

Refers to a player, coach or umpire who is bleeding and treatment is required, or who has blood on his uniform. (See §4.9)

1.10 • CATCH

A catch is a legally caught ball that occurs when the fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his hand(s) or glove and the resulting release of the ball must be voluntary. NOTE: It is not a catch if a fielder, after he contacts the ball, collides with another player, umpire or a fence, or falls to the ground and loses possession of the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. A ball that strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight, is ruled the same as if it struck the ground. An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with anything other than his hand(s) or glove in its proper place.

1.11 • CATCHER'S BOX

The catcher's box is the 8½-foot (2.59 m) by 10-foot (3.05 m) area directly behind the batter's box, to which the catcher is restricted. The lines are considered as being within the catcher's box. At least some portion of both feet of the catcher must be within the catcher's box. The catcher must remain in the box until the pitched ball is batted or touches the ground or plate.

1.12 • CHARGED CONFERENCE

A charged conference takes place when:

A. Defensive conference – A conference shall be charged when a defensive team representative, from the dugout, enters the field of play by crossing the foul line. The conference ends when the representative crosses the foul line on the return to the dugout. Only one defensive conference per inning is permitted. If more than one occurs, the pitcher must be removed from the

pitching position and cannot return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

B. Offensive conference – A conference shall be charged when an offensive team representative or player requests suspension of play to confer with an offensive team member.

C. There will be only one charged offensive conference per inning.

D. The manager or team representative who insists on more than one offensive conference shall be ejected.

1.13 • CHOPPED BALL

A chopped ball occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat so that the ball bounces high into the air. EFFECT: The player will be called out and the ball is dead.

1.14 • COACH (BASE)

A base coach is a member of the team at bat who takes his place within one of the two coaches boxes on the field to direct the players of his team in running the bases. Either base coach may have in his possession any item to be used for score keeping or record keeping purposes only. No communication equipment is allowed.

1.15 • COMMITMENT LINE

A minimum six (6) foot (1.83 m) commitment line shall be marked across and perpendicular to the foul line and placed thirty feet from home plate. Once a runner has touched/crossed the commitment line he: [a] cannot re-cross the line; and [b] cannot return to third base. Once both feet have touched / crossed, he: [a] cannot be tagged out by the defensive player; and [b] the defensive player must touch the strike zone mat. The ball remains live.

1.16 • DEAD BALL

This is the term that is used for a ball that has crossed over the dead-ball line, is blocked touched and/or the umpire has ruled dead. A dead ball line is considered in play. A player may reach over the dead ball line to make a catch.

1.17 • DEFENSIVE TEAM

The defensive team is the team in the field.

1.18 • DISLODGED BASE

A dislodged base is a base displaced from its proper position.

1.19 • DOUBLE PLAY

A double play is a play by the defense resulting in two offensive players being legally declared put out.

1.20 • EJECTION

This is the result of an incident that requires removal from the game by the umpire, whereby the ejected player or coach can no longer participate in the

game and must leave the playing field and dugout. A flagrant act will require the player or coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. Any ejected player discovered participating will constitute a forfeit. (See §5.6)

1.21 • EQUALIZER

When teams of a single unequal age or skill rating play, the older or lower-rated team receives an equalizer, at its election, of five runs (allocated at one run per inning played for innings two through six) OR an 11th defensive player. If the teams are two or more age or ratings levels unequal, the older or lower rated team will receive both the five-run equalizer and the 11th defensive player. In age divisions that already play 11 defensive players, the equalizer shall be five runs only for a single rating or age difference, and seven runs (allocated at one run for each of the first seven, only, innings played) in the case of two or more age or rating differences. **If a Men's 80+ team is receiving two equalizers, it may choose to receive five runs and a 12th defender, or it may choose to receive seven runs.** EXCEPTION: Men's 40-Masters division shall have a runs-only equalizer, and not an 11th defensive player option. NOTE: The team giving the equalizer shall be designated the home team.

1.22 • FAIR BALL

A batted ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball. It does not matter whether the ball first touches fair or foul territory, as long as it does not touch anything foreign to the natural ground in foul territory and complies with all other aspects of a fair ball.

A fair ball is a legally batted ball that:

A. Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or between home and third base.

B. Bounds over or past first or third base, which is in fair territory, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the base.

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

D. Touches first, second or third base.

E. First falls or is touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second or third base.

F. While over fair territory passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.

G. Hits the fair/foul pole.

1.23 • FAIR TERRITORY

Fair territory is that part of the playing field within, and including, the first and third base foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. (NOTE: Any batted ball first hitting any portion of the

strike mat then settling in fair territory is a fair ball. Fair territory includes the strike mat.)

1.24 • FAKE TAG

A fake tag is a form of obstruction by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is about to receive the ball. This obstruction impedes the progress of a runner either advancing or returning to a base. The runner does not have to stop or slide. Merely slowing down when a fake tag is attempted would constitute obstruction. (For penalty, see §8.4(10) A.)

1.25 • FIELDER

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

1.26 • FLY BALL

A fly ball is any ball batted into the air over fair or foul territory.

1.27 • FORCE OUT - FORCE PLAY

A. A force out is force play that results from a batter becoming a batter-runner and before the batter-runner or a preceding runner have been put out. NOTE: (a) If a batted ball is caught prior to the ball touching the ground, there cannot be a force out. (b) If the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base he last occupied, the force play is reinstated and he may again be put out if the defense tags the runner or the base to which the runner is forced.

1.28 • FOUL BALL

A foul ball is a legally batted ball that:

A. Settles or is touched on or over foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base.

B. Bounds or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory.

C. While over foul territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire, or is blocked.

D. First hits the ground or is first touched over foul territory beyond first or third base. A caught fly ball is not a foul ball.

E. Touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand(s) a second time while the batter is within the batter's box.

F. Goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than the hand(s) or glove.

1.29 • FOUL TIP

A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's hand(s) or glove and is legally caught by the catcher. EFFECT: The ball is dead on all foul tips. **A foul tip cannot be caught for an out. NOTE: Balls that go over the batter's head can be caught for an out.**

1.30 • HEADWEAR

A. Offensive – All helmets are recommended to be approved by the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) and game officials. Any player may wear a NOCSAE-approved helmet, with or without ear flaps. It must have a bill.

B. Defensive – Any player may wear a NOCSAE-approved helmet with or without earflaps. It must have a bill. A face mask must be worn by all pitchers (See §6.17), and other defensive players may elect to do so.

C. (Male) Ball caps are optional. They must be alike and worn properly.

D. (Female) Ball caps, visors, other than plastic, and headbands are optional for players and, if worn, can be mixed. Handkerchiefs do not qualify as headbands and cannot be worn around the head or neck.

1.31 • HOME TEAM

The home team shall be designated by mutual agreement or by a flip of a coin. EXCEPTION: **The unbeaten bracket team in a championship game may choose to be the home or visiting team unless there is an equalizer involved. In the case of a team giving an equalizer to an opponent, the team giving the equalizer shall be the home team.** (See definition §1.21)

1.32 • ILLEGAL BAT

An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements of §3.4.

1.33 • ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter hits the ball fair or foul and:

A. The entire foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and on the ground.

B. Any part of the foot is touching the strike zone mat.

C. An illegal or altered bat is used.

1.34 • ILLEGAL CATCH

An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with anything other than his hand(s) or legal glove in its proper place or an illegal player makes a catch.

1.35 • ILLEGAL PLAYER

An illegal player is a player who takes a position in the lineup, either on defense or offense, that does not have a legal right to the position. A player will not violate the illegal player rule until after one pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown. An illegal player is handled as an appeal by the offended team while the player is still in the game. Once the umpire is notified, in all cases the illegal player is disqualified and can be legally replaced either by a substitute or a starter who re-enters the game.

1.36 • ILLEGAL PITCHER

A player legally in the game, but one who may not pitch as a result of being removed from the pitching position by the umpire because of:

A. Two charged defensive conferences in one inning.

B. Pitching with excessive speed after a warning. EFFECT: If an illegal pitcher returns to the pitching position and has thrown one pitch he is ejected from the game.

1.37 • INTENTIONALLY DROPPED FLY BALL

If a fielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort with first base only, or first base and any other base(s), with less than two outs, only one recorded out may be made on the play and the ball is dead. This is an umpire's judgment call.

1.38 • ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTE

An illegal substitute is a player who has entered the game illegally, EXAMPLE: Illegal re-entry, a player will not violate the substitution rule until one legal or illegal pitch is thrown. EFFECT: See §4.7

1.39 • INELIGIBLE PLAYER

An ineligible player is a player who does not meet the requirements of SSUSA. The determination of eligibility is the responsibility of the Protest Committee. The use of an ineligible player will constitute a forfeit if properly protested.

