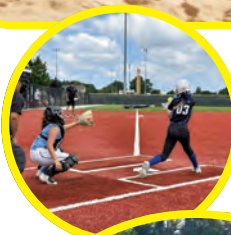




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NSA INSURANCE PROGRAM

Proper insurance is a concern of all the NSA Teams, Leagues, and Field Owners who host NSA sanctioned competitions. Please make an informed decision regarding your team insurance.

Youth teams are required to be covered by NSA WestPoint Insurance to meet the NSA coverage requirements. If the team purchases a yearly NSA WestPoint policy, no further action is required.

For teams that do not have a yearly NSA WestPoint Insurance policy: Teams will supply the Director with a copy of their current team insurance certificate - no matter the company, and the Director is then required to use the Weekend Program to ensure the team meets the NSA insurance requirements.

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PLEASE NOTE: Some companies are offering discounted team insurance policies that may not fully cover your team. Some offer LIABILITY ONLY, PARTICIPANT ACCIDENT/MEDICAL ONLY, or LEAGUE ONLY policies and those are NOT acceptable for play in any NSA event.

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Accidents happen, and with today's soaring medical costs, they can ruin an injured player's family financially. The NSA WestPoint Program offers \$100,000 of excess accident medical insurance for each covered injury which pays the bills left unpaid by other collectable insurance or health plans after a \$250 deductible.

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2024 NSA FAST PITCH RULE BOOK

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NSA – The Players Association

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The National Softball Association **FASTPITCH & MODIFIED OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES**

Official playing rules can be found at www.PlayNSA.com. All updates or corrections can be found there as this book is only a guide.

It is the responsibility of coaches, managers, players and sponsors to know the NSA Rules and Bylaws. Ignorance of these Rules and Bylaws is not grounds for protest or appeal. Softball is a contact sport, played with Composite, Aluminum, Wood and other approved materials in the design of approved bats. The game of softball can be a dangerous sport to participate in. In playing the game of softball, the player and the parents/guardian of the youth players participating in the game of softball assume for themselves and for the youth children participating in the game of softball the risk of serious injury or possible death. By agreeing to be placed on an NSA roster, the participants or parents of participants understand these risks.

NOTE: *The following rules govern play in both the Fastpitch and Modified Programs of the National Softball Association. The only variation between the two programs is the Modified Pitching Rules, which can be found in Rule 6.*

New Rule Changes & Additions are shown in bold highlighted print.

RULE 1 DEFINITIONS

SECTION 1 ALTERED BAT

A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or an illegal or non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat.

SECTION 2 APPEAL PLAY

A play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a manager, coach, or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, or before all infielders (including the pitcher) have left the field (crossed the foul lines). Any dead ball appeal as a game ending play must be made before the umpires have left the field. The appealed play does not change the type of out that is being appealed. There is such a thing as a fourth out appeal. This appeal is only done in order to prevent a run from scoring. An Appeal may be made after the 3rd out, to negate a run if appealed properly.

SECTION 3 APPROVED BAT

A bat model becomes approved after the bat manufacturer submits the bat to NSA after being tested by the official test facility and said model meets the requirements of a legal bat as defined in Rule 3, Sec.1.

SECTION 4 BALL ROTATION

A pitcher will have a choice of balls at the start of each half inning, with the exception that if both balls do not get put into play in the first half of the first inning; the pitcher in the bottom of the first inning must pitch the unused ball. Thereafter, every third out, the ball in play must be returned to the eight-foot circle. The pitcher now taking the field has a ball to start the next half inning. Before throwing a warm-up pitch, the pitcher may request to pitch the other ball giving the ball in his/her possession to the plate umpire. A choice has now

been made, and the pitcher must pitch this ball until it goes out of play or becomes blocked.

SECTION 5 BASE PATH

The imaginary direct line, as well as three feet to either side of the direct line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag.

SECTION 6 BASERUNNER

A player on the team at bat who has finished his/her batting turn, reached first base, and has not yet been put out.

SECTION 7 BATTER HIT BY PITCH

A legal or illegally pitched ball that hits the batter's person or clothing, provided the batter does not strike at the pitched ball. The plate umpire will award first base to the batter hit by the pitch. Any runners will advance one base if forced due to the batter being awarded first base.

SECTION 8 BATTER'S BOX

The area that the batter is restricted to while in position to bat. The batter must have both feet entirely within the lines of the box prior to the pitch. The lines are considered to be within the box.

SECTION 9 BATTER-RUNNER

A player who has finished his/her turn at bat but has not yet been put out or touched first base.

SECTION 10 BATTING HELMET

A batting helmet bearing the NOCSAE stamp is mandatory for each batter, on-deck batter, player, youth coach in the coach's box and any runner. The batting helmet worn by each batter, on-deck batter, player and youth coach in the coach's boxes and all runners must have extended ear flaps which cover both ears and temples. If a pitcher wears a batting helmet, the outer covering must have a non-glare surface. ALL HELMETS SHALL BE FITTED WITH A NOCSAE APPROVED FACE GUARD.

SECTION 11 BATTING ORDER

The batting order is the official lineup of offensive players listing the order in which team members must come to bat. A lineup card must include each player's name, number, and defensive position. Extra Players (EP) and Twin Player must also be included. In all tournaments, including Championship Play, it is OPTIONAL to bat the entire team roster, resulting in NO FIXED NUMBER OF EP'S. However, should one or more players get injured, ill or otherwise unable to continue the game. All pertinent rules governing normal use of the EP rule as described in Rule 4 Sec 3 are in effect.

SECTION 12 BLOCKED BALL

A live ball that is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game; or which touches any object that is not part of the official equipment or playing area.

NOTE: *A blocked ball is not called when a live ball strikes a base coach or on-deck batter and the contact is unintentional.*

SECTION 13 BUNT

A bunt is a fair ball in which the batter does not take a full swing but holds the bat in such a manner in the path of the ball to tap the ball slowly to the infield.

SECTION 14 BUNT ATTEMPT

Any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. The mere holding of the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt no matter the placement of the pitch. To take a pitch the batter must withdraw the bat away from the ball.

SECTION 15 CATCH

A catch is a legally caught ball that occurs when a fielder secures a batted or thrown ball with his/her hand or glove. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arms or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body or clothing, the catch is not complete until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, immediately after he/she contacts the ball, collides with another player, or wall (fence), or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall have complete control of the ball, and his/her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.

SECTION 16 CATCHER'S BOX

The catcher's box is the area in which the catcher must stay until the pitched ball is released. The lines of the box are considered within the box. All of the catcher's body and equipment must be within the catcher's box until the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire indicates an illegal pitch if the catcher is not in this position.

SECTION 17 CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY

Championship Play designates tournaments that carry the title of NIT, STATE, REGIONAL AND WORLD SERIES.

SECTION 18 CHARGED CONFERENCE

A charged conference takes place when:

- a) Defensive Conference - The defensive team requests a suspension of play for any reason, and a representative not on the field enters the playing field and delivers a message (by any means) to the pitcher or any defensive player. It is not a charged conference when the representative enters the field and removes the pitcher, or if the defensive team confers while the offensive team is in conference.
- b) Offensive Conference - the offensive team requests a suspension of play to allow the manager or other team representative, on or off the field, to confer with a batter or baserunner. It is not a charged conference when an offensive pitcher is putting on a warm-up jacket on base or if the offensive team confers while the defensive team is in conference.

SECTION 19 COACH

A member of the team at bat who takes his place in the coach's box to direct his/her players in running the bases. Two coaches are allowed, one positioned at first base and one positioned at third base. One coach can have in his possession a scorebook and an indicator, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only. The defensive coaches/manager must remain in the dugout, as their normal position, when their team is playing defense. Failure to obey this rule, after a warning is issued, will result in the coach/manager being ejected.

SECTION 20 CROW HOP

Prior to delivering the pitch, the pitcher replants the pivot foot and pushes off from a spot other than the pitcher's plate.

SECTION 21 DEAD BALL

The ball is not in play, and not considered in play again, until the pitcher has the ball in his/her possession and the umpire has called "play ball".

SECTION 22 DELAYED DEAD BALL

An infraction, signaled by the umpire, in which the ball remains alive until all play has been completed and time has been called.

SECTION 23 DELIVERY

Delivery of the pitch begins when the hands separate and ends with the release of the ball.

SECTION 24 ELECTRONIC DEVICES

An electronic device is any device capable of making or transmitting still or moving photographs, video recordings, or images of any kind any device capable of creating, transmitting, or receiving text or data; and any device capable of receiving, transmitting, or recording sound.

SECTION 25 FAIR BALL

A fair ball is a legally batted ball that:

- a) Settles on fair territory between home plate and 1st base or home plate and 3rd base. Home plate is in fair territory.
- b) Is on or over fair territory, including any part of 1st and 3rd bases, when bounding toward the outfield, or touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base.
- c) First falls in fair territory beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d) While in or over fair territory, touches the person of any umpire or player.
- e) While over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
- f) Hits an outfield fence on or between the foul poles.
- g) Shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and foul line and not as to the position of the fielder at the time he/she touches the ball.

SECTION 26 FLAGRANT PLAYER OBSTRUCTION

Is the act of a defensive fielder flagrantly, and with excessive force, impedes the runner or batter/runner

PENALTY: Immediate ejection of the defensive player.

SECTION 27 FORCE OUT

A force out is an out which can be made only when a baserunner loses the right to the base, he/she is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or a succeeding baserunner has been put out.

SECTION 28 FOUL BALL

A foul ball is a legally batted ball that:

- a) Settles on or is first touched in foul territory between home plate and 1st base or home plate and 3rd base.
- b) Bounds past 1st and 3rd base on or over foul territory.
- c) Falls first on foul territory beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d) While on or over foul ground, touches an umpire, player or foreign object to the natural ground.
- e) Touches the batter or bat in the batter's hand while within the lines of the batter's box.
- f) Shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and foul line and not as to the position of the fielder at the time he/she touches the ball.
- g) A batted ball that travels directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than the hand(s) or glove is a foul ball.

SECTION 29 FOUL TIP

A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, to the catcher's hands or glove, and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike. The ball remains live and in play. Runners may advance at their risk.

SECTION 30 ILLEGAL BAT

An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements. Rule 3, Sec. 1

SECTION 31 ILLEGAL PITCH

An illegal pitch is a delayed dead ball and is any infraction of the pitching. Rule 6, Sec. 1 – 8.

SECTION 32 ILLEGAL PLAYER

A Player who enters the line-up without the right to an offensive or defensive position. Examples of an illegal player(s) but not limited to are:

- a) Illegal use of the re-entry rule.
- b) Using a player to pitch who was removed from the pitching position.

SECTION 33 ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL

An illegally batted ball occurs when:

- a) A batter's entire foot is completely out of the box, on the ground, when he/she hits the ball fair or foul.
- b) Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate when he/she hits the ball.
- c) The batter hits the ball with an illegal, altered bat or non-approved bat.

SECTION 34 ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL

Occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his/her cap, illegal glove or any part of his/her uniform, detached from its proper place. See Rule 1, Sec.15.

SECTION 35 INELIGIBLE PLAYER

A player who is unregistered or who does not meet requirements to register.

Use of an ineligible player will result in a forfeit of any/all games played or in progress. Examples of an ineligible player but not limited to are:

- a) Playing under an assumed name.
- b) Players not on the team roster.
- c) Violating residence requirements.
- d) Violating divisional age requirements.
- e) Player(s) that are listed on two (2) official NSA sanctioned rosters without an official release form on file in the State Director's Office.
- f) An ejected player
- g) Improper use of a Guest Player.

SECTION 36 IN JEOPARDY

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

SECTION 37 INFIELD FLY

An infield fly is a fair ball, not including a line drive or an attempted bunt, which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases are occupied before two are out. Any fielder can catch an infield fly.

NOTE: *All divisions play with an infield fly rule.*

***NOTE:** *When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire(s) 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 – BATTER IS OUT, IF FAIR". The ball is alive, and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch 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.*

SECTION 38 INNING

An inning is that portion of a game in which the teams alternate between offense/defense. There are three outs for each team. A new inning begins when the third out of the bottom of an inning is declared.

SECTION 39 INTENTIONAL DROPPED BALL

A ball that has first been caught, by the definition of a catch, and is then intentionally dropped in an attempt to confuse or obtain additional outs.

SECTION 40 INTERFERENCE

Interference is an act by the offensive team which prevents a defensive player from executing a play. It may be intentional or unintentional. Non-softball actions such as waving the arms or yelling at a defender may also be considered interference.

SECTION 41 LEGAL TOUCH

A legal touch occurs when a runner or batter-runner, who is not touching a base, is touched by the ball while the ball is held securely in a fielder's hand(s). The ball is not considered as being 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 of the fielder. It is sufficient for the fielder to touch the runner with the glove that holds the ball.

SECTION 42 NON - APPROVED BAT

A non-approved bat is one that does not bear the NSA 2012 logo (See Rule 3 Equipment) or one that bears the NSA 2012 logo from a bat company that is not listed on the Approved Bat Companies list found at www.PlayNSA.com

SECTION 43 OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is the act of: A defensive team member who hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is fielding a batted ball or executing a play. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal. Prior to the pitch, catcher obstruction does not apply, a dead ball shall be called and allow the batter to reset him/herself.

SECTION 44 OVERTHROW

An overthrow is a play in which a ball is thrown to retire a runner who has not yet reached or is off base and goes into foul territory beyond the boundary lines of the playing field.

SECTION 45 PASSED BALL

A pitch the catcher fails to, with ordinary effort, stop or control and which enables a runner(s) to advance.

SECTION 46 PIVOT FOOT

The pitcher's foot that must be in contact with the pitcher's plate or ground until the pitcher steps towards home plate.

SECTION 47 QUICK PITCH

A quick pitch is an attempted pitch made before the batter is in the batter's box, or if the batter is in the box, and he/she is not yet positioned and ready.

NOTE: *The umpire shall stop play and declare "NO PITCH". The ball is dead. All action is nullified.*

SECTION 48 SACRIFICE

A batter is credited with a sacrifice when, with not more than one out, a bunt or hit fly ball enables a runner to score. In either case, the batter-runner would be put out before reaching first base or would have been put out if the hit had fielded without error.

SECTION 49 SLAP

A batted ball that the batter has struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

SECTION 50 SQUEEZE

A play in which the runner advances toward home plate from third base following the release of the pitched ball, and the batter bunts the ball permitting the runner to score.

SECTION 51 STRIKE ZONE

The strike zone is that space over any part of home plate that is between the batter's armpit and the top of the batter's knees when the natural batting stance is assumed. Any part of the ball passing through this strike zone is considered a strike. The umpire is instructed to determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when swinging at a pitch.

SECTION 52 THREE (3) FOOT LINE

The three (3) foot line is a line parallel to, and three (3) feet from the base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and first base. The batter-runner is declared out when he/she runs outside the three (3) foot line, and in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball or interfering with a thrown ball.

SECTION 53 TIE BREAKER/EXTRA INNINGS

After the completion of seven (7) innings or when the time limit has expired and the score is still tied, the tie-breaker procedure will begin. This would involve the last recorded out assuming a position on second base. This would be done at the beginning of each half inning, until, at the conclusion of a full inning, a winner is determined.

SECTION 54 TIME

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

SECTION 55 TURN AT BAT

A player's turn at bat begins when he/she enters the batter's box and continues until he/she is putout or becomes a baserunner.

SECTION 56 WILD PITCH

A pitch that cannot be handled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

RULE 2 THE PLAYING FIELD

SECTION 1

The playing field is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded. The playing field shall have a clear and unobstructed area within the radius of the prescribed fence distances, from home plate between the foul lines.

NOTE: If during the course of any game, the base distance or pitching distance is found to be in error, the error should be corrected immediately, and the game should continue. This is not a point to be protested.