1.40 • INFIELD

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

1.41 • INFIELD FLY

A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) that can be caught by any fielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. Any fielder can catch an infield fly.

NOTE: When it becomes apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "infield fly - batter is out", to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare, "infield fly - if fair". The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after a fielder touches the ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball. Failure of the umpire to call "infield fly," does not negate the infield fly. If the error is discovered prior to the next pitch, the infield fly rule may still be called.

1.42 • IN FLIGHT

In flight is that term used for any batted, thrown or pitched ball that has not yet touched the ground or some object or person other than a fielder.

1.43 • IN JEOPARDY

In jeopardy is a term indicating that the ball is in play and an offensive player may be put out.

1.44 • INNING

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

1.45 • INTERFERENCE

Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. A base runner must avoid a fielder making a play.

1.46 • LEGAL TOUCH

A legal touch occurs when a runner or batter-runner that is not touching a base is touched by the ball while it is securely held in a fielder's hand(s) or glove. The ball is not considered as having been securely held if it is juggled or dropped by the fielder after having touched the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s) of the fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the glove or hand(s) holding the ball.

1.47 • LINE DRIVE

A fly ball batted sharply and directly into the playing field.

1.48 • OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is the act of:

A. A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.

B. A fielder who is not in possession of the ball nor in the act of fielding a batted ball who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.

1.49 • OFFENSIVE TEAM

The offensive team is the team at bat.

1.50 • ON-DECK BATTER

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

1.51 • OUTFIELD

The outfield is that portion of the field in fair territory that is not normally covered by an infielder.

1.52 • OVERSLIDE / RUN

An over slide/run is the act of an offensive player when, as a runner, he overslides or overruns a base (except 1st base) he is attempting to reach. It

usually occurs when his momentum causes him to lose contact with the base, which then causes him to be in jeopardy.

1.53 • OVERTHROW

An overthrow is a thrown ball from a fielder that goes beyond the boundaries of the playing field (dead ball territory).

1.54 • PLAY BALL

Play ball is the term used by the plate umpire to indicate that play shall start and shall not be declared until all defensive players are in fair territory except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box.

1.55 • PROTESTS

Only managers or acting managers may notify the umpire of their intent to protest. There are two types of protests:

A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule – must be made before the next pitch or, if on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field. If the manager or acting manager does not accept the umpires ruling, he may protest to a tournament director. If the tournament director cannot resolve the protest, he will refer the protest to the Tournament Protest Committee. (For tournament protest committee, see §15.2)

B. Ineligible player – can be made any time during or after the game. Eligibility is the decision of the tournament protest committee.

1.56 • QUICK PITCH

A pitch made by the pitcher with the obvious attempt to catch the batter unprepared. This would be before the batter takes his desired position in the batter's box or while he is still off balance as a result of the previous pitch.

1.57 • RUNNER

A runner is an offensive player who has reaches first base and has not yet been put out.

1.58 • RUNNING LANE

A runner's line running lane may be marked according to the official dimensions diagram on page 83.

A 30' (9.14 m) runner's line running lane shall be marked parallel to the first base foul line ending at the rear of the double base. The line will run three feet outside the foul line and will be joined to the foul line closest to home plate by a perpendicular line.

1.59 • SACRIFICE FLY

A sacrifice fly is scored when, with fewer than two outs, the batter scores a runner with a fly ball or line drive that is:

A. Caught.

B. Dropped by an outfielder (or an infielder running into the outfield), and, in the scorer's judgment, the runner could have scored after the catch had the fly ball or line drive been caught.

1.60 • STARTING PITCHER

The player listed as a pitcher on the lineup card or official score book.

1.61 • STARTING PLAYER

The names of starting players shall be entered on the official game card in advance of this pre-game meeting; however, changes can be made until the lineup is official with no charged substitutions. The lineup is official when it is inspected and approved by the plate umpire and team managers at the pre-game meeting. Once the game clock starts, all further changes shall be considered a substitution.

1.62 • STRIKE ZONE MAT

A strike zone mat will be used. The rectangular mat will be 19" (48.26 cm) wide and 34½" (87.63 cm) in length. The mat shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. The mat is placed over home plate and be aligned with the front edge of home plate. DEFENSE: A defensive player making a play at Home plate will be allowed to complete the play by touching any portion of the strike mat. If, during the play, the mat is dislodged, the defensive player shall touch home plate, rather than the strike zone mat.

1.63 • TRAPPED BALL

A trapped ball is:

A. A batted fly ball or line drive that hits the ground or a fence prior to being caught.

B. A thrown ball to any base for a force out that is caught with the glove over the ball on the ground rather than under the ball.

C. A trapped ball is not a catch.

1.64 • TIME

Time is the term used by the umpire to order the suspension of play.

1.65 • TURN AT BAT

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

SECTION 2

PLAYING FIELD DIMENSIONS

The playing field is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded. There shall be a clear and unobstructed area between the foul lines and within the radius of the prescribed fence distances from home plate. (See official dimensions on pages **86-89**).

NOTE: If the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be the wrong dimensions during the course of the game, correct the error at the end of a full inning with no penalty, and continue playing the game. Every effort should be made by the umpire to determine and implement the correct dimensions.

2.1 • GROUND RULES

Ground or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed upon by leagues or opposing teams. Any obstruction on fair ground less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate should be clearly marked for the umpire's information.

If using a baseball field, the mound should be removed and the backstop distance must meet the prescribed minimum of 25' (7.62 m) or maximum of 30' (9.14 m) from home plate.

2.2 • DIAMOND LAYOUT

For the layout of the diamond, refer to diagrams showing official dimensions for a senior softball diamond, pages **86-89**.

2.3 • EQUIPMENT AND MARKINGS

A. The pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, 50' (15.24 m) from home plate, and extending back 10' (3.05 m) perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. The pitcher's plate shall be of rubber or wood, 24" (60.96 cm) long and 6" (15.24 cm) wide. The top of the pitching rubber shall be level with the ground. The front of the pitching rubber shall be the prescribed pitching distance from the back point of home plate (50' / 15.24 m). The pitcher's box will be marked with chalk or field paint.

B. Home plate shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. It shall be a five-sided figure, 17" (43.18 cm) wide across the edge facing the pitcher. The sides shall be parallel to the inside lines of the batter's box and shall be 8½" (21.59 cm) long. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12" (30.48 cm) long.

C. The bases shall be 15" (38.10 cm) square, shall be made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than 5" (12.70 cm) in thickness. The bases should be properly fastened in position. Exception: The double base shall be used at first base. This base is 15" by 30" (76.20 cm) and made of

canvas or other suitable material. Half the base is white (over fair territory) and half is orange or another color (over foul territory). It should not be more than 5" in thickness.

NOTE: With the double base at first, the following rules shall be enforced:

1. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is declared fair and a batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored portion is declared foul.
2. Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner some portion of the colored portion. EXCEPTION: On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, such as on an errant throw or deflected ball, the defense and batter-runner may use either portion of the double base. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at the double base, the runner may touch the white or colored portion. (See §8.4(1))
3. Should the batter-runner round the base on a hit to the infield or the outfield, he may return to either portion.
4. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the double base shall be treated as one base and the fielder or runner may use either portion.

D. A commitment line, a strike zone mat, and runner's lines, as set forth in the Field Dimension Diagrams are the equipment and markings that shall be added to the standard playing field. (See pages **86-89**)

2.4 • BASE DISTANCE

Bases shall be set 70' (21.34 m) apart for all age groups and divisions. NOTE: For men's 75+, and older and women's senior divisions (50+ and older), bases may be set at 65' (19.81 m) if, in the tournament director's sole discretion, such an adjustment is feasible.

2.5 • OUTFIELD FENCE DISTANCE

Men's – All men's games are recommended to be played on 300' (91.44 m) minimum fence distance fields. Women's – All women's games are recommended to be played on 275' (83.82 m) minimum fence distance fields. Exceptions for some age groups may be made with approval of SSWC.

SECTION 3

PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

3.1 • METAL CLEATS ARE PROHIBITED

Anytime after the umpire's pre-game coin toss, a team member found wearing metal cleats will be ejected from the game. If on base, he will be called out. Any team member on base at the time the ejected player came to bat must return to the base occupied at that time if there are fewer than three outs.

3.2 • NUMBERS ON UNIFORMS

Team members participating in the game must wear visible numbers, a minimum of 5" (15.24 cm) tall on their uniforms with no two identical numbers on a team. (See §3.8 B)

3.3 • RESTRICTED EQUIPMENT

Any softball equipment deemed unsafe by SSUSA/SSWC will not be permitted to be used in SSUSA/SSWC-sponsored events.

3.4 • OFFICIAL BATS

A. All bats used in SSUSA and SSWC sponsored events, including qualifiers, must be approved by SSUSA/SSWC.

B. Shall not exceed 34" (86.36 cm) long, nor exceed 38 ounces (1,077.3 g) in weight.

C. Shall not have **visible cracks,** 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.

D. If metal, shall not have a wooden handle, but handle may be angular.

E. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape) or composition material. The safety grip shall not be less than 8" (20.32 cm) long and shall not extend more than 15" (38.1 cm) from the small end of the bat. Any molded finger-formed grip made by the bat manufacturer, if used, must be permanently attached to the bat or attached to the bat with safety tape and must be approved by SSUSA/SSWC. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the safety grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only and may not be applied to the barrel of the bat**.** Tape applied to any bat must spiral continuously. It does not have to be a solid layer of tape. Taping of a bat less than the required length is considered illegal. Bear Grip, Dome Style Power Grip, Finger Style and Sure Grip are all approved.

F. If metal, and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other approved material insert firmly secured at the large end of the bat.

G. Shall have a safety knob of a minimum of ¼ inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A "flare" or "cone" grip attached to the bat will be permissible as long as it is a commercially manufactured flare or cone. Taping into a cone will be considered altered. The knob may be taped as long as there is no violation of this section.

H. Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read due to wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.

3.4(1) • WARM-UP BATS

No more than two official softball bats, including SSUSA/SSWC approved warm-up bats, may be used by the on-deck batter in the on-deck circle. The warm-up bat should meet the following requirements to be approved:

A. Stamped with one-quarter inch letters WB on either end of the bat or marked in one-inch letters the words WARM-UP BAT only on the barrel end of the bat.

B. A minimum weight of 48 oz. (1,360.78 g).

C. A minimum barrel diameter of 2½" (6.35 cm).

D. Shall have a safety grip of at least 8" (20.32 cm) and no more than 15“ (38.1 cm) extended from the knob.

E. Be of one-piece construction or a one-piece permanently assembled bat approved by SSUSA/SSWC.

F. No attachments (i.e., donuts, fans, etc.) are allowed on an official bat except the Pow'R Wrap warm-up attachment. (See §3.4)

3.4(2) • DISAPPROVED BATS

High-tech bats such as titanium or any new substance or configuration not approved for use in SSUSA and SSWC competition are therefore termed illegal and prohibited for use in any SSWC qualifying tournament, the World Championships, and all Senior Softball-USA softball activities.

3.4(3) • APPROVED BATS

All bats manufactured prior to 2014 marked "1.21 BPF" (Bat Performance Factor) or less, SSUSA approved bats, or bats having an ASA 2000 or 2004 stamp are approved for use. Any bat displaying the label "Exceeds 1.21 BPF" is not approved. The rating must be **[1]** clearly visible on the bat, or **[2]** be clearly and permanently marked by either SSUSA logo or “Approved for SSUSA Use”, or similar, by permanent sticker, etching or imprint. Any new bats introduced by bat manufacturers after 2013 must appear on the SSUSA Approved Bat List to be legal for use in any SSUSA sanctioned event. Effective November 1, 2023, newer bats must be marked with the SSUSA/NTS logo. Older bats must say SSUSA approved (or have the SSUSA logo) with 1.21 BPF or lower marked on them.

3.4(4) • ALTERED EQUIPMENT

A bat or ball is considered altered when the physical characteristics of a legal softball bat or ball have been changed (EXAMPLE: chilling softballs **or heating bats.**). Replacing the handle of a metal bat with a wooden or other type handle, inserting material inside the bat, applying excessive tape to the bat grip or painting a bat other than at the top or bottom for identification purposes are considered altering the bat. Applying a foreign substance to the barrel of the bat constitutes altering a bat. **Warming devices for bats are not approved.** (For penalty, see §3.4(6)). Replacing the grip with another legal grip is not considered altering the bat.

3.4(5) • BAT INSPECTION

A. Umpires and SSUSA/SSWC staff have been instructed to inspect all bats prior to use to identify any unsafe or illegal bat. If one is found prior to the game, the player will be warned and the bat will be removed from the game and held by the tournament director until the player has finished playing in the tournament. If there is a reasonable doubt by the tournament director that a bat has been altered, he may quarantine it until the player is out of the tournament. The director should also photograph the bat and send the photo to SSWC with the player's name and team, for use at SSWC.

B. If a player is seriously injured (requiring emergency hospitalization) by a batted ball, the tournament director shall immediately quarantine both the bat and ball and send them to SSUSA Headquarters for inspection.

C. Umpires and SSUSA/SSWC Staff shall remove from competition for the entire tournament any bat that exhibits significant cracking or other deformity, **any bat not legal because of excessive wear and tear, and any bat that fails field compression testing**.

NOTE ON FOLLOWING BAT SECTIONS*: SSUSA does not have the legal right to confiscate property from a player. However, it DOES have the right to make rules and related penalties to be imposed upon anyone who declines to voluntarily "surrender" a suspected altered or illegal bat. The language of the two following sections reflects that legal reality.*

3.4(6) • PENALTY FOR USING AN ALTERED BAT OR SOFTBALL

SSUSA agreed to follow the 2007 Summit Altered Bat Recommendation:

A. Penalty for **possessing** an altered bat – If a bat is suspected of being altered to enhance performance, a tournament official will determine if the bat will be allowed to be used in play or will request that it be voluntarily surrendered by the owner for inspection. If the player refuses to immediately surrender the bat to tournament officials, the player will be suspended for **life** and the team will forfeit all games played in the current tournament. If the player voluntarily surrenders the bat and it is found to be altered to enhance performance, the player will be suspended for **ten** years.

TEAM SANCTIONS: If the player refuses to surrender the bat, or if the bat is found to be altered to enhance performance, the team will forfeit all previously earned current season Tournament of Champions berths and is declared ineligible to participate in the current season SSUSA World Championships and Tournament of Champions. The bat, if surrendered by the owner, will be held and forwarded for testing through the National SSUSA office at the conclusion of the tournament. A second offense may result in the lifetime ban of the player. Immediate actions for use of an altered bat will also result in the following:

1. Batter will be called out and ejected from the tournament.
2. Base runners will be instructed to return to the base(s) occupied at the time the suspected altered bat was used, providing there are fewer than three outs.
3. The bat (if surrendered by the owner) will be held and forwarded for testing through the National SSUSA Office at the conclusion of the tournament

B. Procedure for handling and safeguarding a suspected altered bat:

1. The tournament director/site director will immediately take possession of the surrendered bat. Under no circumstances will the bat be allowed out of the tournament director's/site director's possession.
2. The tournament director/site director will write a receipt for the bat and give it to the person who surrendered the bat.
3. The tournament director/site director will attach a piece of tape to the bat showing the player's name address and telephone number and the team name, address, and telephone number.
4. The tournament director/site director will forward the bat to the SSUSA headquarters with a note explaining why the bat(s) are suspected of being altered.

C. Penalty for use of an altered softball: If a softball is suspected of being altered to enhance performance, a tournament official will determine if the softball is allowed to be used. If the softball is found to be altered, the following penalties shall be imposed:

1. First offense in tournament: Game forfeiture by the offending team;
2. Second offense in tournament: Game forfeiture by the offending team, team ejection from the tournament and further disciplinary action review for potential team and/or manager suspension, at the discretion of SSUSA.

NOTE: An altered softball is deemed to be in play as soon as the offensive team provides it to the umpire or opponent.

3.4(7) • PENALTY FOR USING AN ILLEGAL BAT

A. Any attempt to use an illegal bat in SSWC or SSUSA play will result in the batter being ejected from the game. The second offense by a member of the same team will result in the player and manager being ejected from the tournament.

B. The batter will also be called out.

C. The base runners will be instructed to return to the base(s) occupied at the time the illegal bat was used, providing there are fewer than three outs.

3.5 • OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

A. Shall be a regular, smooth-seamed, flat-surfaced, pebble-textured or dimple-textured ball with concealed stitches.

B. A yellow optic ball is preferred for both men's and women's play.

C. A 12-inch ball with a COR of .44 and a compression rating of no more than 375 psi shall be used in men's play.

D. An 11-inch ball with a COR of **.44** and a compression rating of no more than **375** psi shall be used in women's play.