SECTION 2

The playing field dimensions for youth and adult Fastpitch/modified softball programs are as follows:


<u>AGE GROUPS</u>	<u>MINIMUM FENCE DISTANCE</u>	<u>MAXIMUM FENCE DISTANCE</u>	<u>BASE DISTANCE</u>	<u>PITCHING DISTANCE</u>
GIRLS 10 & U	150 ft	200 ft	60 ft	35 FEET
GIRLS 12 & U	175 ft	200 ft	60 ft	40 FEET
GIRLS 14 & U	175 ft	200 ft	60 ft	43 FEET
GIRLS 16 & U	200 ft	225 ft	60 ft	43 FEET
GIRLS 18 & U	200 ft	225 ft	60 ft	43 FEET
ADULT WOMEN	200 ft	225 ft	60 ft	43 FEET
ADULT MEN	225 ft	250 ft	60 ft	46 ft
	NONE (MODIFIED)		65 ft (MODIFIED)	

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- a) Distances from home plate to 2nd base:
 65' bases - 91'11"
 60' bases - 84'10"
 55' bases - 77'9"
 50' bases - 70'8 1/2"

SECTION 3 GROUND RULES OR SPECIAL RULES

Ground rules or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed upon by leagues or opposing teams whenever backstops, fences, stands, vehicles, spectators, or other obstructions are within the prescribed area.

- a) **TEMPORARY FENCE** – The entire fence is inside the field of play, from the base to the top. When a fence is standing, a ball that hits it and stays on the field of play, remains alive. A fielder that hits it, climbs it, is still in live ball territory until such fielder, glove or ball touches dead ball ground beyond the fence. The same rationale applies when the fence is knocked down, the entire fence is in the field of play from base to top. A ball sitting on it, a fielder standing on it are still in live ball territory until a fielder, glove or ball touches dead ball ground beyond the fence.

SECTION 4 THE PLAYING FIELD LAYOUT SHOULD INCLUDE:

- a) Markings for foul lines
- b) The three-foot line is drawn parallel to and 3 feet from the baseline, starting at a point halfway between home plate and 1st base.
- c) The batter's on-deck circle is a 5-foot circle placed between home plate and 1st base and between home plate and 3rd base.
- d) The batter's box, one on each side of home plate, shall measure 3 feet by 7 feet. The inside lines of the batter's box shall be 6 inches from home plate. The front line shall be 4 feet in front of the center of the plate. The lines are considered as being in the batter's box.
- e) The catcher's box shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be 8 feet 5 inches wide.
- f) The coach's box is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond, toward home plate.
- g) There shall be a sixteen (16) foot circle drawn around the pitcher's plate, eight (8) feet in radius.

RULE 3 EQUIPMENT

By taking the field (no matter if a pre-game conference with the coach/manager was held or not) the coach and/or team manager/representative automatically verifies that his/her team is legally and properly equipped.

NSA Altered Bat and Altered Ball Procedures

For the past several years the NSA has embarked on more stringent test procedures for bats and balls. NSA feels that it has the very best testing procedures in the game; however, there are always players, coaches and outside agencies who will do their best to get around these rules. The rules were implemented to keep our patrons safe and to make this game the safest it can be. With the one word "SAFETY" in mind, NSA will not tolerate anyone who would embark in any manner that would put our patrons in peril. As a Director, UIC or Umpire, if you feel that a player may be using an altered bat or ball in NSA play, the Director or UIC will have the authority to inspect the

bat or ball and to suspend the suspected player(s). The offending player(s) will have two choices only: 1) He/she can allow the NSA representative to inspect the bat or ball and the NSA representative can reach a conclusion as to whether the bat or ball may be altered or he/she can refuse to allow the representative to inspect the bat or ball and take an immediate five (5) year suspension from any and all NSA play with no right of appeal. In addition to the immediate five (5) year suspension by the offending player and/or team, failure to allow a site inspection of the bat or ball or failure to allow the bat or ball to be sent into the NSA National Headquarters for further inspection, will result in forfeit of the game in progress, and forfeiture of all remaining games in the tournament; WITH NO REFUND of entry fees. 2) He/she may after allowing the NSA representative to inspect the bat or ball and the NSA Representative has decided that the bat or ball "could be" altered; the player may allow the director to send the bat or ball to the NSA National Headquarters for inspection. If the NSA National Headquarters decides that the bat or ball may be altered, the NSA will then send the bat or ball to the Manufacturer of the bat or ball for a final determination on whether the bat or ball is altered, or he/she can accept an immediate two (2) year suspension without the right of appeal. During the time of the examination of the bat or ball by NSA and/or the Manufacturer, depending on the sole discretion of the NSA National Headquarters, the NSA may suspend the suspected offending player pending the findings from the Manufacturer and or NSA or final decision of the NSA. If the NSA and/or the Manufacturer determine in their sole discretion that the bat or ball has been altered, the NSA may suspend a first-time offender no less than two (2) years and no more than five (5) years. A suspension decision may be appealed by contacting the Executive VP of the National Softball Association and scheduling an Appeal hearing at the convenience of the National Softball Association at the NSA National Headquarters, which is located at 103 Bradley Way, Nicholasville, Kentucky. A second time offender under this altered bat/ball suspension process will be suspended for life.

The responsibility for knowing whether a bat or ball is altered is that of the user and/or the owner of the bat or ball. If an individual uses a bat or ball in NSA play or is the owner of a bat or ball that is brought into an NSA game or facility, the suspensions will be imposed without regard to what the individual knew about the bat or ball being altered. "An individual must know that his/her bat or ball is not an altered bat or ball, if he/she brings either into an NSA facility or game. If not, the individual can be suspended from any and all NSA activities. The fact that the individual did not know that the bat or ball was altered is not a factor in imposing the suspension. The question is only whether the bat or ball is altered or not.

An altered bat is considered altered when the physical structure of the legal bat has been changed in any way, or when an illegal or non-approved bat has been made up in such a way as to appear to be a legal bat. Examples of altering a bat are, but not limited to the following: Painting a bat, replacing the handle rolling, compressing the bat in any way that is not done during the act of batting/hitting a softball or shaving the handle or barrel or the taper changed in any way such as by sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means, removing or replacing the plug or changed in any way other than factory repairs, had the knob removed/replaced or changed in any way or had anything removed or added to the

inside or outside of the bat other than the legal way to tape the bat the specified and appropriate place as described in the NSA Rule Book.

Examples of an altered ball (but not limited to) are: Any ball frozen, or kept cold in a cooler to make the core harder or livelier or any ball that has been cooked in a microwave oven, or the seams/stitches or cover that has been altered in any way. If the physical structure of the ball (inside or outside) has been altered in any way other than the alterations that are caused by usage, that ball is to be considered altered. Should an umpire or player be thrown a ball that is colder than the outside temperature, that ball is to be immediately thrown out of the game, the game forfeited and the offending person(s) suspended for altering a softball. At any time during any NSA game an umpire has the authority to not allow a ball to be played with if the umpire suspects in any way shape or form that some sort of altering has been done to the approved NSA softball that is presently being played with or attempted to be played with.

NOTE: *For every Division contained inside the cover of this Rule Book all equipment must be 100% conforming, 100% of the time. The NSA reserves the right to approve or reject any softball related equipment for its intended use in the NSA Program. Equipment does not merely need to meet industry standards but must meet NSA Standards before approval for its use is granted. If the NSA should believe in any way shape or form that a particular piece of equipment is dangerous and/or not acceptable for fair play, the NSA reserves the right to ban such equipment immediately.*

****NOTE:*** *The NSA has adopted a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or less. All bats with a BPF of 1.20 or less for the entire length of the barrel or hitting surface are approved for use in the NSA Program, unless the NSA believes in any way shape or form that a particular bat is dangerous and/or not acceptable for fair and safe play.*

*****NOTE:*** *The NSA reserves the right to ban such equipment immediately. All bats used in NSA Play must be stamped with a BPF of 1.20 or less*

EXCEPTION: *Wooden Bats do not have to be stamped with a 2012 Logo but must be stamped "Softball" or "Official Softball". Wooden Bats are legal in all NSA Play*

SECTION 1 OFFICIAL BAT

The official bat shall bear the NSA 2012 logo and be a bat manufactured by a bat company that is listed on the Approved Bat Company list found at www.PlayNSA.com. The official bat cannot be a bat from a company that is not listed as an Approved Bat Company. The Official bat shall be of one piece or interchangeable barrel construction and can be made of wood (hardwood) or other materials approved by the NSA; or formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive, in such a way, that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat. When the interchangeable barrel bat is joined together properly, the two-piece bat must meet all NSA official bat requirements. Below is a list of additional requirements for all approved NSA BATS:

- a) The bat shall not be more than 34 inches in length and no more than 38 ounces in weight and shall meet the NSA bat standards. (See Above ****NOTE*** and *****NOTE*** for further bat standards.) Any bat which cannot be identified by markings on the bat as an approved bat shall be considered illegal.

EXCEPTION: *Wooden bats must be stamped "Softball" or "Official Softball" and meet the standards described in Rule 3.*

- b) The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (not smooth plastic type), or combination material. (EXCEPTION Wood Bats)
- c) The grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the knob or bottom of the bat.
NOTE: Spray or Pine Tar or other approved substances may be applied to the handle of the bat to enhance the players' ability to grip the bat (i.e. Pine tar, Spray or other sticky substances). However, the application of such substances may not exceed 15 inches from the knob or bottom of the bat and at no time will such substances be applied to the barrel of the bat. PENALTY: The bat will be deemed an illegal bat.
- d) In the case of well used bats, sufficient markings must remain to make the bat identifiable as an NSA Approved bat. (Bat name and/or model number along with the NSA 2012 logo should suffice for this purpose). Any bat which cannot be identified by markings on the bat as an approved bat shall be considered illegal.
- e) The bat may be made of metal or other materials approved by the NSA and may be angular; however, the NSA must approve any material before it is used in sanctioned events.
- f) All exposed surfaces of the bat must be smooth and free of burrs, pins, rivets, DEEP DENTS OR DANGEROUS DENTS, fractures/cracks of any type, hairline or otherwise, sharp edges or any type of exterior fastener that would present a safety hazard. Those bats are to be removed from the game immediately.
EXCEPTION: At the umpire's discretion slightly dented bats may be considered legal.
- g) All Bats manufactured on or later than 1/1/2012 must be fitted with a tamper proof end cap or roll over end and tamper proof knob combination. Unless the bat is made of one-piece construction or interchangeable two piece barrel construction with the barrel end closed, it should have a tamper resistant rubber or plastic insert in the barrel.
- h) Bats manufactured on or after 1/1/2012 must also bear the NSA Approved 2012 logo. See Graphic Below



- i) A one-piece rubber grip and knob combination is legal.
- j) Metal or other approved material bats, if made with a knob on the handle, the knob must be welded or mechanically fastened.
- k) The knob portion of the bat may be taped as long as the bat does not exceed 34 inches in length; however, the umpire may request the tape to be removed from both the handle and knob, if there is any question concerning the bat being altered or illegal. After determining the bat to be legal, the player may tape the bat back to his/her preference, providing the bat meets the requirements set forth by Rule 3, Sec. 1 (a-m).
- l) A flare or cone grip may be attached from the factory or a factory flare or cone may be attached to the bat by the player, but the flare or cone must be installed properly to the bat. The flare or cone must be taped or covered by an approved bat grip. A flare or cone grip that does not meet

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the specifications of Rule 3 is considered an altered bat. ***STINGERS ARE APPROVED FOR NSA PLAY PROVIDED THEY ARE PROPERLY INSTALLED.***

- m) Shall be rounded and shall be smooth. Shall not be more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/16 inch is permitted, to allow for expansion on the round bat.
- n) All bats must be submitted by the manufacturer to a test facility approved by NSA and must meet the bat standards supplied to bat manufacturers. All bats must be 100% conforming to all of Rule 3 and remain 100% conforming 100% of the time. Only those model bats from licensed NSA Bat Companies that bear the NSA 2012 logo will be considered legal for NSA play.

NOTE: Sec. 1 (a-n) Any bat that does not comply with these guidelines or that is not listed on the Official NSA Approved Bat Companies List (REFER TO: playnsa.com for approved bat companies list) must be removed from the game, penalties (if any) administered, and the bat may no longer be used in any NSA Sanctioned Play.

SECTION 2 OFFICIAL BALL

The official softball shall be a raised-seamed, concealed-stitched or flat-surfaced ball. The center of the ball may be made of either long fiber kapok or mixture of cork and rubber, and/or machine wound, with a fine twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement or it may be made of other materials approved by the NSA. The single layer cover of the ball shall be optic yellow, tanned horsehide, cowhide or any other materials approved by the NSA, cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with black waxed cotton or black linen thread to form a black stitched softball. The softball MAY NOT be multi layered. The solid core ball must be stamped with one of the official NSA logos. The ball ***MAY NOT*** bear any other logos except for the NSA official logo unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director or the Executive Vice President of the NSA.

- a) The official softball used for all divisions of the fast pitch Program will be the 12" raised-seam softball.

EXCEPTION: The youth division, boys and girls 10 & under, will use the 11" softball.

REFER TO: PlayNSA.com for Approved Ball Companies list -- See below for approved logo's



SECTION 3 GLOVES

All fielders must wear gloves made of leather or other approved materials. Gloves with optic yellow circles on the outside, giving the appearance of a ball, may not be worn by any player and will be considered illegal. Maximum height of the glove shall be 15”.

SECTION 4 SHOES

All players, coaches, and participants must wear shoes. Sandals are considered proper shoes for non-players. A shoe shall be made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar materials. The sole may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber or polyurethane cleats. Metal cleats or any type of shoe that has exposed metal on the sole other than the cleat or rivet are not legal in youth play in the 12u division and younger. Metal cleats are legal in 14u, 16u, 18u and all adult fast pitch divisions.

EXCEPTION: *When a ballpark has specific rules that prohibit the use of metal cleats, the official park rules will take preference and be observed.*

PENALTY: *If it is discovered during the game that an offensive player is wearing metal cleats an out will be called and the player will be ejected. A defensive player who is wearing metal cleats will be ejected, any baserunner(s) must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

SECTION 5 EQUIPMENT/OTHER

- a) No Equipment shall be left lying on the field, either in foul or fair territory.
- b) THE NATIONAL SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT ANY TYPE OF JEWELRY NOT BE WORN IN ANY NSA PLAY.
- c) Casts, (plaster, metal or other hard substances) or other items judged dangerous by the Tournament Director/UIC may not be worn during the game, by any coach coaching the bases or by any player.

EXCEPTION: *In some cases, a protective device may be attached to an approved head protector, with prior approval by the local NSA Director.*

- d) Coaches in wheelchairs MAY be on the field of play during live ball situations. NSA recommends, though not mandatory, that coaches who choose to coach on the field who are in wheelchairs would pad exposed metal that potentially may be dangerous to other participants.
- e) Prosthesis may be worn; however, any metal that is part of a brace or support must be covered by ½” soft foam or soft material and taped.

EXCEPTION: *In some cases, a protective device may be attached to an approved head protector, with prior approval by the local NSA Director.*

SECTION 6 UNIFORM

All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color and style.

NOTE: *If a team is not in compliance with the uniform rule, the opposing team, if in total uniform, has the choice of being the home or visiting team. Non-compliance of the uniform rule must be brought to the attention of the home plate umpire prior to the coin toss between the coaches. Once the game starts, there is no penalty.*

- a) Ball caps or visors must be alike and must be worn properly. Caps or visors are not mandatory but when worn by one or more players must be identical and must be a team cap or visor. Hard plastic visors, bandanas, handkerchiefs and the like are not approved headgear.
- b) **In the umpire’s judgment:** No player may wear any object on their person, that would be a distraction, or wear any object that may be dangerous to the player’s person or any other player involved in the contest. *Examples are but not limited to: Glitter or sparkles, looped ear rings, necklaces that could create a hazard, pitchers with a helmet that creates a glare.* Effective 1/1/2016, no player will be permitted to wear “Optic Yellow” or “lime green” pants / shorts or any similar color that

would resemble the softball. Optic Yellow or Lime Green pinstripes or side leg trim will be permitted.

- c) Players may wear multi-colored undergarments under their uniform shirts or shorts. It is not mandatory that all players wear these undergarments, but if worn, they shall not be ragged, frayed, or lit on exposed areas.
- d) Players may wear scrunchies or tie-ups if worn in good taste and not worn in a derogatory fashion. Scrunchies may not be worn in a fashion to hide or prohibit the viewing of the player's number.
- e) Distinguishable numbers must be worn and visible on all uniforms and be a minimum of six (6) inches in height. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. If this occurs, the umpire must ensure that this is corrected immediately.

EXAMPLE: # 7 and # 07 are distinguishable numbers and ARE NOT considered identical.

NOTE: *Play prior to detection of jewelry is not affected by violation of the jewelry rule. Violation of the jewelry rule is not grounds for protests.*

***NOTE:** *Prior to the start of the game, the manager/coach shall be responsible for verifying to the Umpire-in-Chief that all his/her players are equipped and in compliance with the Official NSA Rule Book.*

SECTION 7 HELMET

A batting helmet bearing the NOCSAE stamp is mandatory for each batter, on-deck batter, player, any runner, and youth coach in the coach's box. The batting helmet worn by each of these individuals must have extended ear flaps that cover both ears and temples. For all youth Fast Pitch play: The helmet must have a properly attached face guard and the face guard must bear the NOCSAE stamp to be approved. If a pitcher wears a batting helmet while pitching, the outer covering must have a non-glare surface. Plastic visors are prohibited for players, coaches and managers. The batting helmet must be worn properly at all times.

EXCEPTION: *In the adult program, one or two ear flaps are acceptable.*

PENALTY: The Umpire will issue a team warning if any player is found to be in non-compliance. All subsequent violations of the warned team will result in the ejection of the player not in compliance with this rule.

- a) When an umpire detects a runner (including the batter/runner) deliberately removing his/her batting helmet during playing action, a dead ball will be declared immediately. The violator is declared out with all runners returning to the last base touched at the time of the infraction. Preceding runners, scoring before the removal of the helmet, will score and are not required to return to the last base occupied.

SECTION 8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The National Softball Association HIGHLY RECOMMENDS to the parents and coaches of ALL players (especially pitchers, 3rd & 1st basemen) to have their children and players wearing not only protective equipment but wearing PROTECTIVE FACE MASKS during all live ball play!

Beginning August 1, 2018, all Pitchers 8U and under and 10U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching.

Beginning August 1, 2019, all Pitchers 12U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching.

Beginning August 1, 2020, all Pitchers 14U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching.

Beginning August 1, 2021, all Pitchers 16U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching.

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Beginning August 1, 2022, all Pitchers, in all age groups, must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching.

The catcher must wear a NOCSAE approved head protector and protective mask, with throat protector (may be an extension of the mask or a commercially manufactured, properly attached, and not altered in any manner.), body protector, and baseball/softball shin guards. The male catcher or any male player warming up a pitcher shall wear an approved protective cup. Any player warming up a pitcher at any location within the confines of the park or facility will be required to wear an approved head protector and an approved mask with throat protector.

All protective equipment must conform to industry standards. All players are permitted to wear any approved protective equipment including catcher's equipment, batter's helmet, and soccer-style shin guards. If used, the equipment must not be detached. Detached equipment can be an obstruction. Repeated acts could be grounds for ejection. For all additional Equipment that is approved for NSA play, refer to www.PlayNSA.com

RULE 4 PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTION

Any non-player who is not yet considered an adult, may not be between the fences or boundaries that are considered the playing field without a NOCSAE approved helmet with a NOCSAE approved face mask properly attached. Any youth division bat boys/bat girls who are the teams' official bat boy/bat girl or who are team members serving as bat boy/bat girl must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with a NOCSAE approved face mask properly attached. The coach/manager or player representing the team is responsible for ensuring that the non-player be in compliance with the batting helmet rule or age rule.

PENALTY: The player, non-player, bat boy or bat girl will put the helmet on or be removed from the playing area.

NOTE: *Any player participating in any NSA sanctioned event must be physically able to participate. By physically able, the player must be able to walk on and off the field and play the game as intended. This is intended to keep injured people from further injury.*

SECTION 1 LINE UP

A team shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of twelve (12) players if the two (2) optional Extra Player (EP) and the Twin Player are used. Teams can play a maximum of nine (9) players on defense. ***Teams will be allowed to start with 8 players with the 9th spot in the batting order being an out. If the 9th player shows up, he/she can be immediately inserted into the 9th spot in the batting order.***

Players of the team in the field may be stationed anywhere on fair territory, except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box, and the pitcher who must be in a legal pitching position at the start of each pitch. No part of the defensive player's foot (except catcher) may be outside the foul lines, from the time when the pitcher steps on the pitching rubber or until the pitch is released.

A team must have the required number of players present in the team area to start or continue a game. Players listed in the starting line-up and not available at game time may be substituted for and re-entered later. Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official scorekeeper or the umpire at

the start of each game. The line-up shall contain, at minimum, the last name, position, and uniform number of each player.

NOTE: *If a wrong number is on the line-up card, correct it and continue playing ball with no penalty.*

- a) All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place by, at minimum, last name and uniform number.
- b) Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list any time during the game.

SECTION 2 TWIN PLAYERS

- a) Any two players may be designated as “TWIN PLAYERS”. **The use of TWIN PLAYERS must be made known at the pre-game meeting and written on the line-up card.** Both names must be written on one (1) line on the line-up card or write the names of the TWIN PLAYERS on two lines with the word TWIN PLAYERS before their names. One (1) set of Twin Players are allowed per game.
- b) The TWIN PLAYERS are interchangeable. The TWIN PLAYERS occupy one (1) slot in the batting order and are locked to that slot for the duration of the game. One TWIN can replace the other on offense (either as a batter or runner) at any time and as often as desired without the action being considered a substitution.
- c) Any 9 players in the line-up can play defense at any time. The TWIN PLAYERS may play defense at the same time.
NOTE: *A team must have a minimum of ten (10) players to utilize the Twin Players.*
- d) There is no requirement that a TWIN PLAYER play defense at any time during the game.

SECTION 3 EXTRA PLAYER

- a) **An EP(s) is optional, but if one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of game and be listed on the line-up sheet or score sheet.**
 - 1) If the EP(s) is used, he/she must be used the entire game.
 - 2) The EP(s) must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
 - 3) If an EP(s) is used, all players (10 or 11) must bat and any nine (9) can play defense. Defensive positions can be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.
 - 4) The EP(s) may be substituted for at any time, either by a pinch runner or a pinch hitter who then becomes the EP. The substitute may be a player who has not yet been in the game.
- b) The Extra Player (EP) can play defense. Coaches have the option of using two (2) EP’s.

EXCEPTION: *In all tournaments, it is OPTIONAL to bat the entire team roster, resulting in NO FIXED NUMBER OF EP’S. However, should one or more players get injured, ill or otherwise unable to continue the game. All pertinent rules governing normal use of the EP rule as described in Rule 4 Sec 3 & 5 are in effect.*

SECTION 4 GUEST PLAYER

Improper use of the Guest Player(s) will fall under the definition of an Ineligible Player (Rule 1, Section 35). Please refer to the Fast Pitch Bylaws for using Guest Player(s) properly.

SECTION 5 RE ENTRY

Any of the starting and substitute players may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once. (This includes the EP(s) and/or Twin Players, provided that

the players occupy the original position in the batting order whenever in the game).

NOTE: *The original player and her substitute cannot be in the game at the same time.*

- a) Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an illegal player. Refer to Rule 4, Sec 9.
- b) Violation of the re-entry is handled as an appeal that can be made ANYTIME during the game.

SECTION 6 LINE UP REQUIREMENTS

A team must have the required number of players to start or continue a game.

- a) Eight (8) players, Nine (9) players, Ten (10) players if one EP only is used, Eleven (11) players if two EP's are used, Twelve (12) players if the two EP's and the Twin Players are used. If a team starts the game with the EP(s), the team must finish the game with the EP(s) or be penalized as follows: if the EP(s) or any other player is removed, injured or ejected from the game with no substitute to replace the player, the vacated spot automatically becomes an out each time the vacant spot comes to bat or anytime a runner is removed from the base with no legal substitution. A team starting with eight (8) players and no available substitute must finish the game with eight (8) players. A team playing with nine (9) players and no available substitute may finish the game with eight (8) players if an injury occurs with the vacant spot being an out as described in Rule 4 Sec 6 (b).
- b) When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup because of starting the game with eight (8) players or because of the removal of a player from the line up as described in Sec. 6 (a), the opposing team may not, with two outs, intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter in order to get the "AUTOMATIC OUT" created by the vacant spot in the batting order. This would also include catcher obstruction to the previous batter, or the previous batter being hit by a legal or illegally pitched ball. If the previous batter is walked or hit by a legal or illegally pitched ball, the vacant spot is skipped, the "AUTOMATIC OUT" is waived, and the next batter is the player whose name follows the vacant spot in the batting order. This only applies when there are two (2) outs.

NOTE: *If a team has a vacant spot and a substitute arrives or the original player can play again, he/she must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot.*

SECTION 7 OFFICIALLY IN GAME

A player shall be officially in the game when he/she is announced by the manager or team representative and entered on the official score sheet or enters the game "unannounced" and a pitch (legal or illegal) is thrown.

PENALTY: For an unreported substitution the first offense will be a warning. Any repeated offense will result in an immediate ejection of the Head Coach. The unreported sub shall remain in the game and all activity will be official.

NOTE: *A player's correct name supersedes an error if an incorrect number has been entered on the score sheet.*

The following regulations govern the substitution of players:

- a) A player substituted for a 2nd time in the game, shall not participate in the game except as a coach or courtesy runner.
- b) When a batter takes his/her place in the batter's box.
- c) When a fielder takes the place of the fielder for which he/she is substituting.
- d) When a runner replaces the player on the base, he/she is holding.

- e) A substitute pitcher is legally in the game when he/she is announced by the manager or team representative, is entered on the scoresheet and throws a warm up pitch.

SECTION 8 COURTESY RUNNER

The player in the batting order where the last out was recorded or any player not currently in the game may replace the current (the player physically playing the position when the 3rd out was recorded) pitcher or catcher as a courtesy runner at any time. The pitcher or catcher will remain in the game and the courtesy runner will retain all substitution rights (if the courtesy runner has substitution rights). A player can be used only once per inning as a courtesy runner. Should the player that made the last recorded out be on base for any reason or is the pitcher or catcher, or batting or has already been a courtesy runner in that inning, the new courtesy runner would be determined by going back previous outs to the next allowable courtesy runner or to any player not currently in the game. If in the first inning a courtesy runner is used for either the pitcher or the catcher (who are listed in the line – up when the line ups are turned in) and there are no outs recorded, the courtesy runner will be the player furthest removed from the pitcher or catcher needing the courtesy runner or any player not currently in the game. If one of the twin players is a pitcher/catcher, the use of a courtesy runner must be for the pitcher/catcher who has earned her way onto a base.

PENALTY: Using the wrong courtesy runner is an out.

The pitcher or catcher may be used as a courtesy runner and a player with no substitution privileges may also be a courtesy runner as long as the player has not been ejected. *The courtesy runner can be replaced by the pitcher/catcher to run for themselves when the courtesy runner is due up to bat or the coach may choose to skip the courtesy runner's turn at bat without penalty.*

SECTION 9 ILLEGAL PLAYER

The use of an illegal player is handled as an appeal that can be made at any time while the player is in the game. A player will not violate the illegal player provision until he/she enters the game, and one (1) pitch is thrown. Any action before one pitch is thrown is correctable. An illegal player violation results in the immediate ejection of the illegal player and his/her coach. In Youth Play, an unreported substitute is not a violation of the Illegal Player Rule; however, the coach shall be ejected if Rule 4, Section 7(a) is met. In addition, the following penalties will apply:

- a) If the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and before the next pitch, the illegal player is called out. Any advance by any runner as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified. Any additional outs recorded on the play stand.
- b) If the illegal player has made a defensive play and before the next pitch (or the defensive team or the umpires have left the field), the offensive team has the option of 1) the result of the play or 2) replaying the last pitch.

NOTE: *The illegal player can be legally replaced by any eligible substitute.*

***NOTE:** *The penalty for using an ineligible player is a forfeit of any/all games played or in progress. Violation of an illegal player constitutes the immediate ejection of both the illegal player and his/her coach.*

****NOTE:** *Re-entry is considered a substitution and if an illegal re-entry occurs, this constitutes an illegal player. The use of an illegal player is handled as a protest which can be made at any time while the player is in the*

game. A player will not violate the illegal player provision until he/she enters the game and one (1) pitch is thrown.

SECTION 10 DIVISIONS OF PLAY

The National Softball Association has divisions for men and women, and a coed division for both to compete in jointly. The men's division is specifically for men ages 16 and older, and the women's division is specifically designed for women ages 16 and older. With the exception of the Coed division, women may not compete in the men's program and men may not compete in the women's program of any division. This also applies to the Youth Program.

Player eligibility is determined by the player's birth certificate.

FOR COMPLETE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/ROSTER INFORMATION REFER TO THE BYLAWS

****NOTE: The Tournament Director or the Tournament UIC may declare a higher-class player(s) ineligible without having a team protest.***

*****NOTE: NSA Youth Fast pitch (10 & under through 18 & under) has an "A", "B" and (10 & under, 12 & under and 14 & under) in the "C" Divisions which are determined by skill levels. See Bylaw for classification restrictions. Other NSA Fast pitch Divisions are 23 & Under and Adult.***

******NOTE: The 23 & Under teams are considered adult teams. The 23 & Under division will play by the adult rules including the age eligibility rule.***

SECTION 11 INSURANCE PROCEDURES

Youth Team Insurance - **All teams must submit a current copy of their team insurance certificate to the League or Tournament Director prior to participating in any level of NSA event.**

All youth teams must have a Team Insurance Policy that **includes Liability and Participant Accident or Accident Medical Coverage**. It is the coach/manager's responsibility to make sure these requirements are met prior to participation.

PLEASE NOTE: Some companies are offering discounted team insurance policies that may not fully cover your team. Some offer LIABILITY ONLY, PARTICIPANT ACCIDENT/MEDICAL ONLY, or LEAGUE ONLY policies and those are NOT acceptable for play in any NSA event.

- a) Teams are REQUIRED to have team insurance with Liability and Participant/Accident Medical Coverage. It is the coach/manager's responsibility to make sure these requirements are met prior to participation.
- b) Teams are REQUIRED to have the NSA WestPoint Insurance policy coverages.
- c) If the team has an NSA WestPoint yearly policy, no further action is needed.
- d) **If the team does not have a yearly NSA WestPoint policy**, the team can still participate by turning in a copy of their yearly Insurance Certificate (certificate that includes Liability and Participant/Medical Accident coverage), **no matter the company. The Tournament or League Director is then required to use the Weekend Program to ensure those teams meet the NSA WestPoint requirements for the one time the team is playing NSA.**

Adult Fastpitch Teams: Including 18 & over, 23u and Women's Teams
If any player on the team is UNDER the age of 18 years old: The team is REQUIRED to have TEAM INSURANCE. **If all players on the team are 18 years of age or older:** It is highly recommended that you have team insurance.