E. In all SSUSA-sponsored qualifiers and tournaments, official game balls must have the official SSUSA stamp or be pre-approved by SSUSA headquarters, located in Sacramento, CA.

F. Penalty for use of an illegal softball: If a softball is suspected of being illegal, a tournament official will determine if the softball is allowed to be used. If the softball is found to be illegal, the following penalties shall be imposed:

1. First offense in a game: The batter shall be called out. If the illegal softball is discovered after a player has completed his turn at-bat, and before the next pitch, the batter is out, all outs made during the play stand, and other runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.;

2. Second and subsequent offense(s) in a game: The half-inning at bat shall be terminated.

NOTE: An illegal softball is deemed to be in play when the ball is in the possession of the pitcher and a batter is in the batter's box.

3.6 • GLOVES

Gloves and mitts may be worn by any player. 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 5" (12.70 cm) in length. Here are the maximum length specifications: palm width (top) 8" (20.3 cm), palm width (bottom) 8½" (21.6 cm), top opening of web 5" (12.7 cm), bottom opening of web 4½" (11.5 cm), 1st finger crotch seam 7½"

(19.05 cm), thumb crotch seam 7½" (19.05 cm), crotch seam 16½" (41.91 cm), thumb top to bottom edge 9¼" (23.5 cm), 1st finger top to bottom edge 14" (35.56 cm), 2nd finger top to bottom edge 13¼" (33.66 cm), 3rd finger top to bottom edge 12¼" (31.12 cm), 4th finger top to bottom edge 11" (27.94 cm).

3.7 • MASKS, HELMETS, SHIN-GUARDS

A. Masks –

1. Any offensive or defensive team member may wear a NOCSAE-approved helmet of similar color as the team caps.
2. Medically protective – Specially designed masks, such as those worn to protect a broken jaw, may be allowed for offensive and defensive play if, in the umpire's judgment, the mask would not present a safety hazard to the wearer or opposing team members.

B. Helmets – Any offensive or defensive team member may wear a NOCSAE-approved helmet of similar color as the team caps.



5.7 • SCORING OF RUNS

A. One run shall be scored each time a runner crosses the scoring line or touches the scoring plate, after legally touching all bases in proper order.

B. No run shall be scored if the third out of the half-inning is the result of:

1. A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
2. A runner being put out by a tag or live ball appeal play prior to the lead runner crossing the scoring line or touching the scoring plate.
3. A preceding runner is declared out on appeal involving a force play.
4. **A violation of the safety base rule for a close play at first base. (See §8.4(1)) That final out is deemed to be a force out.**

NOTE: An appeal may be made after the third out in order to nullify a run.

C. A limit of five runs per inning, except in the "open inning," may be scored until the final inning. (See §5.5(1) for Major-Plus exception).

5.8 • GAME SCORES

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 an equal number or 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. Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped, if it is decided that they should be played out.

C. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven to zero (7-0) in favor of the team not at fault.

5.9 • CONFERENCES

A. Offensive conference – There shall be only one charged conference between the manager and/or other team representative(s) and the batter and/or runner(s) in an inning. The umpire shall not permit any such conferences in excess of one in an inning. EFFECT: Ejection of the manager or team representative who insists on another charged conference.

B. Defensive conference – There shall be only one charged conference between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with each pitcher in an inning. EFFECT: The second charged conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. PENALTY: If the pitcher returns to the pitcher's

position at any time during the game after two defensive conferences in the same inning, he is ejected from the game. The removed pitcher can play another position on defense but cannot pitch again.

5.10 • DELAYS

5.10(1) • INJURY

A time out for an injured player will be called and the game clock stopped at the discretion of the umpire.

5.10(2) • PROTESTED CALL OR PLAY

Protest time outs will be called at the discretion of the umpire. He also may stop the game clock if he feels the protest is a delaying tactic.

5.10(3) • DELIBERATELY DELAYING GAME

In all time limit games, if in the umpire's judgment a leading team is taking or leaving the field slowly to delay the game, he will warn the manager one time to get his players to hustle on and off. If they continue to delay, the umpire may call for a batter and start calling strikes when the offending team is delaying offensively. In cases where the offending team is delaying defensively, time may be added to the game.

5.10(4) • DUGOUT CONDUCT

Coaches, players, substitutes or other bench personnel shall not be outside the designated bench/dugout area except when the rule allows or when justified by an umpire. **Only team personnel can be in the dugout or on the playing field. All team personnel must appear on the team's roster and have signed the waiver form.** EFFECT: The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.

5.11 • CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR MARIJUANA

The consumption of alcoholic beverages or marijuana in the dugouts or within the confines of the playing field is prohibited. EFFECT: The penalty shall be the ejection of the player for the remainder of the team's games for that day. In addition, no outside alcohol may be brought into the ballpark. Teams shall receive a warning for a first offense. A second offense shall result in an ejection of that player from the team's current game, or from the next game if the alcohol is discovered between games.

5.12 • UMPIRE ANNOUNCES TIME REMAINING

Prior to the ball being pitched to begin the fourth and subsequent innings, the umpire will announce game time remaining to both managers. Because teams are limited to five runs per inning, the umpire must also announce the last inning to give both teams an opportunity to score as many runs as possible. (See §5.5(1)) EXAMPLE: As soon as time has expired the umpire will announce clearly to both teams that they will complete the inning in progress and play one more, open inning. This announcement must be made before the last out of the inning).

5.13 • SCOREKEEPING

5.13(1) • OFFICIAL GAME CARD

The game umpire shall keep the official score on the game card. An official SSUSA game card will be issued to the plate umpire for each game. The umpire will record the official score on the card by innings, after verifying the correct score with both team score keepers. At the end of the game, the official scorekeeper and both managers will meet with the plate umpire, acknowledge that the final recorded score on the card is correct, and sign the card. This will be the official score of the game. Managers are advised to double-check the final score as recorded on the official game card before signing to avoid the possibility of an inverted score or an error in run count. NOTE: If an erroneous game card with all of the signatures affixed is turned in by the umpire to the tournament director, the error will stand unless corrected prior to seeding.

5.13(2) • PROTESTED GAME

Once notified of a protest the umpire shall stop the game clock and notify the tournament director. The tournament director shall assemble the Tournament Protest Committee and meet with the principals of the game in question. After considering, and discussing if necessary, all elements of the protest, the committee will render its decision, which will be final.

SECTION 6

PITCHING REGULATIONS

6.1 • STRIKE ZONE MAT

A strike zone mat will be used. Legal pitches striking any portion of the mat will be strikes.

6.2 • PITCH COUNT

Batters are allowed 3 balls and/or 2 strikes. All batters start with a 1 1 ball/strike count. There will be one "waste foul" available to a batter after there are two strikes in the count. **NOTE: If an incorrect pitch count is communicated through an umpire's error, it may be corrected prior to the next pitch. Thereafter, the previously communicated pitch count is deemed to be accurate, and the result of any subsequent pitch call or play shall stand.**

6.3 • THE ARC

The height of a legal pitch must be from six to 12 feet above the playing surface.

6.4 • BEFORE STARTING THE PITCH

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

B. The pitcher must take a position with at least one foot in contact with the pitcher's box.

C. The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be maintained at least one second before starting the pitch.

6.5 • STARTING THE PITCH

The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his delivery after the required stop.

6.6 • LEGAL DELIVERY

A. The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

B. The delivery is a continuous motion.

C. The pitcher must not use a delivery in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.

D. The pitcher must deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward pass of the pitching arm past the hip with an underhanded motion.

E. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's box 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 box and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

F. The pitcher may not pitch the ball behind his back or through his legs.

G. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely up to the umpire's judgment. 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 removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.

H. The pitching motion does not continue after release of the ball.

I. The pitcher has ten seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball, or after the umpire indicates "play ball."

J. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch from the glove.

6.7 • USE OF A WINDUP

The windup may be used as a legal part of the pitch as long as all of the requirements of this rule are followed:

A. The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the ball in front of his body.

B. The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his windup after the required stop.

C. The windup is a continuous motion.

D. The pitcher must not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.

E. The pitcher must deliver the ball toward the strike mat on the first forward pass of the pitching arm past the hip.

F. The pitcher cannot continue to wind up after he releases the ball.

6.8 • DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

6.8(1) • PITCHER DELIVERING THE BALL

The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box.

6.8(2) • DISTRACTING THE BATTER

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

6.9 • PITCHING RESTRICTIONS

Neither the pitcher nor any other player shall, at any time during the game, be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball, the pitching hand or the fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands. Resin bags must remain on the ground near the pitching area. The pitcher may wear a sweatband on the pitching arm or tape on the fingers. Batting gloves may not be worn on the pitching hand. EFFECT: An illegal pitch shall be called on the first offense. If the pitcher continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, he should be ejected from the ball game.