SECTION 12 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES

When a player is bleeding or has an open wound, the bleeding must be stopped, and the open wound covered with a bandage/dressing strong enough to withstand the rigors of competition. This treatment must be immediate and a suspension of play for a *reasonable amount of time, will be awarded the team. Should the treatment of this wound exceed a **reasonable amount of time*, the affected player must be substituted. If no substitute is available, the team must comply with Rule 4 Sec 6. When the affected player can continue, he/she may re-enter the lineup. Return to play will be determined by appropriate medical personnel or the home plate umpire. Any player whose uniform is saturated with blood, regardless of the source, must follow the same guidelines as stated above for a person bleeding and must have that uniform changed, if determined necessary, before returning to the game.

NOTE: *A reasonable amount of time will be determined by the home plate umpire and will be no more than five minutes.*

RULE 5 THE GAME

Softball is a contact sport, played with Composite, Aluminum, Wood and other approved materials in design of approved bats and softballs. The game of softball can be a dangerous sport to participate in. In playing the game of softball, the player and the parents of the youth players participating in the game of softball assume for themselves and for the youth children participating in the game of softball the risk of serious injury or possible death. By agreeing to be placed on an NSA roster, the participants or parents of participants understand these risks. To reduce the risk of Injury, the National Softball Association HIGHLY RECOMMENDS THAT EVERY PLAYER WEAR PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT!

***NOTE:** *It is the option of the Tournament Director to either use or not use an official scorekeeper. If an official scorekeeper is not used, the home team will be the official scorer and it is the obligation of the visiting team to verify the score at the end of each half inning. A paper score book is required to be used. If the home team fails to furnish a paper score book, then the visiting team's paper score book will be the official book for the game being played.*

SECTION 1 PROHIBITED

No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the dugouts or on the field during any NSA sanctioned event. No tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes (Vaping), are allowed in the dugouts or on the field for all NSA youth programs.

SECTION 2 ADMISSION

No youth player will be charged admission to any NSA youth tournament, above and beyond the team entry fee.

SECTION 3 COIN FLIP

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

Bracket Play - The Tournament Director has the option to utilize the highest seed team from pool play would have the choice of home or visitor throughout bracket play, if in uniform compliance. If both teams have the same pool play finish, a coin toss will determine the choice of home or visitor. **If this bracket play format is used, it must be posted by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament.**

If a team is not in compliance with the uniform rule, the opposing team, if in total uniform compliance, has the choice of being the home or visiting team.

SECTION 4 FITNESS OF GROUNDS

The fitness of the grounds for a game shall be decided by the Tournament Director, Tournament Umpire-In-Chief and the Home Plate Umpire.

SECTION 5 REGULATION GAME

NOTE: *In all Fast Pitch games with a time limit the official clock will start when the pre – game conference is concluded. The official game clock will be kept by the umpires.*

A regulation game shall consist of seven (7) innings.

- a) A full seven (7) innings need not be played if the home team (the team second at bat) scores more runs in six innings or before the third out of the seventh inning.

EXCEPTION: *The NSA will use the 12, 10 and 8 run rule in all tournament play. If one team is 12, 10 or 8 runs ahead after 3, 4 or 5 innings, or after 2½, 3½ or 4½ innings, if the home team is ahead by 12, 10 or 8 or more runs respectively, the team with the 12, 10 or 8 run lead shall be the winner.*

- b) A game that is tied at the end of seven innings will use the tie-breaking rule. This would involve the last recorded out in the official scorebook of the previous inning, assuming a position on second base. This would be done at the beginning of each half inning until, at the conclusion of a full inning a winner is determined. A game that is tied at the end of the time limit must complete the full inning if the time elapses during any part of an inning.

NOTE: *The NSA recommends a one hour and thirty-minute (1:30) time limit in NIT, State, Regional, and World Series Tournaments (in youth play only). In the Adult Fastpitch & Modified Program, a one hour and forty-five-minute (1:45) time limit is recommended. No new inning (top of the inning) will start after the allotted time limit has expired. Once an inning begins, that inning must be completed unless the home team is ahead when the time expires. The visiting teams one half inning must be completed.*

- c) The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other causes which place the patrons or players in peril.
- d) These provisions do not apply to any acts on the part of the players or spectators, which might call for the forfeiture of the game. The umpire may forfeit the game if attacked physically by any team member or spectator.
- e) The umpire shall forfeit a game in favor of a team not at fault in the following cases:
- 1) If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game at the time the team is scheduled to play, or within a time set for forfeitures (grace period) by the organization in which the team is playing.
 - 2) If after the game has started, one team refuses to continue play unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
 - 3) If after the umpire has suspended the game, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "play ball".
 - 4) If a team uses tactics to delay or to hasten the game.

- 5) If after being warned by the umpire, any one of the rules is willfully violated.
 - 6) If the order for the removal of a player, coach, or manager from the game is not obeyed within one minute.
 - 7) A team can no longer field eight (8) defensive players.
 - 8) The score of a forfeited game will be 7-0 to the winning team.
- f) During all tournament play (Qualifying, NIT, State, Regional and World Series) in the event of rain or any other cause which interrupts a game, the game must be resumed at the exact point where it was stopped, unless the teams mutually agree to accept the existing score as the final score.
- NOTE: *Players listed in the line-ups and not available at game time may be substituted.***
- g) In the event that a tournament cannot be completed, an official game may be called after 5 innings of play or 4 ½ innings of play if the home team is ahead.
 - h) Original lineups may be changed when the game is replayed.

SECTION 6 WINNER DETERMINED

The winner of the game shall be the team which scores the most runs in a regulation game. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning unless the home team has scored more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.

SECTION 7 RUN NOT SCORED-THIRD OUT OF INNING

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

- a) The batter being put out before LEGALLY touching first base.
- b) A baserunner being forced out due to the batter becoming a baserunner.
- c) A baserunner leaving the base before a pitched ball to home plate leaves the pitcher's hand.
- d) An appeal play at first base on the batter/runner for the third out of the inning.
- e) If the 3rd out is declared on an appeal play resulting in a force out, this play takes precedence if enforcing this appeal would negate a score.
- f) When there is more than one (1) out to end the half inning (i.e. the 4th out appeal) the defensive team may choose the out which is to their advantage.
- g) No succeeding runner shall score a run when a preceding runner has been declared the third out of an inning.

SECTION 8

A baserunner shall not score a run ahead of the baserunner preceding he/she in the batting order if the preceding runner has not been put out.

SECTION 9 OFFENSIVE CONFERENCE

A manager and/or team representative, on or off the field, shall be allowed only one charged conference with a batter or baserunner in any one inning.

PENALTY: A strike will be called on the batter if more than one conference occurs.

SECTION 10

Players and fans are prohibited from broadcasting excessive external electronic amplified sound or music through speakers during the game.

EFFECT: 1st Warning is to the coach. 2nd Warning the coach is ejected. 3rd Warning is a forfeit.



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SECTION 11 ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices of any kind are prohibited on the playing field with the exception of dugout or behind the fences.

EFFECT: *1st offense – removal of device; 2nd offense – ejection of coach and whoever has the device.*

No DRONES are to be flown over playing fields during any NSA event.

EFFECT: *Person flying the drone will be removed from the ballpark.*

RULE 6 PITCHING REGULATIONS

SECTION 1 PITCHING REQUIREMENTS

Before starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall comply with the following:

- a) The pitcher shall take a position with both feet on the ground and one or both feet in contact with the pitching plate. The non-pivot foot may be on or behind the pitching plate as far back as desired, however, once the toe is set, no movement further backwards is allowed.
- b) Both feet must be on the ground and within the 24" pitching plate, hips aligned with first and third base, with the hands separated and the ball being held in either the glove or pitching hand.
- c) While in this position, the pitcher shall take, or simulate taking, a signal from the catcher.
- d) The pitcher shall bring the hands together or touch them together for no more than ten seconds.
- e) The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position, unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- f) The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitching plate without having the ball in his/her possession.

SECTION 2 PITCH START

The pitch starts when the hands are separated, or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his/her wind-up. The hands may only be separated one (1) time per pitch. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter, and simultaneously with the delivery of the ball to the batter.

NOTE: *It is not a step if the pitcher slides his/her foot across the pitching rubber, provided contact is maintained with the pitching rubber.*

SECTION 3 NON-PIVOT FOOT

After taking the signal, the pitcher may not step backward with the non-pivot foot.

EXCEPTION: *Men may step backward but this step must be taken simultaneously with or prior to starting the pitch.*

SECTION 4 PIVOT FOOT

The pitcher must push off from the pitching plate with the pivot foot in contact with the pitching plate. The pivot foot does not have to drag or maintain contact with the ground. The pitcher may not push off a second time from in front of the pitching plate (replant or crow hop). There is no restriction on position or movement of the free foot except that if a step is taken forward with the free foot, the step must be taken within or partially within the 24" width of the pitching plate. *Women and Youth Girls may not step backwards.*

EXCEPTION: *For Men only: There is no restriction on position or movement of the free foot except that if a step is taken backwards or forwards with the free foot, the step must be taken within or partially within the 24" width of the pitching plate.*

***NOTE:** *It is not considered a step, if the pitcher slides their foot on the pitching plate, provided contact with the pitching plate is maintained.*

****NOTE:** *Such technique as the "crow hop" is illegal.*

SECTION 5 LEGAL DELIVERY

A legal delivery is one in which the ball is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

- a) The follow through of the hand and wrist and the release of the ball must be forward past the straight line of the body.
- b) The hand must be below the hip, and the wrist must not be farther from the body than the elbow.
- c) When a forward step is taken toward the batter, the pitch is completed.
- d) When the pitch is released, the catcher must be within the area defined as the catcher's box.

SECTION 6 WIND-UP

A pitcher may use any wind-up desired providing:

- a) There is no motion made to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b) A rocker action is not used in which, after having the ball in both hands in the pitching position, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- c) No wind-up is used in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- d) There is no more than one revolution of the arm in the windmill pitch. The pitching arm may be dropped to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip.
- e) The pitcher makes no continuous wind-up after taking the forward step, which is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

SECTION 7 PITCHER MAY NOT

While in the pitching position, the pitcher may not deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from striking it.

SECTION 8 FOREIGN SUBSTANCE

During the game, the pitcher may not use tape or other substances on the ball, pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any player apply any foreign substance to the ball. Rosin may be used to dry the hand. The wearing of any item on the pitching hand, wrist, or arm that may be distracting to the batter will not be allowed.

PENALTY: Any infraction of Sec. 1 through Sec. 8 constitutes an illegal pitch. A ball is awarded to the batter. If the illegal pitch is hit and all runners including the batter-runner, advance one base, the play stands. If all baserunners including the batter-runner do not advance at least one base, the offensive coach has the option of taking the result of the play or the result of the pitch. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.

SECTION 9 NO PITCH

The umpire will declare no pitch when:

- a) A pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
- b) A runner is declared out for leaving the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- c) The pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched the base occupied after a foul ball and the ball is dead.

PENALTY: The ball is dead and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

SECTION 10 ILLEGAL PITCHING ACT

Umpire will declare an illegal pitch when:

- a) A fielder, other than the catcher, is outside the playing field (foul territory) once the pitcher steps on the pitching plate and prior to the pitch being released.

NOTE: *Foul line considered fair territory.*

EFFECT: *The ball is dead, batter is awarded a ball, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.*

- b) Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the pitcher has twenty (20) seconds to start the pitch.

PENALTY: (b and c above) a ball is awarded the batter.

- c) After assuming the pitching position, the pitcher may not throw to a base while a foot is in contact with the pitching plate.

PENALTY: An illegal pitch is declared

- d) After assuming the pitching position, the pitcher may not exchange the ball from the glove to the hand or from the hand to the glove.

NOTE: *An illegal pitch will be declared if any fielder takes a position in the batter's line of vision, or with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, acts in a manner to otherwise distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be delivered.*

SECTION 11 WARM UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one (1) minute may be used to deliver not more than five (5) pitches to the catcher or other teammate. Play shall be suspended during this time. Each pitcher during an inning may only warm up one (1) time per inning.

PENALTY: A pitcher will be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five (5).

NOTE: *Under the discretion of the home plate umpire, the pitcher may be authorized more pitches due to inclement weather, injury, or other circumstances.*

SECTION 12 PITCH SLIPS FROM HAND

If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the wind-up or during the backswing, a ball shall be called on the batter, and the ball remains in play and runners may advance at their own risk.

SECTION 13 VERBAL INTERFERENCE BY COACH

No player, manager, or coach shall call "TIME", or employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.

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

SECTION 14 DEFENSIVE CONFERENCE

There shall be only one charged conference between the manager and other team representative from the dugout with each and every pitcher in an inning. The second charged conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

If the pitcher is removed from the pitching position as the result of a second charged conference, the pitcher can remain in the game in any other position excluding the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

EXCEPTION: *It is not a charged conference when the manager or team representative enters the field of play and removes the pitcher from the pitching position. The player may return to the pitching position.*

NOTE: *The rules for a charged conference do not change in extra innings.*

SECTION 15 MINIMUM PITCH REQUIREMENT

Each pitcher (starter or substitute) must pitch until the first batter facing him/her has completed his/her turn at bat, the side has been retired or he/she has been removed from the game, unless the pitcher sustains an injury or illness which in the judgment of the home plate umpire, incapacitates the pitcher from pitching. A pitcher removed from the game by rule or ejection is not subject to this rule. Any other player may be removed from the game at any time.

RULE 7 BATTING

SECTION 1 THE BATTER SHALL

- a) Take his/her position within the lines of the batter's box.
- b) Not have his/her entire foot touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or touching home plate when the ball is hit.
- c) Not step directly across in front of the catcher to the other side of the batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch.
EFFECT: *Sec. 1 (b-c) The ball is dead, the batter is out, baserunners may not advance.*
- d) Not enter the batter's box with an illegal bat.
EFFECT: *The batter is out; the ball is dead, and the baserunners may not advance.*
- e) Not enter the batter's box with an altered bat or non-approved bat.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead, the batter is out, and without warning the coach ejected from the game. Baserunners may not advance.*
- f) Take his/her position within ten (10) seconds after the pitcher has received the ball. He/she must have both feet within the lines of the box, as defined, before the start of the pitch.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead. The umpire will call a strike on the batter and will also issue a warning to the batter to take his/her position or risk being called out. If the batter refuses to take his/her position after the warning, he/she will be called out. Any repeated violation by the same player will result in an out being called.*

SECTION 2

Each player of the side at bat shall become a batter in the order in which his/her name appears on the score sheet. The batting order of each team must be on the score sheet and delivered by the manager or captain to the home plate umpire. The batting order must be followed throughout the entire game unless there is a substitution. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the player he/she is replacing in the batting order. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the preceding inning.

EFFECT: *Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made by the defensive team only.*

- a) If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter takes his/her place and legally assumes any balls and strikes.

- b) If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has batted and before the next pitch to the following batter, the player who should have batted is out. Any advance or score made because of a batted ball by the improper batter's advance to first base on a hit, an error, or a base on balls shall be nullified. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. Any out(s) that have been made prior to discover the infraction remains an out(s).
- c) If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter 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.

SECTION 3

No baserunner shall be removed from the base he/she is occupying to bat in her proper place. He/she merely misses her turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following him/her in the order becomes the legal batter.

EXCEPTION: *The courtesy runner can be replaced by the pitcher/catcher to run for themselves when the courtesy runner is due up to bat or the coach may choose to skip the courtesy runner's turn at bat without penalty.*

SECTION 4

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

SECTION 5

Members of the team at bat, including base coaches, shall not interfere either physically or vocally with a player attempting to field either a fair or foul ball.

EFFECT: *The ball is dead; the batter is out, and baserunners may not advance.*

SECTION 6

The batter shall not hit a batted ball a second time while the ball is over fair territory. This includes a bat released by the batter which strikes the ball in the air or on the ground over fair territory.

EFFECT: *The ball is dead, the batter is out, and baserunners may not advance.*

EXCEPTION: *If the batter is standing in the batter's box and the second contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hands, it is a foul ball.*

EXCEPTION: *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 ball is live and in play.*

SECTION 7 THE UMPIRE CALLS A STRIKE

- a) For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone before touching the ground and at which the batter does not swing.
- b) For each pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter. This includes a ball that hit the ground first.
- c) For each foul tip held by the catcher. The batter is out if it is the 3rd strike.
- d) For each foul ball not legally caught. This does not include a 3rd strike.
- e) For each pitched ball swung at and missed which touched any part of the batter. The batter is out if it is the 3rd strike.
- f) When any part of the batter's person is hit with his/her own batted ball and the batter is standing within the batter's box as defined.
- g) When a pitched ball hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.

EFFECT: *Sec. 7 (d-g) The ball is dead, and baserunners must return to their bases without liability to be put out.*

SECTION 8 THE UMPIRE CALLS A BALL

- a) For each pitch that does not enter the strike zone, hits the ground, touches home plate, or is not swung at by the batter.
- b) For each illegally pitched ball.
- c) When a pitch hits the batter outside of the strike zone. The batter is awarded first base. This would include a ball that hits the ground and then hits the batter.
- d) When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher
- e) When the pitcher fails to pitch within twenty (20) seconds.
- f) For each excessive warm-up pitch. (See Rule 6, Sec. 11.)
- g) When the pitcher attempts a quick return pitch, he/she shall be given a warning.

SECTION 9 A FAIR BALL IS A LEGALLY BATTED BALL WHICH

- a) Settles or is touched on fair ground between home plate and 1st base or home plate and 3rd base.
- b) Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over fairground.
- c) Touches 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base.
- d) While on or over fairground, touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player.
- e) First falls on fairground beyond 1st or 3rd base. A fair fly ball must be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, regardless of whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time he/she touches the ball.
- f) Hits home plate and remains in fair territory.

EFFECT: *Rule 7 Sec 9 (a-f). The ball is in play and baserunners are entitled to advance any number of bases with liability to be put out. The batter becomes a baserunner unless the infield fly rule applies.*

- g) While on or over fairground, the ball lands behind a fence or in the stands beyond the outfield fence. This is a home run.
- h) Hits a foul pole on the fly. If the ball hits the pole above the fence level, it shall be a home run.

SECTION 10 A FOUL BALL IS A LEGALLY BATTED BALL WHICH

- a) Settles on foul ground between home plate and 1st base or between home plate and 3rd base.
- b) Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over foul ground.
- c) First touches on foul ground beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d) While on or over foul ground touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player, or the ball is blocked.

SECTION 11 THE BATTER IS OUT

- a) When the 3rd strike is struck at and missed including if the ball touches any part of the batter's person.
- b) When any batter, officially in the game or not, appears in the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered, Senior, non-approved or an illegal bat prior to hitting the ball, the batter is also ejected from the game for using an altered, Senior or non-approved bat. For using a Senior Bat, the player is also suspended one (1) year on the spot with no right to an appeal.
- c) When a fly ball is legally caught. A fielder may be touching or leaning on the fence when making a catch as long as the fielder has possession of the ball before touching dead ball ground on the other side of the fence, or

before he/she touches the ground past a temporary fence that is on the ground.

- d) Immediately when he/she hits an infield fly and the umpire has declared "Infield Fly". Refer to Rule 1, Sec. 36.
- e) If a fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, including a line drive, and an attempted bunt which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort with 1st, 1st & 2nd, 1st & 3rd or 1st, 2nd & 3rd bases occupied with less than two (2) outs.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead, the batter is out, and base runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. This does not apply to an infield fly. The dropped ball remains alive on an infield fly.*
- f) If a preceding runner, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball, or is attempting to throw a ball in an attempt to complete a double play; the preceding runner and the batter are both declared out.
- g) Any batter-runner who carries the bat during a live ball and legally reaches or touches 1st base while still holding the bat, will be declared out. Should this be the 3rd out of the inning, no preceding runner shall score.
EFFECT: *If less than two (2) outs, a delayed ball signal will be given, and the ball will remain alive.*
- h) When the batter attempts a bunt on the 3rd strike and bunts the ball foul.
- i) On a legally caught 3rd strike.
- j) When hit by his/her own-batted ball in fair territory, with at least one foot entirely outside of the batter's box.
- k) When the batter swings and makes contact with the ball with at least one foot entirely outside of the batter's box, or touching home plate.
- l) When the batter hinders the catcher from making a play on a runner with at least one foot entirely outside of the batter's box, or *intentionally* hinders the catcher from making a play while standing within the batter's box.
- m) When the batter interferes with a play on a runner at home plate.
EFFECT: *j-m, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
EXCEPTION: *If the batter interferes with a play on a runner at the plate with less than two (2) outs, the baserunner is out.*
EXCEPTION: *If no play is being made and the batter accidentally interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher, the umpire will call "time" and stop any advance by runners.*

SECTION 12 THE BATTER OR BASERUNNER IS NOT OUT

- a) If a fielder making a play on him/her uses an illegal glove.
EFFECT: *If an illegal glove is involved in a play; a delayed dead ball signal will be signaled, and 3 bases awarded to the batter unless the batter gains 4 bases or the ball is deflected by the illegal glove and goes over the fence. The Coach in both instances has the option to take the result of the play. If an illegal glove is spotted prior to a play, the umpire shall remove the glove and resume play.*
- b) If a fielder commits Flagrant Player Obstruction.
PENALTY: Immediate ejection of the defensive player.

SECTION 13 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 either on-deck circle without blocking the view of any manager or coach.

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- c) The on-deck batter may loosen up with two official softball bats, an official warm up bat, or the player may use the Power Wrap, Worth WBS, H & B BW3, swing sock or any other official warm up bat or product that has been approved by the NSA National Headquarters. Nothing else may be attached such as a Pyro Flite Bat Warmer donut, fan, etc. when loosening up. The Pyro Flite Bat Warmer is legal to warm the bat with. See www.PlayNSA.com for approved equipment.
- d) The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle when he/she becomes the batter or to direct baserunners advancing from 3rd to home plate.
- e) When the on-deck batter interferes with the defensive players. opportunity to make a play on a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference is declared out.
- f) The provision of Rule 7, Sec. 3 shall apply to the on-deck batter.

RULE 8 BASERUNNING

SECTION 1

The baserunner must touch the bases in legal order (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd home plate)

- a) When a baserunner must return to a base while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.
EFFECT: *The ball is in play and baserunners must return with liability to be put out.*
- b) When a baserunner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, he/she may hold the base until he/she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.
- c) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither he/she 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.
- d) A baserunner may not run the bases in reverse order, either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead, and the runner is out.*
- e) Two baserunners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.
EFFECT: *The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.*
- f) 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 3rd out of the inning, no succeeding runner may score a run.
- g) No runner may return to touch a missed base, or one left illegally after a following runner has scored.
- h) When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base, a base he/she has left after he/she has left illegally, even after the ball becomes alive. However, when a dead ball occurs, a runner may return to a missed base if he/she 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/she 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.

- i) No runner may return to touch a missed base, or one left illegally once he/she enters his/her dugout or bench area.
- j) When the umpire has called four (4) balls, baserunners do not advance unless forced or successful in an attempt to steal.
- k) Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases. Awarded bases must also be touched in proper order.

SECTION 2 THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-BASERUNNER

- a) As soon as he/she hits the ball.
- b) When the umpire has called four balls.
- c) When a legal or illegal pitched ball hits the batter's person or clothing, provided the batter does not strike at the ball. This includes a ball that hits the ground and then hits the batter.
EXCEPTION: If the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the hitting of the batter is disregarded, and the ball is dead. The pitch will be called a strike or ball depending on the location of the pitch. Unless ball four (4) is called on the batter forcing runners to advance, all runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- d) When with less than two (2) outs and 1st base unoccupied a dropped 3rd strike occurs, the batter may attempt to advance to 1st base. The batter becomes a batter/baserunner when the third strike touches the ground before being caught.
- e) When with two (2) outs and a dropped 3rd strike occurs, the batter may attempt to advance to 1st base. The batter becomes a batter/baserunner when the 3rd strike touches the ground before being caught.
- f) When the catcher or any other fielder obstructs or hinders the batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball:
 - 1) The umpire shall signal, "Delayed dead ball".
 - 2) The offensive team manager has the option of taking the base awarded the batter for catcher obstruction, or he may take the result of the play.
 - 3) If the batter reaches 1st base safely and all other runners advance at least one (1) base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled, and no other options are given.
- g) When a fair ball strikes the umpire or baserunner on fair ground:
 - 1) If the ball hits the umpire or baserunner after passing an infielder other than the pitcher or touches an infielder including the pitcher, the ball is in play.
 - 2) If the ball hits the umpire or baserunner before passing an infielder, the ball is dead, and the batter is entitled to 1st base without the liability of being put out. Runners not forced by the batter-runner must return.

SECTION 3 BASERUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

- a) When, after the pitcher releases the ball, the runner attempts to advance to the next base without the aid of a base hit, put out, or a fielding (including batter) error (stealing base).
 - 1) A batter runner who has received a base on balls can attempt to steal second base.
- b) When the ball is thrown into fair territory or foul territory and is not blocked.
- c) When the ball is batted into fair territory and is not blocked.

- d) When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- e) If a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner after passing an infielder other than the pitcher or having been touched by an infielder including the pitcher, the ball shall be in play.

SECTION 4 A PLAYER FORFEITS HIS/HER EXEMPTION FROM LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

- a) If, while the ball is in play, he/she fails to touch the base he/she is entitled to before attempting to make the next base. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at 1st base, or any other runner forced to advance because of the batter-runner at 1st base or any other runner forced to advance because of the batter-runner, this is a force out.
- b) If after over running 1st base, the batter-runner attempts to continue to the next base.
- c) If after dislodging the base, the batter-runner attempts to continue to the next base.

SECTION 5 BASERUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

- a) When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.

OBSTRUCTION Section 5 (b) and (c)

- b) When a fielder obstructs a baserunner from making a base, (including a run-down) unless the fielder is trying to field a batted ball or has the ball ready for a tag.

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 the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base they would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and each runner affected by the obstruction shall be awarded the base(s) in the umpire's judgment, the runner(s) would have reached had there not been obstruction. An obstructed runner cannot be called out between the bases where they were obstructed

EXCEPTIONS:

- a) *When an obstructed runner safely obtains or returns to the base that he/she would have been awarded in the umpires judgment had there been no obstruction, and there is a subsequent play on another runner, the obstructed runner no longer has protection by the umpire between the bases in which the obstruction occurred and may be put out.*
 - b) *When properly appealed for missing or leaving a base early on a fly ball.*
 - c) *When the runner interferes with the defense.*
 - d) *When the runner physically passes another runner*
 - e) *When the batter flies out for the 3rd out.*
 - f) *When the batter is obstructed between 2 bases and he/she flies out.*
- 2) When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the baserunner is obstructed by the fielder who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.

- 3) 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, as in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction.
 - 4) If a fielder without the ball fakes a tag, the umpire may award the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction.
NOTE: In the case of a "fake tag", the fielder will be automatically ejected from the game.
 - 5) If the obstructed runner is put out after obtaining the base, he/she would have reached in the umpire's judgment had there not been obstruction, the obstructed runner shall be called out and the ball shall remain alive.
 - 6) When a runner while advancing or returning to a base is obstructed, the obstructed runner and all other runners affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base(s) which he/she would have reached in the umpires' judgment had obstruction not occurred.
- c) When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base for catchers' obstruction.
- d) When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with an illegal glove or with his/her cap, glove or any part of his/her uniform or equipment while detached from its proper place.
NOTE: The umpire(s) will give the "delayed dead ball" signal.
EFFECT: If an illegal glove is involved in a play; a delayed dead ball signal will be given, and 3 bases awarded to the batter unless the batter gains 4 bases or the ball is deflected by the illegal glove and goes over the fence. The Coach in both scenarios has the option to take the result of the play. If an illegal glove is spotted prior to a play, the umpire shall remove the glove and resume play.
EFFECT: For a player making a play with his/her cap, glove, or any part of his/her uniform or equipment while detached, a runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. In either case, runners may advance further, at their own risk. If an illegal catch was made of a fair ball; that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded. The umpire will signal a delayed dead ball.
- e) When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.
NOTE: All base runners will be allowed to advance one (1) base on a pitched ball that goes directly out of play.
- 1) The ball is dead. In all cases where a thrown ball goes into the spectators' seats, goes over, through or under any fence surrounding the playing field hits any person or object not engaged in the game, including bats lying near benches, goes into the players benches, whether the ball rebounds onto the playing field or not, or remains in the meshes of any wire screen, each and every baserunner shall be awarded two (2) bases.
EFFECT: For offensive equipment or an offensive player causing a blocked ball, the player closest to home plate is declared out, and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball becomes blocked.
 - 2) When the first throw is made by an infielder, two (2) 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 (1) 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.

- 3) When a throw is made by an outfielder or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the two (2) base award shall be governed by the position of each runner and the last base he/she 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.
- 4) 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 (1) 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/her original base, the original base he/she left is considered the “last base touched” for the purposes of an overthrow award.
- f) When a ball bounds or rolls into a stand, over, under, or through a fence; bounds out of play unintentionally off a defensive player or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead, and all baserunners are awarded two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.*
- g) When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead immediately. All baserunners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all baserunners are awarded two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time he/she entered the dead ball area.
NOTE: *A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have intentionally carried it there. A dead ball line is considered in play.*

SECTION 6 A BASERUNNER MUST RETURN TO HIS/HER BASE

- a) When a foul ball is illegally caught and so declared by the umpire.
- b) When the umpire declares an illegally batted ball.
- c) When a batter or baserunner is called out for interference, other baserunners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- d) When a pitched ball that is swung at and missed touches any part of the batter’s person.
- e) When a foul ball is not caught.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead, and baserunners must return to base, except when forced by the batter becoming a baserunner. Baserunners need not touch the intervening bases in returning but must return promptly. Runners must be allowed sufficient time to return.*
- f) Umpires Interference shall be called when the umpire or any part of the umpire’s clothing interferes with catcher’s attempt to throw out a runner stealing or during a “pick-off” play.
EFFECT: *The umpire signals delayed dead ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is declared out, the play stands and the ball remains alive. If the runner is declared safe, time shall be called, all runners must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

The pitched ball shall remain whatever the umpire declared the pitch (ball or strike) and the count shall reflect the pitch as called.

NOTE: *It is not umpire interference on a wild pitch or a passed ball.*

SECTION 7 BATTER-BASERUNNER IS OUT

- a) When after a fair ball is hit, he/she is legally touched with the ball before he/she touches 1st base.
- b) When after a fair ball is hit, the ball is held by a fielder touching 1st base with any part of his/her person, before the batter-baserunner touches 1st base.
- c) When after a fly ball is hit, a fielder catches the ball before the ball touches the ground or any object other than a fielder.
- d) When after a fair ball is hit or a base on balls is awarded, he/she fails to advance to 1st base and enter his/her team area.

EFFECT: *Rule 8, Sec. 7 (a-d). The ball is in play and the batter-runner is out.*

- e) When he/she runs outside the three (3) foot line and, in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at 1st base; however, he/she may run outside the three (3) foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- f) When he/she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or interferes (intentionally) with a thrown ball. If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the baserunner closest to home plate, shall be called out.
- g) When a batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate, in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate, the runner is also out.
- h) When he/she moves back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

EFFECT: *Rule 8, Sec. 7. (e-h), the ball is dead and the batter-runner is out. Other baserunners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.*

- i) When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with an illegal glove. Or with his/her cap, glove or any part of his/her uniform while detached from its proper place.