6.10 • CATCHER

A. The catcher must remain within the perimeters of the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground or plate, or reaches the catcher's box.

B. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout. EFFECT: An additional ball is awarded to the batter.

6.11 • QUICK PITCH

The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken his position or when the batter is off balance as a result of a pitch. EFFECT: The umpire will call time and allow the batter to get set.

6.11(1) • PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL PITCHES

Any infraction of §6.3 through §6.10 is an illegal pitch. A ball shall be called on the batter. Runners may not advance. EXCEPTION: If a batter swings at any illegal pitch, it is nullified and the result of the play stands.

6.12 • WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half-inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than three warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, etc. NOTE: A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches.

6.13 • NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared when:

A. The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

B. The pitcher attempts to "quick pitch" the batter.

C. A runner is called out for leaving his base before the pitched ball reaches home plate, is batted, or touches the ground before reaching home plate.

D. The pitcher pitches before a runner has retouched his base after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.

E. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during his windup or during the back swing.

F. No player, manager or coach shall call time, employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is live 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 removed from the game.

EFFECT: §6.13 A-F: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is nullified.

6.14 • ILLEGAL PITCH

The umpire shall call an illegal pitch when the ball is at its highest point less than six feet or over twelve feet above the playing surface.

6.15 • SHORT PITCH

A pitched ball hitting the ground in front of home plate is a dead ball. A ball shall be called on the batter.

6.16 • WIND OR SUN AFFECTING BOTH PITCHERS

In significantly windy conditions, if, in the judgment of the umpire, the wind is having a discernible adverse effect on the accuracy of both pitchers, the umpire may declare that only strikes count. In the case of sun interference potentially affecting the pitcher's safety, the umpire may invoke a short suspension of play. EFFECT: Softball is an outdoor game played in the elements. Sun position affecting the batter is not a potential safety issue and shall not be the basis for a suspension of play.

6.17 • PITCHER'S MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Pitchers must wear a protective face mask that covers, at a minimum, the area of the face from above the eyes to the lower part of the chin while pitching. All pitchers must wear the mask consistent with the manufacturer's intended usage of their product.

6.17(1) • PLAYERS' RECOMMENDED SAFETY EQUIPMENT

All players, including pitchers, are encouraged to wear the recommended additional protective safety equipment, comprised of head gear (NOCSAE approved), heart/chest protection and shin guards. Players are not required to wear the recommended safety equipment.

SSUSA makes NO warranty as to the protective qualities of any mandated or recommended safety equipment when used in softball, which may have inherent risks as an impact sport. SSUSA does not make any specific claims

as to any safety equipment's performance and will not accept any liability for personal injury. The mandated face mask is designed to prevent injuries to the player's face, but not all injuries can be prevented. Players can still suffer serious injury while wearing any type of face protection.

6.17(2) • RELEASE (INJURY TO PLAYER)

By electing not to wear the recommended safety equipment, players waive any and all claims, individually, and by his or her heirs, and hold harmless Senior Softball World Championships, Inc., its Board of Directors, Senior Softball-USA, LLC, any municipal or park facility employees, their agents or employees and tournament directors and sponsors from and against any and all loss liability, charges and expenses (including attorney's fees) and causes of action of whatever character that may arise for injury that may have been reasonably prevented by the recommended safety equipment during participation in SSWC events;

6.17(3) • PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROCURING INSURANCE

Players are presumed to be fully aware that SSWC and SSUSA do not carry, or provide, any medical insurance for any participants and that all players are solely responsible for procuring their own insurance.

6.17(4) • ASSUMPTION OF INHERENT RISK

Players recognize that they assume all risk involved arising from participation in any SSUSA/SSWC sanctioned Tournament as a player electing not to wear the recommended safety equipment, and knowingly undertake the inherent risks of the sport; and

6.17(5) • SOFTBALL SKILLS

Players are presumed to be familiar with the skills required to participate as a player in an event sponsored by SSWC and SSUSA (including batting, fielding, running and throwing) and have satisfied themselves that they are proficient in these skills.

6.18 • INTENTIONALLY HITTING UP THE MIDDLE AT THE PITCHER

Any batted ball intentionally hit up the middle at the pitcher, regardless of whether or not it strikes the pitcher, shall result in a dead ball out. The batter will be ejected from the game and may be subject to an additional penalty in the form of a suspension. The determination of "intentional" is a judgment call by the umpire, is not subject to appeal and shall not be presumptive merely in the case of a batted ball striking the pitcher. EFFECT: The determination of intent shall be based upon the totality of the facts and circumstances present during the game, including previous statements and actions by players, managers and others prior to the incident that results in the umpire's judgment of intent or lack thereof.

SECTION 7

BATTING

7.1 • BATTING ORDER

A. The batting order of each team showing the players' last name and first initial or first name, uniform numbers and positions must be on the listed on the game card and must be completed and delivered to the plate umpire before the game. The plate umpire 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 a substitute who must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.

C. When the third out in an inning is made before the batter has completed his turn at bat, he shall be the first batter in the next inning and the ball and strike count on him shall be canceled.

D. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed his turn at bat in the preceding inning.

EFFECT - §7.1 B-D: Except for a wrong batter at bat, batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter, or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout.

1. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter may take his place and legally assume any balls and strikes. NOTE: The offensive team may correct a wrong batter at the plate with no penalty.
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 the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area: (a) the player who should have batted is out. (b) Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, walk, or a base hit shall be nullified. **Runners not called out must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.** (c) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. (d) If the batter declared out under these circumstances is the third out, the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put out by ordinary play.

3. If the error is discovered after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.
4. No runner shall be removed from the base he is occupying except the batter-runner who has been taken off the base by the umpire as in Number 2 above 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.

7.1(1) • BATTER ELIGIBILITY

A team may bat every player in the dugout and on the team roster. All batters must be listed on the lineup listed on the game card provided to the umpire prior to the start of the game. The number of batters listed cannot be reduced without recording an out when the vacant position comes to bat. In the case of an injury, an out will be recorded only the first time the vacant position comes to bat. (EXCEPTION: if a player is ejected and a substitute is not available an out will be recorded every time that position comes to bat).

7.2 • ON-DECK BATTER

A. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order.
B. The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest his bench.
C. The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two. Any detachable piece placed on the bat must be approved by the equipment standards committee following a one-year period observed by members of this committee.
D. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:
   1. When he becomes the batter.
   2. To direct runners advancing from third to home plate.
   3. To pick up bat discarded by a batter-runner.
E. The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's opportunity to make an out:
   1. If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
   2. If it is with the defensive fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.

7.3 • BATTING POSITION

A. The batter must have at least some portion of both feet on or inside the lines of the batter's box at the start of the pitch. A batter who steps out of the batter's box at any time during the pitch and then hits the ball, fair or foul, shall be called out. Steps out means touching the ground completely outside of the lines of the batter's box. (See §1.5)

B. **The batter will be called out if he hits the ball when his back foot is completely farther forward than the line defining the front edge of home plate. His front foot may be on the ground in front of the box when he hits the ball. NOTE: All other illegally batted ball infractions regarding the side and rear lines of the batter's box, along with stepping on the strike mat, remain in effect.**

C. The batter must take his position within ten seconds after being directed by the umpire. EFFECT: The umpire will call a strike. No pitch has to be thrown and the ball is dead.

D. The batter shall not step directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch. EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out and the runners may not advance.

7.3(1) • OBLITERATING THE BATTER'S BOX

Any player, in the umpire's judgment, deliberately erasing any portion of the batters box will be called out. If the person who erases the box (including a manager) is not due to bat next, the team's next batter will be declared out. For a second offense by the same team in the same game, the penalty is an inning-ending out.

7.4 • STRIKE CALLED BY UMPIRE

A. For each legally pitched ball hitting the strike mat before touching the ground and the batter does not swing. Any pitched ball that hits the ground or strike mat cannot be legally swung at by the batter. NOTE: If the batter swings and misses the pitch prior to the ball hitting the plate or mat it is a strike. EFFECT: The ball is dead.

B. For each legally pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter. EFFECT: The ball is dead. If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the illegal pitch is nullified.

C. For each foul tip. EFFECT: The ball is dead**.** NOTE: A foul tip may be a "waste foul."

D. For each foul ball, including the third strike.

E. 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 has fewer than two strikes.
EFFECT - §7.4 D-E: The ball is dead and each runner must return to his base.