NOTE: *The umpire(s) will give the “delayed dead ball” signal.*

EFFECT: *If an illegal glove is involved in a play, a delayed dead ball signal will be given and three (3) bases awarded to the batter unless the batter gains four (4) bases or the ball is deflected by the illegal glove and goes over the fence. The Coach in both scenarios has the option to take the result of the play. If an illegal glove is spotted prior to a play, the umpire shall remove the glove and resume play.*

EFFECT: *For a player making a play with his/her cap, detached glove or uniform, a runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. In either case, runners may advance further, at their own risk. If an illegal catch was made of a fair ball; that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded. The umpire will signal a delayed dead ball.*

SECTION 8 THE BASERUNNER IS OUT

- a) When in running to any base, he/she runs more than 3 feet from a direct line between that base and the next base, in regular or reverse order, to avoid being touched by the ball in the hands of a fielder. When a play, such as a rundown is made on a runner who has

- "rounded" a base, and that runner is outside a direct line between bases, the runner establishes his/her baseline as a direct line between him/her and the next base in regular or reverse order.
- b) If, while the ball is in play, he/she is legally touched with the ball in the hands of a fielder while not in contact with a base.
 - c) When, on a force out, a fielder tags him/her with the ball or tags the base.
 - d) If the baserunner fails to return to touch the base he/she previously occupied when play is resumed after suspension of play.
 - e) If a baserunner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.
 - f) When anyone, other than another baserunner, physically assists a baserunner while the ball is in play.
- NOTE: Congratulatory actions between coaches and runners (for instance a high five or a fist bump) are legal.***
- g) When the baserunner leaves his/her base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has been touched by a fielder, or when a runner is positioned behind and not in contact with a base in order to achieve a running start on any fly ball. Provided the ball is returned to a fielder and legally held on that base or a fielder legally touches the baserunner before he/she returns to his/her base.
 - h) When the baserunner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is in play and legally held on that base or the baserunner is legally touched while off the base he/she missed.
 - i) When the batter-runner legally overruns 1st base, attempts to run to 2nd base, and is legally touched while off the base.
 - j) In running or sliding for home plate, he/she fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in his/her hands while touching home plate and appeals to the umpire for a decision.
- EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec. 8. (g - j), These are appeal plays and the defensive team loses the privilege of putting the baserunner out if the appeal is not made before the next legal or illegal pitch. If an appeal is made after the ball is dead and before the next pitch is made, the ball remains dead and runners may not advance. Any manager, coach, or player may then make an appeal by announcing to the umpire, which runner is being appealed, which base has been missed, or which base has been left too soon. Any player in the game may also make an appeal while the ball is still alive and before the ball becomes dead by tagging the runner or the base being appealed with the ball.***
- k) When the baserunner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the baserunner is put out, the immediate succeeding runners shall also be called out.
 - l) When a base runner is struck by a fair, un-touched batted ball in fair territory while off base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher. He/she is also out if the ball passes an infielder, strikes the runner, and the contact prevents another infielder from making a play. A deflected ball striking a runner is not an out unless ruled intentional.
 - m) When a runner intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.
 - n) When, with a baserunner on 3rd base, the batter interferes with a play being made at home plate with less than two (2) outs.

- o) When the coach near 3rd base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The baserunner nearest to 3rd base shall be declared out.
- p) When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect at or around a base which a baserunner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. This includes the bat boy/girl, or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.
- q) When any baserunner runs the bases in reverse order to confuse the defensive team or to make a travesty of the game. This includes the batter-runner moving backwards towards home plate to avoid or delay a tag.
- r) If a coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.
- s) When a runner, after being declared out or after scoring, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall also be called out.

EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec. 8. (k-s). The ball is dead, and the baserunner is out. Other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.

- t) When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner remains on his/her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player, the runner is declared out. The ball is dead, and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision, unless Rule 8, Sec. 8 (j) or Rule 8, Sec. 8 (s) applies.

PENALTY: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender is ejected from the game.

- u) When the baserunner(s) fails to keep contact with their base until a legally pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. The ball is dead, "NO PITCH" is declared and the baserunner(s) is declared out.
- v) When he/she abandons a base, does not attempt to advance to the next base, and "LEAVES THE FIELD OF PLAY", the baserunner shall be called out immediately when he/she enters into a dead ball area.
- w) If hit by an infield fly when not in contact with the base, the ball is dead, and the runner and the batter are both declared out. Other runners must return to the base occupied, without liability to be put out, at the time of the pitch.
- x) Look Back Rule: When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch, or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, with the batter/runner being out or reaching first base, and while the pitcher has the ball within the sixteen (16) foot circle, the runner may stop once, but then must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or return to the last base touched. Failure to immediately return non-stop to the base or proceed non-stop to the next base will result in the runner being declared out.

EXCEPTION: The runner is not out if a play is made by the pitcher (a fake throw is considered a play).

NOTE: When a walk or a dropped third strike occurs in which the batter is entitled to run, it is treated the same as a batted ball, if the pitcher has possession of the ball in the sixteen (16) foot circle. The batter-runner may continue past first base and is entitled to run toward second base as long as he/she does not stop at first base. If he/she stops

after rounding first base, then that runner must comply with Rule 8, Section 8 (x).

- y) When prior to a pitch being made to the next batter, it is discovered that the previous batter used an altered, illegal or a non-approved bat.
PENALTY: The baserunner is declared out. If the bat was altered or non-approved, the player and the coach are ejected from the game. Any out(s) made on the play shall remain an out(s). All other baserunner(s) must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.
- z) 1st base double base – At facilities that use the white and orange double bag at 1st base, the following rules will be implemented. If the first play is at 1st base, either from the infield or outfield, a batter/runner will be called out for touching the inside base if properly appealed by the defense before the batter/runner returns to first base. An appeal will not be allowed once the batter/runner has returned to either the inside or outside bag. If the play is elsewhere, the inside base may be tagged in a continuation or possible continuation toward 2nd base. The defensive player may use the orange bag on a dropped third strike. In this situation, the batter/runner is required to touch the white bag if the orange bag is occupied by the defense.
***NOTE:** *Once the batter – baserunner becomes a baserunner, the double base becomes one bag.*

SECTION 9 BASERUNNER IS NOT OUT

- a) When a base runner runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder who is attempting to field the ball in the baseline.
- b) When a baserunner does not run a direct line to the base, providing the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in his/her possession.
- c) When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the baserunner comes into contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.
- d) When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball which has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and no other infielder was in position to make a play.
- e) When a baserunner is touched with a ball not securely held by a fielder.
- f) When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play until after the next pitch.
- g) When a batter-runner overruns 1st base after touching it and makes no attempt to advance to the next base.
- h) When the baserunner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, he/she shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher pitches the ball. The umpire shall call no pitch.
- i) When a runner, who has legally started to advance, cannot be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate nor by stepping on the pitching plate with the ball in his/her possession.
- j) When a baserunner holds his/her base until a fly ball touches a fielder, and then attempts to advance.
- k) When the runner is in contact with the base and is hit by a batted fly or ground ball in fair territory (unless he/she intentionally interferes with the ball), the baserunner is not out, and the ball is dead.
EFFECT: *Ball is dead, and all runners advance one base if forced.*

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- l) When a baserunner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper place, the base is considered to have followed the runner. See Rule 8, Sec.1 (c) and Rule 8. Sec. 4 (c).
- m) When a fielder makes a play on a batter or baserunner while using an illegal glove. See Rule 7, Sec. 12 for option given to the manager of the offensive team.
- n) When the baserunner is hit by a fair-batted ball after it touches any fielder, including the pitcher.

RULE 9 DEAD BALL/BALL IN PLAY

SECTION 1 THE BALL IS DEAD AND NOT IN PLAY

- a) When the ball is batted illegally.
- b) When a batter steps from one side of the box to the other when the pitcher is ready to pitch.
- c) When a ball is pitched illegally.
EXCEPTION: *Delayed dead ball, see Rule 6, Sec. 8 Penalty for illegal pitches.*
- 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 baserunner fails to keep in contact with their base until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- 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) If an accident to a runner prevents him/her from proceeding to a base which he is awarded, a substitute runner (if available) shall be permitted for the injured player. If no substitute is available, the last recorded out may replace the injured player on base.
- k) In case of interference with the batter or fielder.
- 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/her own batted ball while he/she is in the batter's box.
- o) When a runner runs the bases in reverse order.
- p) When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he/she reaches 1st base.
- q) When a blocked ball is declared.
- r) When the batter enters the batter's box with or uses an illegal or an altered bat.
- s) When a caught fair ball, including a line drive, which can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped with less than two (2) outs and with runners on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases.
- t) When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- u) When the batter is hit by his/her own batted ball in fair territory outside the batter's box.

- v) When a fair ball, prior to passing a fielder, strikes an umpire or baserunner on fair ground.

SECTION 2 THE BALL IS IN PLAY

- a) At the start of each half inning, when the pitcher has the ball in his/her 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 baserunner on fair ground after passing or touching an infielder.
- e) When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- f) When the baserunners have reached the bases that they are entitled to, when the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
- g) When a baserunner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- h) When no play is being made on an obstructed runner, the ball shall remain alive until the play is over.
- i) When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- j) When a baserunner must return in reverse order while the ball is already in play.
- k) When a baserunner 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 baseline 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 baserunner 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, photographer, 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 judgment of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out, and the ball is alive and in play.
- s) When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- t) When a thrown ball strikes a base 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 will continue to be dead during a subsequent appeal play.
- v) When, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach touches or physically helps a runner; or when a coach near 3rd 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.

EFFECT: A delayed dead ball signal will be given, and play shall continue. The assisted runner shall be ruled out and all other subsequent play will be ruled upon accordingly.

RULE 10 UMPIRES

NOTE: *Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 10 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for the umpires.*

SECTION 1 POWERS AND DUTIES

The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization for the particular game that they have been assigned. They are authorized and required to enforce the rules contained in this book. The umpires have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or refrain from doing any act that is necessary to enforce any of these rules; and to inflict any penalties prescribed. The plate umpire shall have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules.

NOTE: *An umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e. player, coach, officer scorekeeper, or sponsor.)*

- a) The umpire should inspect the playing field, equipment, and clarify all ground rules to both teams and managers/coaches prior to the start of the game.
- b) Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed anytime during playing time or suspension of play until the game is over.
- c) No umpire has the authority to set aside or question decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his/her respective duties.
- d) An umpire may consult with his/her partners at any time; however, the final decision shall rest with the umpire whose authority it is to make the decision and who requested the opinion of the other umpires.
- e) The plate and base umpires shall have equal authority to :
 - 1) Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon.
 - 2) Call "time" for suspension of play.
 - 3) Remove a player, manager, coach, or other team member from the game for violation of the rules.
- f) Unless appealed, the umpire shall not call a player out for having failed to touch a base, leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, batting out of order or making an attempt to go to second base after reaching first base, as provided in these rules.

SECTION 2 THE PLATE UMPIRE

- a) Shall take a position behind the catcher and have full responsibility for the proper conduct of the game.
- b) Shall call all balls and strikes.
- c) Shall be in agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire(s) call on plays, fair or foul balls, legally or illegally caught balls. On plays, which require the base umpire to leave the infield, the plate umpire shall assume the duties that the base umpire is normally required to cover.
- d) Shall determine and declare whether a batter chops or bunts a ball, whether a batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter, and also whether a fly ball is an infield fly.
- e) Shall render decisions on the bases when required by the instruction in the umpire's manual.
- f) Shall determine when a game is forfeited.

SECTION 3 THE BASE UMPIRE

- a) Shall take a position(s) on the playing field as outlined in the Umpire's Manual.
- b) Shall assist the plate umpire in every way to enforce the rules of the game.

- c) Can call an Infield Fly.

SECTION 4 CHANGING OF UMPIRES

Umpires cannot be changed during a game unless injury or illness incapacitates an umpire, or for other unforeseen circumstances.

SECTION 5 UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT

There shall be no appeal of any decision of any umpire on the grounds that he/she was not correct in his/her decision that a batted ball was fair or foul, a baserunner was out or safe, a pitched ball was a ball or a strike, or any other play involving accuracy of judgment. Any argument is grounds for a player or coach to be ejected from the game. No decision of an umpire shall be reversed, except when he/she is convinced it is in violation of a rule. If the manager, captain, or either team does not seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question, shall, if in doubt, confer with his/her associates before taking any action. But under no circumstances shall any player or person, other than the manager or captain of either team, have any legal right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules. Under no circumstances should any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by his/her associates, nor shall any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of his/her associates, unless asked to do so.

SECTION 6 SUSPENSION OF PLAY

- a) An umpire may suspend play when, in his judgment, conditions justify such action.
- b) Play shall be suspended when the plate umpire leaves his/her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly related with the calling of a play.
- c) The umpire shall suspend play whenever the batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- d) The umpire shall not call "time" after the pitcher has started his/her pitching motion or while any play is in progress. "Time" shall not be called until all action in progress, by either team, has been completed.
- e) When in the judgment of the umpire, all immediate play is apparently completed should he/she call "Time".

SECTION 7 VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

- a) Players, coaches, managers, or other team members shall not make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about opposing players, officials, or spectators, or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
- b) There shall be no more than two (2) coaches for each team to give words of assistance and direction to the members of the team while at bat. One coach shall be stationed near 1st base and the other near 3rd base. They must remain in the coach's box.
- c) The penalty for violations by a player is prompt removal of the offender from the game and grounds. For the first violation, the coach or manager may be warned. For the second offense, the player is removed from the game. The offender shall go directly to the dressing room (if available), for the remainder of the game, or leave the grounds. Failure to do so will warrant a forfeiture of the game.
- d) Any player or coach who leaves his/her respective position on the field, including the dugout, to argue balls and strikes or to argue whether a batter stepped on or over home plate, will be ejected.

SECTION 8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- a) Umpires who work fast-pitch softball (especially the home plate umpire) should wear a chest protector and shin guards. Male umpires must wear an approved protective cup. It is mandatory for the home plate umpire to wear a facemask (with a throat protector). It is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that the mask be a black mask with black or natural pads. Hockey style masks are considered approved umpire equipment. The Hockey mask must be plain black and be free of ANY decorations other than the manufacturer's logo(s).
NOTE: *An official NSA umpire cap must be worn under any mask at all times and must remain on the head when the mask is removed. There is NO RESTRICTION as to which official umpire cap must be worn (some state association may have stricter guidelines) by the plate or base umpire, however, AN OFFICIAL UMPIRE CAP sold by the NSA National Headquarters must be worn at all times.*

SECTION 9 OFFICIAL UMPIRE GEAR

All NSA Umpires must be registered and have a valid membership number, prior to taking the field. ALL NSA OFFICIAL UMPIRE GEAR MUST BE PURCHASED THROUGH NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS. All NSA Umpires must wear an Official NSA umpiring uniform consisting of the following:

- a) *Official NSA logoed umpire shirt.*
NOTE: *Any clothing worn under the official umpire shirt must be plain white with no writing or graphics of any kind.*
EXCEPTION: *Official embroidered NSA undergarments.*
- b) *Charcoal or Heather grey trousers with belt loops (SP & FP).*
NOTE: *Trousers do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants, or other pants or slacks that would not be considered dress trousers.*
- d) *Charcoal or Heather grey shorts with belt loops.*
***NOTE:** *Charcoal or Heather grey shorts, with belt loops, may be worn at all levels of NSA sanctioned play.*
EXCEPTION: *Fastpitch Softball. It is up to the discretion of the Tournament Director to allow umpires to wear shorts or trousers during all post season play. It is recommended that Umpires, in cooperation with the league/tournament Umpire-In-Chief, coordinate their uniforms to look alike, i.e. one Umpire wears shorts, both wear shorts. This is the same for trousers. When shorts are worn, solid white crew socks or white or black socks that cover the ankle must be worn. No show socks are not acceptable as part of the NSA OFFICIAL UNIFORM.*
- e) *Black Belt.*
- f) *Black socks with trousers and white crew socks or white or black socks that cover the ankle with shorts. Partners' sock color MUST match if shorts are worn.*
- g) *Black jacket w/official NSA logo.*
- h) *Black half sleeve jacket w/official NSA logo.*
- i) *Black shoes. Black official (umpire) shoes bearing the white logo, a trademark or manufacturer's name is legal. NO WALKING BOOTS OR CASTS PERMITTED.*
- j) *White/black mock with official NSA logo or plain white/black regular turtleneck.*
- k) *Black rain gear (top and bottom).*
- l) *Black cap w/official NSA Logo.*



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- m) *Black ball bag w/official NSA logo. Ball bag must be worn on the hip or slightly to the rear of the hip.*
- n) *Any umpire apparel (hat, jacket, etc) that is issued to an umpire for being assigned to a special event (NIT, World Series, a Super World Series, etc) may NOT be worn after the conclusion of said special event as a part of the official NSA Umpire uniform.*
- o) *The following item sold by NSA that bears the official NSA logo is mandatory wear and MUST be purchased from the NSA National Headquarters. NSA Official Jacket, NSA Official Shorts, NSA Official Half Sleeve Jacket, NSA Official Cap, NSA Official Shirt, NSA Official Rain Gear, NSA Official Mock Turtle Neck, NSA Official Ball Bag. To place an order, go to www.NSASportingGoods.com*

SECTION 10

No umpire during the course of any **NON NSA sanctioned** softball event (League, Tournament, friendly or scrimmage) may not wear any part of the NSA official umpire's uniform.

SECTION 11

No player during the course of any NSA sanctioned softball event may wear any part of the NSA official umpire's uniform.

RULE 11 PROTESTS

SECTION 1

Protests shall not be allowed or considered if they are based solely upon a decision involving judgment on the part of any umpire.

NOTE: *Examples of a protest which will not be considered are:*

- a) Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
- b) Whether a baserunner was safe or out.
- c) Whether a pitched ball was a ball or strike.
- d) Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.
- e) Whether a runner left his/her base too soon on a caught fly ball.
- f) Whether a fly ball was or was not legally caught.
- g) Whether it was or was not an infield fly.
- h) Whether there was or was not interference.
- i) Whether the field is fit to continue or resume play.
- j) Whether there is sufficient light to continue play.
- k) Any other matter involving only the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

SECTION 2

Protests shall be received and considered concerning matters of the following type:

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

SECTION 3

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

EXCEPTION: *Player eligibility.*

- a) The manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the scorekeeper and the opposing manager.

- b) It is the umpire's responsibility to record the surrounding conditions to aid in the correct determination of the issue. (i.e. inning, outs, name of batter, runners on base, etc.)

NOTE: *On appeal plays, the appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal, or before the defensive team has left the field. This would mean when the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on the way to the bench or dugout area.*

SECTION 4

In League play, the official protest must be filed within a reasonable time:

- a) Within forty-eight (48) hours after the scheduled time of the contest is generally considered a reasonable amount of time in league play.
- b) The formal written protest should contain the following information:
- 1) The date, time, and place of the game.
 - 2) The names of the umpires and scorekeeper.
 - 3) The rule and section of the Official Rules or local rules under which the protest is based.
 - 4) The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision.
 - 5) All essential facts involved in the matter protested.

SECTION 5

In tournament play, all play ceases until the protest is resolved.

- a) A protest fee of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) cash will be paid in all qualifying and post season tournaments sanctioned by the NSA. In tournament play, the fee must be paid immediately. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee shall be returned. If protesting player eligibility, the fee is \$75.00 cash per player. Bat protests are \$200.00 per bat.

EXCEPTION: *In the event a Bat compression test machine is on site, a bat protests are \$75 per bat. Ball protests will be \$75.00 per ball.*

- b) In tournament play, protest concerning player eligibility must be filed before the end of the game being protested.

NOTE: *The Tournament Director/Coordinator or Tournament UIC may require a copy of the birth certificate or Government Issued picture I.D. at any time during tournament play. Play ceases until the protest is resolved.*

SECTION 6

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

- a) The protest is found invalid and the game stands as played.
- b) When a protest is allowed for misinterpretation of a playing rule, the game is replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made with the decision corrected.
- c) When protest for eligibility is allowed, the team shall forfeit the game played to the offended team.

EIGHT & UNDER PLAYER FASTPITCH RULES

PLAYER PITCH, COACH PITCH, MACHINE PITCH and MODIFIED.

Any rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the Fast Pitch Section of the current edition of the Official NSA Rulebook.

RULE 1 SECTION 35

The infield fly rule is not in effect. The ball remains alive with all runner(s) in jeopardy of being put out or advancing.

RULE 1 SECTION 45

A baserunner who advances one (1) base on a passed ball is considered to have stolen that base. In the 8 U Under division, a baserunner may not steal home, but are liable to be put out if they are off base.

RULE 2 SECTION 2

The base distance in the 8 & Under Division will be 60 feet.

RULE 2 SECTION 2

The pitching distance in the 8 & Under Division will be 35 feet.

RULE 3 SECTION 2 (a)

Girls in the 8 & Under Division will use the 11-inch softball. Refer to Rule 3, Section 2.

RULE 3 SECTION 8

Beginning August 1, 2018, all pitchers 8U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching or in the pitching position.

RULE 5 SECTION 1 (d)

Defensive coaches are allowed behind the outfielders on the left field line and the right field line.

RULE 7 SECTION 11 (1st NOTE)

In the 8 & Under Division, the batter is declared out no matter whether the third strike is caught or not.

RULE 8 SECTION 3 (a-g)

Base stealing is allowed in the 8 & Under Division under the following guidelines:

- a) Runners starting at 1st base or 2nd base are entitled to steal one base only per pitch with liability to be put out.
NOTE: *Runner(s) are not allowed to advance more than one base per pitch even in the event of an overthrow at any base.*
- b) Runner starting at 3rd base may not steal home but are liable to be put out if they are off the base.
- c) A runner(s) attempting to advance beyond the one base they are entitled to steal may be put out while between bases or in contact with a base to which he/she is not entitled to.
- d) After all play ceases and the ball becomes dead, if a runner(s) occupies a base beyond the one he/she was entitled to steal, the runner(s) will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
- e) A batter/runner who has received a base on balls can attempt to steal second base.
- f) Awarded bases will apply to all runners. This would include an overthrow into dead ball territory.

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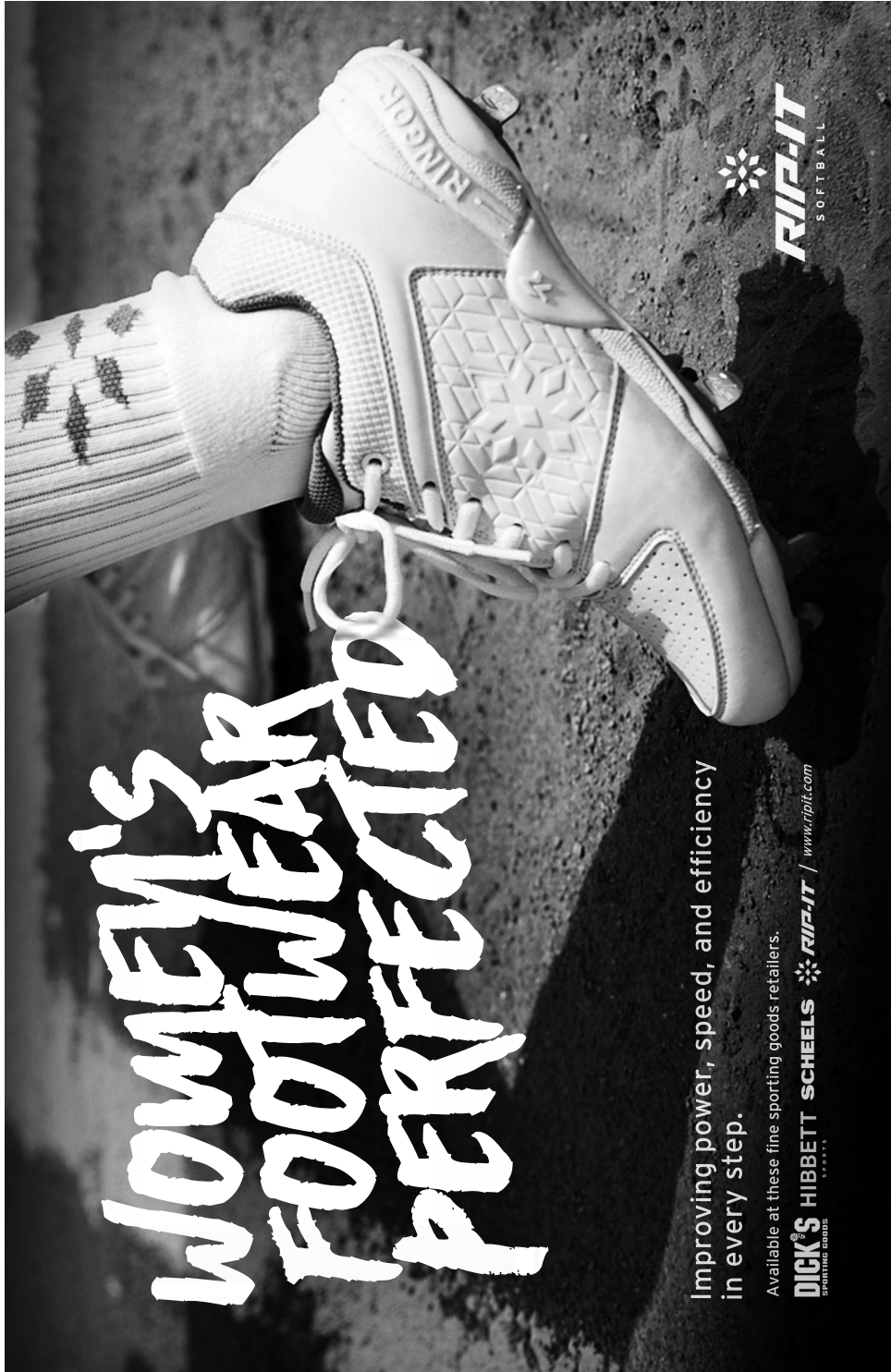
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- g) Runner can only score on:
- 1) A batted ball.
 - 2) A base on balls.
 - 3) A hit batter with the bases loaded.
 - 4) An awarded base when the ball goes out of play.
 - 5) An illegal pitch.
 - 6) When a play is made on him/her.

EIGHT & UNDER COACH PITCH

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in Part I of the current edition of the Official NSA Rulebook.

RULE 2 THE PLAYING FIELD

SECTION 4

The base distance will be 60 feet.

- a) Thirty (30) foot slash marks will be made on the first and third base lines. The defensive team cannot cross those lines until the ball is hit.

RULE 3 EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1

The official bat should be made of one piece of wood (hardwood), metal, or other materials approved by the NSA, or formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive, in such a way, that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat. Below is a list of additional requirements:

- a) The bat shall not be more than 34 inches in length and no more than 38 ounces in weight. The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (not smooth plastic type), or combination material.
- b) The grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the small end of the bat.
- c) ***Wooden bats must be stamped “Softball” or “Official Softball” and meet the standards described in Rule 3.***

NOTE: If the words “SOFTBALL” or “OFFICIAL SOFTBALL” cannot be read due to normal wear, the bat shall be declared illegal, if it is legal in all other aspects.

- d) The bat may be made of composite or metal and a bat may be angular; however, the NSA must approve any material, before it is used in sanctioned events.
- e) All exposed surfaces of the bat must be smooth and free of burrs, pins, and rivets, **DEEP DENTS OR DANGEROUS DENTS, fractures of any type**, sharp edges or any type of exterior fastener that would present a safety hazard.

EXCEPTION: At the umpire’s discretion slightly dented bats may be considered legal.

- f) Unless the bat is made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, it should have a rubber or plastic insert in the barrel.
- g) A one-piece rubber grip and knob combination is illegal.

- h) Metal or other approved material bats, if made with a knob on the handle, the knob must be welded or mechanically fastened.
- i) The knob portion of the bat may be taped as long as the bat does not exceed 34 inches in length; however, the umpire may request tape to be removed from both the handle and knob if there is any question concerning the bat being altered or illegal. After determining the bat legal, the player may tape the bat back to his/her preference, providing the bat meets the requirements set forth by Rule 3, Sec. 1 (a-n).
- j) A flare or cone grip may be attached from the factory or a factory flare or cone may be attached to the bat by the player, but the flare or cone must be installed properly to the bat. The flare or cone must be taped or covered by an approved bat grip and the bat must meet all requirements of Rule 3, Sec. 1 (a-n) after installation to be considered legal.
- k) Shall be rounded, smooth, and not be more than 2 ¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/16 inch is permitted, to allow for expansion on the round bat.

NOTE: *Sec. 1 a-n. Any bat that does not comply with these guidelines must be removed from the game, and the bat may no longer be used in any NSA Sanctioned Play.*

***NOTE:** *The BPF of 1.20 does not apply to eight & under bats.*

SECTION 2

The official softball shall be a smooth-seamed, concealed stitched or flat-surfaced ball. The center of the ball may be made of either long fiber kapok or mixture of cork and rubber, and/or machine wound with a fine twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement. Or it may be made of other materials approved by the NSA. The cover of the ball shall be optic yellow, tanned horsehide, cowhide or any other materials approved by the NSA, cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with black waxed cotton or black linen thread to form a black stitched softball. The solid core ball must be stamped with THE official NSA logo which contains the maximum C.O.R. and compression standards. The ball MAY NOT bear any other logos except for the NSA official logo unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director or the Executive Vice President of the NSA. See Rule 3, Section 2 for approved logos.

SECTION 3

Beginning August 1, 2018, all pitchers 8U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching or in the pitching position

SECTION 7

Batters and baserunners must wear NOCSAE approved helmets and the face guard must be NOCSAE approved.

SECTION 8

No jewelry is allowed. Medical ID bracelets are allowed.

RULE 4 PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTIONS

Any non-player who is not yet considered an adult, may not be between the fences or boundaries that are considered the playing field without a NOCSAE approved helmet with a NOCSAE approved face mask properly attached. Any youth division bat boys/bat girls who are the team's official bat boy/bat girl or who are team members serving as bat boy/bat girl must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with a NOCSAE approved face mask properly attached. The coach/manager or player representing the team is responsible for ensuring that the non-player is in compliance with the batting helmet rule or age rule.

PENALTY: The player, non-player, bat boy or bat girl will put the helmet on or be removed from the playing area.

SECTION 1

A team may play with an Optional tenth (10th) player on defense. This Optional player must be positioned in the outfield and must stay a minimum of ten (10) feet outside of the baseline (umpires judgment) until the ball is hit.

- a) If the Optional tenth (10th) player is used, that team has only one (1) optional EP for their use. If a team decides not to use the Optional (10th) player; letters a, b and c below apply.
- b) If the Optional tenth (10th) player is used, the team must complete the game with the Optional tenth (10th) spot in the line-up. If an Optional tenth (10th) player gets hurt or becomes ill, this must be brought to the attention of the opposing team and the umpires. If no substitute is available:

PENALTY: Failure for the optional tenth (10th) player to bat is an automatic out each time that vacant spot in the line-up comes to bat.

Should the ill or injured batter be able to return to the line-up, the batter will resume their correct position in the batting order when returning to the game.