F. If the batter does not take his position within ten seconds after being directed by the umpire.

G. When, after being warned by the umpire, a leading team coming to bat is delaying the game. (See §5.10(3))

7.5 • BALL CALLED BY UMPIRE

A. For each legally pitched ball that does not hit the strike mat, or touches the ground before reaching the strike mat, and the batter does not swing. Any pitched ball that hits the ground or strike mat cannot be legally swung at by the batter. NOTE: If the batter swings at a pitch after the ball hits the ground, the ball is dead and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. A ball is called.
B. For each illegally pitched ball not swung at.
C. When a pitched ball hits the batter while he is inside the batter's box.
D. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
E. For each excessive warm-up pitch.
EFFECT: §7.5 A-E: The ball is dead and runners may not advance.

7.6 • BATTER IS OUT

A. When a batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an altered bat. The batter is also ejected from the game and the tournament.
B. When the batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an illegal bat. The batter is also ejected from the game. The second offense by a member of the same team will result in the player and manager being ejected from the tournament.
C. When an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box when he hits a ball fair or foul. (See also §7.3)
D. When any part of a foot is touching the strike mat when he hits a ball fair or foul.
E. When the batter bunts or chops the ball, or does not take a full swing when deliberately hitting a pitched ball.
F. When members of the team at bat interfere with a player attempting to field a fly ball.
EFFECT: §7.6 A-F: The ball is dead and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
G. Upon hitting a foul ball on third strike, the batter is out. If a fly ball is caught in playable territory, the ball remains live and runners may advance at risk of being put out.
H. Whenever the exception under §4.4 (short-handed rule) applies.
I. The batter shall not hinder the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or intentionally hinder the catcher while standing within the batter's box. EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out and each runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was touched at the time of the interference.
J. When spectator interference is ruled. (See §8.2(2))

SECTION 8

ON BASE SITUATIONS

8.1 • TOUCHING BASES IN ORDER

The base runner must touch bases 1st, 2nd, 3rd and cross the scoring line or touch the scoring plate in that order.

A. When a base runner must return to bases while the ball is in play, he must touch the bases in reverse order. EFFECT: The ball is in play and base runners must return with liability to be put out.

B. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, he may hold the base until he has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner. EFFECT: Base runner is liable to be put out, whether or not he remains in contact with the base, if he fails to vacate the base for the succeeding runner.

C. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position neither he nor the succeeding runners in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position. The ball is in play and runners may advance with liability of being put out. NOTE: A runner in a double play situation who stops or retreats towards the base left is not to be considered as running the bases in reverse order or making a travesty of the game.

D. Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. EFFECT: The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it. The other runner can be put out by being touched with the ball. (See §8.1 B.)

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 the bases in proper order. However, if the preceding runner were to be called out for 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 succeeding runner has scored.

G. When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base. However, when a dead ball occurs, a runner may return to a missed base or a base he left illegally, if he is required to by the umpire in the awarding or determination of bases. The runner is not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he is required to by the umpire in the awarding or determination of the bases. The runner is not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he is required to return to.

H. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left illegally once he enters his dugout or bench area.

I. When the umpire has called four balls or when a walk is issued, all runners must touch all bases in legal order. Base runners do not advance unless forced.

J. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to subsequent bases. Awarded bases must also be touched in proper order.

8.2 • BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER

A. A batter becomes a batter-runner when he hits a pitched ball and has liability to be put out.

B. When four pitched balls have been called by the umpire. The batter-runner is awarded one base without liability to be put out. EFFECT: The ball is dead and runners may not advance unless forced. If the pitcher desires to intentionally walk a batter, he may do so by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base. If two batters are to be walked intentionally, the second intentional walk may not be administered until the first batter reaches first base. NOTE: If the umpire mistakenly allows two walks at one time and the first batter fails to touch first base, no appeal will be honored on the first batter, because an intentional walk constitutes a pitch to the succeeding batter that nullifies any appeal.

C. When he bats a fair ball even though it strikes another player, umpire or their attached clothing or equipment.

1. If the runner is hit with a fair batted ball while touching a base, he is not out. EFFECT: The ball is live or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the ball. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base runner hit by the ball, the ball remains live. However, after the runner in contact with the base is hit by the batted ball, it shall be the same as hitting the ground. Since the ball remains live, the defense is free to make whatever plays are available. If the defensive player is behind the base runner, the ball is ruled dead, the hitter is awarded a base hit and runners are advanced only if forced to advance.

2. If the runner is hit by the ball while off base and before it passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), the ball is dead and the hit runner is declared out. The batter-runner is awarded first base without liability to be put out.

8.2(1) • CATCHER OBSTRUCTING BATTER

When the catcher obstructs, hinders or prevents the batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball. EFFECT:

A. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal.

B. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled and all action resulting from the batted ball stands.

No option is given. NOTE: Once a runner has passed a base, he is considered to have reached that base (whether missing the base or not) and no option is given.

C. If the batter-runner and all runners have not advanced at least one base, the manager does not have the option to take the result of the play or accept the obstruction. The batter-runner will be awarded first base and advancing all other runners only if forced.

8.2(2) • SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE

If a spectator reaches into the field of play and interferes with the fielder's opportunity to catch a fly ball, the ball is dead, the batter is out and the runner(s) must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.

8.3 • BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT

A. When after hitting a fair ball he is legally put out prior to reaching first base.

B. When, after a fly ball is hit, the ball is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

EFFECT: §8.3 A and B: The ball remains live.

C. When he fails to advance to first base and enters his team area after a batted fair ball, a base on balls, or catcher obstruction. EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch unless put out prior to the violation.

D. When he runs outside the running lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base; however, he may run outside the three-foot lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or to avoid interfering with a throw coming from foul territory.

E. When he interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.

F. When he makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base, the ball is dead and all other runners shall return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

G. When the batter-runner intentionally interferes with a play at home in an obvious attempt to prevent an out, both the batter-runner and the base runner are out.

H. When he moves back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder. The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

I. When he hits an infield fly, when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. The ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches the highest point based on the position of the closest fielder

regardless who makes the play. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "infield fly, the batter is out" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near a foul line, the umpire shall declare "infield fly, if fair." The runner(s) may tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching), the same as on any fly ball. If a declared infield fly becomes foul, the umpire shall declare the ball foul.

J. When an infielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, that can be caught with ordinary effort with first base only, or first base and any other base(s) occupied, with less than two outs. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped. EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and each runner shall return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

8.4 • AFTER GETTING A HIT

8.4(1) • BATTER-RUNNER REACHING FIRST BASE

Each batter must reach first base without the aid of a courtesy runner. **EXCEPTION: For the 2026 Season in the 85+ and older age divisions, a one-year evaluation trial is instituted to allow courtesy runners from home to first base. Staff will develop and publish playing rules and regulations regarding the runner's starting point, how far he may advance and his exposure to be retired at first base on an outfield hit. All other courtesy runner rules at §8.5 will apply.** A double bag shall be used at first base, the double portion of the bag being in foul territory abutting first base. If there is a play on a batter-runner going to first base, the batter-runner must touch some portion of the double bag extending into foul territory. He will be called out if he fails to do so, except if, in the umpire's judgment, the batter-runner is avoiding a collision. The batter-runner simultaneously touching both portions of the double bag is permitted. This is NOT an appeal play. Important: The defending player has only the white base, in fair territory, to make the putout unless the play (such as an errant throw) pulls the fielder into foul territory. On any force out attempt from the foul side of the base, the defense and the batter-runner may use either portion of the double-base. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the double base shall be treated as one base and the fielder or runner may use either portion.

8.4(2) • HOME RUN OVER FENCE – MAJOR-PLUS (50+ TO 70+)

In the Major-Plus division for ages 50+ through 70+, a limit of nine home runs. Each home run over the limit is a dead ball out and base runners cannot advance. NOTE: Men's 40-Masters Major-Plus = 10 home runs, outs.

8.4(3) • HOME RUN OVER FENCE – MAJOR DIVISION

In the Major division, a limit of six home runs. Each home run over the limit is a dead ball out and base runners cannot advance. NOTE: Men's 40-Masters Major = 8 home runs, outs.

8.4(4) • HOME RUN OVER FENCE – AAA DIVISION

In the AAA division, a limit of three home runs. Each home run over the limit is a dead ball out and base runners cannot advance. NOTE: Men's 40-Masters AAA = 6 home runs, outs.

8.4(5) • HOME RUN OVER FENCE – AA DIVISION

In the AA division, a limit of one home run. Each home run over the limit is a dead ball out and base runners cannot advance. **NOTE: Men's 40-Masters AA = 3 home runs, outs.**

NOTE: For §8.4(2) through §8.4(5), the home run batter may return directly to the dugout and all other runners may return directly to the dugout. EFFECT: The concept known as "hit and sit" is permitted in SSUSA sanctioned events.

8.4(6) • GAME-WINNING HOME RUN

A team may hit up to its limit of home runs at any time during the game, including a game-winning home run.

8.4(7) • FOUR-BASE AWARD

Any fair ball touched by a player on either side of the fence that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory before touching the ground will be a "four-base award," and will not be included in the total over-the-fence home run count. NOTE: The batter may return directly to the dugout and all other runners may return directly to the dugout. EFFECT: The concept known as "hit and sit" is permitted.

8.4(8) • WHEN RUNNERS CAN ADVANCE AT THEIR RISK

Runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out:

A. When a pitched ball is batted.

B. On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.

C On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.

D. When a legally caught ball is first touched.

8.4(9) • WHEN A RUNNER CAN BE PUT OUT

A runner can be put out:

A. If, while the ball is in play, a runner is not touching the base.

B. If, after overrunning first base, in the umpire's judgment, the runner attempts to continue to second base.

C. If, after dislodging a base, the runner attempts to continue to the next base.

8.4(10) • WHEN RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE

Runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out:

A. When a fielder obstructs the progress of a runner or batter-runner, who is legally running the bases. 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. Should an act of interference occur after any obstruction, enforcement of the interference penalty would have precedence. EFFECT: When obstruction occurs, the umpire shall call "obstruction" and give a delayed dead ball signal for obstruction. NOTE: Failure of the umpire to call obstruction DOES NOT negate the obstruction.

   1. If play is being made on the obstructed runner or if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching 1st base, the ball is dead, and all runners advance without liability to be put out to the bases they would have reached. EXCEPTION: A base runner obstructed in a run down shall be awarded the lead base at the time of the obstruction. Any proceeding runners forced to advance by the award of bases for obstruction shall advance without liability to be put out.

   2. If no play is being made on the obstructed runner at the time of obstruction, the play shall proceed until the play is completed. The umpire shall call "time" and impose such penalties, if any, that will nullify the act of obstruction.

   3. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base that would have been reached had there not been an obstruction, the obstructed runner will be called out and the ball remains live.

   4. When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base, is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball, or a fielder who fakes a tag without the ball, the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base or bases that would have been 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.

   5. When any obstruction occurs (including a run-down), the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball.

B. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded first base.

C. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted or thrown ball with his helmet, cap, mask, protector, pocket, detached glove or any part of his uniform that is detached from its proper place on their person. EFFECT: The runners would be entitled to three bases from the time of the pitch if a batted ball, or two bases from the time of the throw if a thrown ball, and in either case, they can advance farther at their own risk. 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 should be awarded a four-base award.

D. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked. EFFECT: All runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hands. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the lead runner.

   EXCEPTION:

   1. If the ball becomes blocked because of offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is called out.
   2. If an awarded base is in error, after one pitch is thrown (legal or illegal), the error cannot be corrected.

E. When a fair ball bounces over or rolls under or through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field. Also when it deflects off a runner or umpire and goes out of play. EFFECT: The ball is dead, and all runners are awarded two bases.

   1. When the first throw is made by an infielder, two bases shall be awarded. The award shall be governed by the position of each runner at the time the pitch was made; however, if all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one base when the infielder makes the wild throw, on the first play after a pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made.
   2. When a throw is made by an outfielder or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the two base award shall be governed by the position of each runner and the last base he has touched at the time the throw was made. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.
   3. When a fielder loses possession of the ball such as on an attempted tag and the ball enters a dead ball area or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked. 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 the purposes of an over throw award.

F. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory. EFFECT: The ball is dead and each base runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered the dead-ball territory.

G. If, in the umpire's judgment, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead ball territory. (NOTE: A fielder carrying a live ball into a dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have unintentionally carried it there.) EFFECT: The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered or the ball was kicked, pushed or shoved into dead ball territory.

H. When there is spectator interference with any thrown ball, the ball is dead at the moment of the interference and the umpire shall award the base or bases that in his judgment the runner(s) would have reached had there not been any interference.

8.5 • COURTESY RUNNERS

8.5(1) • USING COURTESY RUNNERS

Any player on the roster and present may be a courtesy runner if listed on the official lineup. A courtesy runner may be used for a base runner at any time, but the same courtesy runner may not be used more than once per inning. Any courtesy runner found running more than once per inning will be called out. Any player on the team roster may be a courtesy runner; he does not have to be playing defense or in the batting order.

8.5(2) • USING A RUNNER ON BASE

A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

8.5(3) • COURTESY RUNNER REPLACEMENT

A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury causing removal of the original courtesy runner permanently from the game.

8.5(4) • COURTESY RUNNER COMING TO BAT WHILE ON BASE

A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat will be declared out. The runner will be removed from the base and a second courtesy runner cannot be substituted. Substitution for the original player will not prevent this out. The courtesy runner called out does not lose his turn at bat. EFFECTS: [1] The out occurs at the base the courtesy runner abandons to take his required turn at bat, unless it is the third out; and [2] The courtesy runner retired for the third out will be the first batter of the team's next half-inning at bat.

8.5(5) • COURTESY RUNNER OFFICIALLY IN THE GAME

A courtesy runner must report to, and be acknowledged by, the umpire before play resumes. A courtesy runner may enter the game only prior to the first pitch to any batter; the umpire(s) shall prevent entry of a courtesy runner during the at-bat. A courtesy runner is in the game when he touches the base. If a

courtesy runner is determined illegal, he will be called out upon touching the base and no other courtesy runner is allowed. The original runner may not return as the runner. An illegal courtesy runner on base is committing a continuing violation and may be called out upon appeal at any time while on base or, if he scores, prior to the first pitch to the next batter.

8.6 • WHEN SLIDING IS OPTIONAL - AVOIDING COLLISIONS

Sliding or diving into first base or the scoring line or scoring plate is permitted only to avoid a collision with a defensive player. This is an umpire's judgment call and is not subject to protest or appeal. A player may slide or dive into second or third bases, or when returning to any base. A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases or sliding or diving. If in the umpire's judgment a runner misses a base to avoid a collision, the runner will not be called out. If in the umpire's judgment the runner fails to avoid a collision with a defensive player involved in the play, the ball will be declared dead and that runner called out. All base runners except the batter will be returned to their previous base unless forced to advance. If in the umpire's judgment the runner's collision with the defensive player involved in the play negates a double play, the umpire may award a second out.

8.7 • OVER-RUNNING BASES

8.7(1) • OVER-RUNNING SECOND AND THIRD BASES

Players are not permitted to over-run second and third base without being in jeopardy of being tagged out. This rule applies to all age divisions. A player has the option of sliding. This option is included primarily so a player can avoid a collision.

8.7(2) • OVER-RUNNING FIRST BASE

A player may over-run first base without being in jeopardy of being tagged out. If the base runner, in the umpire's judgment, is tagged out before returning to first base after attempting to advance to second base, he will be declared out.

8.7(3) • OVER-RUNNING WHEN RETURNING TO BASE

A runner who overruns any base when returning to it is liable to be put out.

8.7(4) • AVOIDING COLLISIONS

A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner misses a base to avoid a collision with a defensive player, the runner will not be called out. (See §8.6.)

8.8 • COMMITMENT LINE

A commitment line thirty feet from the scoring line or scoring plate will be used. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing to the scoring line or scoring plate. **The runner may**

be tagged out until both feet have touched or crossed the line. EFFECT: If tagged once both feet have touched/crossed the line, the runner will be called safe, the ball remains live and the runner is not required to touch the scoring plate or cross the scoring line. NOTE: If a runner re-crosses the commitment line for any reason in an attempt to return to third base, he will be declared out and the ball remains live.

8.9 • RETIRING RUNNER AT HOME

8.9(1) • FORCE SITUATION AT HOME

Retiring a base runner at home becomes a force out situation once the runner has touched/crossed the commitment line. The defensive player must have possession of the ball while touching any portion of the strike mat before the runner gets a foot down on or down past the scoring line or down on the scoring plate.

8.9(2) • CROSSING OR TOUCHING STRIKE MAT OR BATTER'S BOX

The runner shall also be called out if he touches or crosses over any portion of the strike mat or the batter's box. The ball remains live.

8.10 • SCORING LINE AND SCORING PLATE

A base runner's foot down on or down past the scoring line or down on the scoring plate prior to the ball being received by a defensive player touching the strike mat results in the scoring of a run.

SECTION 9

MISCELLANEOUS

9.1 • DEAD BALL

The ball is dead and not in play:

A. When the ball is batted illegally.
B. When a batter steps from one box to another when the pitcher is ready to pitch.
C. When a ball is pitched illegally.
   EXCEPTION: If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the play stands.
D. When the umpire declares "No pitch."
E. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person or clothing, whether or not the ball is struck at.
F. When a foul ball is not caught.
G. When a base runner is called out for leaving a base early on a pitched ball.
H. When the offensive team causes interference.
I. When the ball is outside the playing limits of the playing field. A ball is considered "out of play" when it touches the ground, person on the ground or object outside the playing area.
J. In case of interference with the batter or fielder.
K. When the batter bunts or chops a pitched ball.
L. When the umpire calls time.
M. When the umpire calls time and an appeal play follows, the ball remains dead throughout the appeal.
N. When any part of the batter's person is hit by his own batted ball while he is in the batter's box.
0. When a runner runs the bases in reverse order.
P. When a 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, and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
Q. When a base runner fails to keep contact with his base until the pitched ball has reached home plate.
R. When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he reaches first base.
S. When a blocked ball is declared.
T. When the batter enters the batter's box with or uses an illegal or altered bat.
U. When a fair batted fly ball, including a line drive, that can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped, with less than two outs, and with a runner or runners on base at the time. EXCEPTION: An "infield fly" is a live ball.
V. When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.

W. When a batter is hit with his own-batted ball in fair territory outside the batter's box.
X. When a fair batted ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground before passing or touching an infielder, excluding the pitcher. EXCEPTION: A fair batted ball that deflects off the pitcher's glove remains a live ball. EFFECT: The batter is awarded first base, and runners advance one base only if forced with the exception that a runner struck while off base is out. (See also §8.2 C.)
Y. When a pitched ball not hit by a batter strikes the ground or mat.

9.2 • THE BALL IS IN PLAY

A. At the start of each half inning, when the pitcher has the ball in the pitching position and the umpire has called "play ball".
B. When the infield fly rule is enforced.
C. When a thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
D. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground after touching an infielder, including the pitcher. (See also §9.1 X)
E. When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
F. When the base runners have reached the bases that they are entitled, when the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
G. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
H. When no play is being made on an obstructed runner, the ball shall remain live until the play is over.
I. When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
J. When a base runner must return, in reverse order, while the ball is already in play.
K. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out.
L. When a base is dislodged while runners are running the bases.
M. When a runner runs out of the base line in regular or reverse order to avoid a tag by a fielder.
N. When a runner is forced or tagged out.
O. When the umpire calls the base runner out for failure to return and touch the base when play is resumed, after a suspension of play.
P. When a live ball strikes a groundskeeper, policeman etc. assigned to the game.
Q. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
R. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the umpire’s judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out and the ball is live and in play.
S. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
T. When a thrown ball strikes a coach.

U. As long as there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This would include an immediate live ball appeal before the umpire has called "time." Once the umpire has called "time" however, the ball remains dead during a subsequent appeal play.
V. When, in the umpire's judgment, a coach touches and physically assists a runner. EFFECT: A delayed dead ball signal will be given and play shall continue. The touched and assisted runner shall be ruled out and all other subsequent play will be ruled upon accordingly.
W. When the ball strikes a photographer assigned to the game by the tournament director

9.3 • THE BALL REMAINS LIVE

The ball remains live until the umpire calls "time," which should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area, and in the umpire's judgment, all play has ceased.

9.4 • FOUL FINAL STRIKE

Upon hitting a foul ball on the final strike, the batter is out. If the ball is caught in playable territory in the air, the ball remains live. Runners may advance at their own risk.

9.5 • RETRIEVING HOME RUN SOFTBALLS

Each team shall be required to retrieve its home run softballs. The softball shall be retrieved in a prompt manner and returned to the umpire. Teams may, in lieu of retrieving home run softballs, purchase SSUSA official softballs from the tournament director.

SECTION 10

ADVERSE WEATHER

10.1 • TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE DECISION

10.1(1) • TOURNAMENT PLAYED OR MODIFIED

SSWC qualifiers and World Championships may be played in adverse weather conditions, much like a football game. Teams accept these conditions when entering. If it becomes necessary in the judgment of the tournament committee, playing procedures may be modified. If game times must be reduced because of time limitations due to inclement weather, or other acts of God, the following methods may be implemented, in priority order:

A. Games may be reduced to five innings, with the 5th inning being the open inning. A game reduced to five innings becomes official only after the completion of five innings, or 4½ innings with the home team ahead.

B. In severe time restrictions, the batter may be allowed only one pitch.

10.1(2) • TOURNAMENT TERMINATED

If, in the opinion of the director(s), a senior softball tournament must be terminated prior to its conclusion because of adverse weather or other Acts of God, the tournament will not be postponed beyond its ending date. Should this unlikely event occur, refunds will be made at the discretion of the SSWC executive board. In no event will refunds be made after two games have been played. There is no guarantee of any refund. Participants must realize that nobody can control weather or other Acts of God.

10.1(3) • STANDINGS IF TOURNAMENT IS TERMINATED

If for any reason, such as inclement weather, a tournament must be terminated, game standings at the time of termination will determine the champions.

CO-ED PLAYING RULES

2026 - 2027

These are the official rules for Co-Ed competition in the Senior Softball Tournament Championships and qualifiers.

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SECTION 16

CO-ED PLAYING RULES • The following rules supplement the Official SSUSA playing rules for men's and women's 40-Masters play.

16.1 • ROSTERS FOR CO-ED PLAY

A. A legal team consists of 10 to 20 players.

B. All international male players must be at least 40 years old as of December 31 of the year they compete. All international female players must be at least 21 years old as of December 31 of the year they compete. All International players must present valid identification before participating.

C. American and Canadian team players: All male players must be at least 40 years old as of December 31 of the year they compete. All female players must be at least 30 years old as of December 31 of the year they compete. American and Canadian players must fully register and possess a valid SSUSA National Identification card.

D. Each American and Canadian team must be comprised of players who live within the same statistical metropolitan area.

16.2 • DEFENSIVE RULES

A. Ten players constitute a defense. At least four shall be female and no more than five male. At no time will six men be permitted on defense simultaneously.

B. Teams may start with nine players or drop to nine during the game as long as at least four are female. Teams cannot play with eight or fewer players.

C. Pitchers may be either male or female, but the catcher must be the opposite sex.

D. Teams shall have four outfielders and four infielders but may play one short in either the outfield or infield if the line-up starts with or drops to nine.

E. When a woman bats, infielders shall remain in their normal defensive positions and outfielders shall remain behind the 200-foot line until the ball is hit. EFFECT: The penalty shall result in the batter being awarded first base. Runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced to advance. NOTE: This is a judgment call by the umpire, who shall immediately declare "dead ball" when the violation occurs.

F. A female batter-runner may not be thrown out at first base **on an initial throw by an outfielder.** PENALTY: Batter-runner will be awarded **first** base.

16.3 • BATTING RULES

A. The lead-off batter may either be a man or a woman.

B. The batting order must alternate between sexes until all the players in the group with the fewest players have batted. A team may bat a maximum of two more men than women.

C. Two female players may bat consecutively, but male players may not bat consecutively until after all women have batted.

D. If a player leaves the game due to injury or ejection and no substitute is available, an automatic out will be declared each time that position comes up to bat, unless the preceding batter walked. NOTE: The game may end on an automatic out.

E. In a tournament where SSUSA provides the bats, all players must use a provided bat.

16.4 • WALKS

A. A male batter who receives a base on balls, whether intentional or unintentional, will be awarded two bases.

B. A female batter following a walked male batter has the option of taking her at-bat or accepting a walk.

C. Runners on base at the time of a walk advance only if forced.

16.5 • HOME RUNS – Co-Ed teams are allowed six home runs per game. Each home run over the limit is a dead ball out and base runners cannot advance.

16.6 • SOFTBALLS

A. Men hit the 12-inch official SSUSA softball. Women hit the 11-inch official SSUSA softball.

B. Play must stop and time be called by the umpire before a ball may be rotated out.

C. If a batter hits the wrong ball, the batter has the option to keep the result of the play or re-hit with the count the same as it was before that pitch. Runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

16.7 • COURTESY RUNNERS

A. A courtesy runner may enter the game only for a base runner of the same sex.

B. All other Courtesy Runner rules contained in §8.5 apply to Co-Ed play.