- c) A team shall consist of eight (8) players and a maximum of eleven (11) players if two optional Extra Players (EP's) are used.
- d) A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start or finish a game
- e) All other rules concerning players should be the same as girl's fast pitch rules with the exception of using a Twin Players.

RULE 5 THE GAME

SECTION 1

- a) Addition to Part One (1) of the Official Playing Rules:
- b) An Offensive coach will pitch to his/her team.
 - 1) The coach acting as the pitcher, will not be allowed to coach the offense while acting as the pitcher.

PENALTY: At the time when the umpire recognizes the infraction, the ball becomes dead and all runners will return to the base last legally touched.

- c) The game shall be six (6) innings or 1-hour time limit. When the time limit is up, the teams must finish the inning unless the home team is ahead when the top half of the inning is over.

- d) All defensive players must play by position. Outfielders must be a minimum of ten (10) feet outside of the baseline (umpires judgment) until the ball is hit.
- e) One defensive coach is allowed on the field behind the outfield. He/she should give instructions before the ball is hit. After the ball is pitched, the defensive coach on or off the field, cannot physically touch any player.
PENALTY: Runners will advance one (1) base after play has stopped.
- f) Each half inning will end when the defense records three (3) outs or the offense scores five (5) runs, whichever comes first. The batting order shall be a revolving batting order consisting of nine (9) ten (10), or eleven (11) batters.
EXAMPLE: *Nine (9) batters if there are only nine (9) players present at game time. Ten (10) batters if one (1) EP is used or if the Optional tenth (10th) player is used. Eleven (11) batters if both Optional EP's are used or if the Optional tenth (10th) player and one (1) EP are used.*
- g) The batter will be allowed five (5) pitches or three (3) strikes whichever comes first. **NO BASE ON BALLS will be awarded.** If the batter hasn't hit the ball fairly after five (5) pitches, the batter is out.
EXCEPTION: *The at bat cannot be completed on a foul ball.*
- h) The Offensive team will be allowed three (3) coaches as follows: one first base coach, one third base coach, and one coach serving as the pitcher. The pitcher will pitch from a thirty-five (35) foot pitching rubber.
- i) No bunting will be allowed.
PENALTY: A strike will be called on the batter.
- j) Hit batters are not allowed to advance to first base.
- k) The run rule will be sixteen (16) runs after four (4) innings and eleven (11) runs after five (5) innings of play.
- l) An injured player may re-enter the game but must return to the same position in the batting order.
- m) If a batted ball hits the Coach/Pitcher (not the player in the circle), the ball is dead; The batter and any baserunner(s) shall all advance 1 base.

RULE 6 PITCHING

SECTION 1

Addition to the General Playing Rules:

- a) The player playing the position of pitcher shall keep one or both feet within the sixteen (16) foot diameter pitching circle until the ball is hit.
- b) The defensive coach may move the pitcher behind 2nd base for safety reasons and must be a minimum of ten (10) feet behind 2nd base.
NOTE: *Violation of the above rule will result in the offensive team having the option of taking the result of the play or declaring no play.*
- c) If the batted ball hits the adult pitcher the ball is dead. An adult pitcher must make an effort to keep from being hit by the batted ball.
PENALTY: If no effort is made in the judgment of the umpire, the batter is called out. First offense draws a warning or ejection, based on severity. Second offense draws an automatic ejection.
- d) The catcher may be positioned anywhere from the catcher's box to the screen.
- e) Catchers must wear a NOCSAE approved mask until the ball is hit, then it may be removed to field the ball.

RULE 7 BATTING

SECTION 1

Addition to the General Playing Rules:

- a) No play shall be declared if a batter hits the ball with one or both feet outside the batter's box. If the pitch is the fifth pitch, the batter will be declared out.
- b) For safety reasons, coaches will caution players about throwing/slinging the bat. Each player will receive one warning from the umpire for throwing/slinging the bat. On the second offense, the player will be called out.
- c) Each team must allow all players to bat according to the batting order. If a player is sick, hurt, or refuses to bat, this must be brought to the attention of the other coach, umpire, and the scorekeeper. Each team is allowed to bat all players that are present at game time. If the team elects not bat all players, the team must follow Rule 4, Section 1(a, b, and c)
- d) Failure to bat constitutes a team out. The individual batter will resume their correct position in the batting order when returning to the game.
- e) There will be NO infield fly rule.

RULE 8 BASERUNNING

SECTION 1

Addition to the General Playing Rules:

- a) Baserunners must be in contact with the base until a legally pitched ball reaches home plate.
- b) Baserunners shall be entitled to the base they are going to plus one when the ball is over-thrown into a dead ball area.
- c) When the defensive team stops the progress of the lead runner, the umpire will call "time out" and play will be stopped. When the ball is in possession of a defensive player within the 16' circle, any runners between bases must immediately advance to the next base, and one base only, or return to the last base touched. If the runner fails to return or advance immediately, the umpire will call "time out" and play will be stopped. Baserunners do not have to be on base to establish stopping of progress. (This will be in the umpire's judgment.)
- d) Any coach touching a baserunner(s) while the ball is in play will result in the touched runner(s) being called out. All other runners may advance at their own risk.

PENALTY: For a runner(s) leaving early, the ball becomes dead, the runner(s) will be declared out.

EIGHT & UNDER MACHINE PITCH

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in Part I of the current edition of the Official NSA Rulebook.

SECTION 1 COACH PITCH / MACHINE PITCH

Coach Pitch/Machine Pitch is a combined division of coach pitch teams playing against machine pitch team.

NOTE: *A Team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game*

- a) Seven (7) run limit per inning per team.
- b) Three (3) outs per inning.
- c) Batters shall get six (6) pitches, or three (3) strikes, if the sixth (6th) pitch is a foul ball, the batter shall receive an additional pitch or pitches until the ball is hit fair or the batter's turn at bat is completed.
- d) No designated hitter (DH) allowed.
- e) No intentional walks allowed.
- f) Courtesy runner will be allowed for the catcher. The runner must be a player not in the lineup unless all players are in the lineup, then the last offensive player who has just finished his/her turn at bat and has been put out (and if available has not become a runner) shall be used as the courtesy. If there is no player put out at bat available, use last completed at bat via a runner put out at a base, or that has scored if no runner put out at a base. If none of the above is available, use the player on the lineup furthest from coming up to bat.
- g) No infield fly rule.
 - 1) Batters may not bunt or half-swing the pitch.
PENALTY: Ball is declared a foul ball and counts as a pitch.
 - 2) Batters may not indicate a "fake bunt" then pull back and swing.
PENALTY: A strike will be called and if the third (3rd) strike the batter will be declared out.
- h) Each team on defense will have an option to field nine (9) players consisting of six (6) infielders and 3 outfielders who must stay in the outfield until the is hit. Or each team may field ten (10) defensive players consisting of six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders who must stay in the outfield until the ball is hit.
PENALTY: Violation of this rule will result of giving the offensive coach the option of batting over or taking the result of the play.
NOTE: *A Team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game*
- i) When the defensive team stops the progress of the lead runner, the umpire will call "time out" and the play will be stopped. When the ball is in the possession of a defensive player within the 16' circle, any runners between bases must immediately advance to the next base, and one base only, or return to the last base touched. If the runner fails to return or advance immediately, the umpires shall call "time out" and play will be stopped. Baserunners do not have to be on base to establish stopping of progress (This will be in the umpire's judgment).
- j) Teams shall have an adult pitch to the batters or load the pitching machine.

- k) If the batted ball hits the adult pitcher, the ball becomes dead. An adult pitcher must make an effort to keep from being hit by the batted ball (umpire's judgment), and if no effort is made, the batter shall be declared out.
Beginning August 1, 2018, all pitchers 8U and under must wear a FACE GUARD while pitching or in the pitching position
NOTE: The NSA Highly recommends protective equipment. NSA Recommends that the pitcher stand on either side of the adult pitcher
- l) Any coach assisting a base runner(s) by physically touching that runner while the ball is in play will result in the runner(s) being declared out. Other runner(s) may advance at their own risk.
- m) Each team will bat all players that are present at game time. Any player(s) arriving after the beginning of the game will assume the last position in the batting order. If a player is sick, hurt or refuses to bat, this should be brought to the attention to the opposing coach, scorekeeper and umpire. Failure to bat constitutes a team out.
EXCEPTION: Any player(s) arriving after the beginning of the game will assume the last position in the batting order. If the team elects not to add the players; the team will follow Rule 4, Section 1 (a, b &c)
NOTE: Teams have free substitution for defensive player(s) who are currently in the lineup. If the player is not listed in the lineup, then normal substitution rules will be applied.
- n) Any player(s) listed in the starting lineup and has been removed for a substitute may re-enter the game one (1) time.
NOTE: This rule applies to starters only. Player(s) must return to their original position in the batter order. Substitute is ineligible to play for the remainder of the game.
- o) If a player is hurt or injured after the ball is batted, the offensive team may advance only one (1) base. Time is then called to attend the injured player.
NOTE: An injured player may re-enter the game but must return to the same position in the batting order.
- p) In the coaches and machine divisions the catcher must take a position within the catcher's box in order to receive each pitch.
- q) Pitching Machine Only: Machine may be adjusted at the start of each inning. Machine may be readjusted if hit by a batted ball or moved by the adult pitcher. If machine needs to be readjusted, the tournament director must approve.
- r) Games that end in a tie will then be required to use the international tie breaking system to determine the winner of that game.
- s) One (1) time out per inning per team will be allowed and last one (1) minute each. Time out as a result of an injury shall be an official time out and will not count against the team's number of allotted time outs.
- t) One (1) coach is allowed behind the baseline but not within the field of play to provide instructions.
- u) Offensive team will be allowed three (3) coaches on the field and should be positioned as follows: one (1) first base coach; one (1) third base coach; and one (1) coach serving as the pitcher for their team.
- 1) The coach acting as the pitcher, will not be allowed to coach the offense while acting as the pitcher.

PENALTY: At the time when the umpire recognizes the infraction, the ball becomes dead and all runners will return to the base last legally touched

- v) Baserunner(s) may not leave their base until the ball is hit.
WARNING: If the umpire notices baserunners to be leaving early the team will receive a warning then if it continues the penalty will be in effect.
PENALTY: Runner(s) will be called out for leaving the base early.
NOTE: If the ball is hit, the play will continue, and penalty will be enforced after the play is completed.
- w) Appeal plays may be made once time has been called and the play has come to a complete stop. Only the head coach can make the appeal and must inform the umpire on what is being appealed and where.
NOTE: If the appeal process is done illegally, then the appeal will be denied and the play stands.

EIGHT & UNDER MODIFIED

Any softball rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in Part I of the current edition of the Official NSA Rulebook.

SECTION 1 8U PLAYER/COACH PITCH

Modified (Player Pitch/Coach Pitch is a combined program for players transitioning from coach pitch to player pitch.

NOTE: A Team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game

- a) The game will begin with the players pitching. When a pitcher walks a 3rd batter, the offensive coach will come in to pitch to the next batter, that batter has 5 pitches to either hit or strike out. After 5 pitches the batter is out. A 5th pitch foul ball will allow one additional pitch to the batter, if the ball is not put in play, the batter is declared out.
- b) Once that batter is out, or reaches base, the player will again assume the role of pitcher, resetting the rule on batters. This rule is used each time in an inning or throughout the game.
- c) While the offensive coach is pitching, he/she must remain in contact with the pitching mound and is not allowed to coach any of his/her players or field any balls. **PENALTY:** Coach will be removed from the pitching position and all players will return to the base occupied at the time of the infraction. A new coach can replace the removed coach, or the player may resume the pitching position.
- d) Each inning will end after 3 outs or 5 runs have been scored.
- e) Runners may not steal more than one base on any overthrow.
- f) Runners may leave the base once the pitch is released, this includes while the coach is pitching.. **Runners may ONLY lead off base when the coach is pitching, they may not steal.**
- g) Runners may not steal home unless a play is made on them.

- h) All runners must, without hesitation, go to the next base or return to their previous base once the ball is in the pitching circle. PENALTY: Runner is out.
- i) There is no bunting (a strike is called on a bunt), or dropped third strike
- j) There is no 'hit by pitch'. If a batter is hit by a pitch, a ball is called. If a batter is hit a second time, within the same at bat, the batter shall be awarded 1st base. A third 'hit by pitch' by the same pitcher shall result in the pitcher being removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the inning.
- k) No infield fly rule
- l) Teams may play with 10 players
- m) Time limit is 1 hour (75 minutes per option of the Tournament Director.) or 16 runs after 4 innings or 11 runs after 5 innings.
- n) A defensive coach may be on the field but must be positioned in the outfield behind his/her players.
- o) Runners are not required to slide but must try and avoid contact
- p) International Tie Breaker: If the game is tied at the end of 7 innings or the time limit has expired, the last recorded out shall be placed at 2nd base with zero (0) outs and no count on the batter. The inning will end after three (3) outs or eight (8) runs have been scored.
- q) All other rules, please refer to the 8U program.

ADULT MEN'S FAST PITCH RULES

Any rules not covered or found in this section will be covered or found in the Fast Pitch Section of the current edition of the Official NSA Rulebook.

RULE 1 DEFINITIONS

SECTION 10 BATTING HELMET

A batting helmet bearing the NOCASE stamp is mandatory for each batter and baserunner. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a non-glare surface. Helmets will have an extended earflap on one or both sides. If the helmet has only one flap it must cover the ear on the side facing the pitcher.

RULE 2 THE PLAYING FIELD

SECTION 2

- a) The minimum fence distance will be 225 ft
- b) The maximum fence distance will be 250 ft
- c) The base distance will be 60 ft
- d) The pitching distance will be 46 ft

RULE 3 EQUIPMENT

SECTION 7

A batting helmet bearing the NOCASE stamp is mandatory for each batter and baserunner. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a non-glare surface. Helmets will have an extended earflap on one or both sides. If the helmet has only one flap it must cover the ear on the side facing the pitcher.

SECTION 8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

It is highly recommended, but not mandatory that the catcher wear an approved head protector, protective mask with a throat protector, body protector, shin guards and a protective cup. All protective equipment must conform to industry standards. All players are permitted to wear any approval protective equipment and if used, the equipment must not be detached. All catchers are REQUIRED to wear a face mask.

RULE 4 PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTIONS

SECTION 2 DESIGNATED HITTER (DH)

- a) The designated hitter (DH) may go in and play defense. Once the (DH) enters the game in a defensive position that will eliminate the role of the designated hitter (DH) for the remainder of the game.

EFFECT: *When the designated hitter (DH) enters the game on defense, the player on defense he was hitting for is removed for the remainder of the game.*

SECTION 8 DIVISIONS OF PLAY

For Players who have reached their 16th birthday to compete in adult fast pitch events.

- a) Major
- b) Class A
- c) Class B
- d) Class C

RULE 5 THE GAME

The NSA highly recommends that teams purchase team insurance for liability and medical coverage.

SECTION 9

Teams must have registered and entered their roster online with all information correct and complete or the player(s) and/or team(s) will be considered ineligible to participate in any National Softball Association Sanctioned Tournaments, including Qualifiers, NIT's or Post Season Tournaments.

- a) Teams must PRINT a copy of the Official NSA ONLINE ROSTER (complete & correct), OBTAIN SIGNATURES of participants (and Parents or guardian if Youth) to turn in at ALL NSA sanctioned tournaments prior to their scheduled start or they will not be allowed to participate.

EXCEPTION: *See Youth Tryout Rosters*

RULE 6 PITCHING REGULATIONS

SECTION 1

The pitcher shall take a position with both feet on the ground with at least one foot in contact with the pitching plate. The hands shall be separated with the ball being held in either the glove or pitching hand.

SECTION 4

The pivot foot initially in contact with the pitching plate and the non-pivot or free foot once lifted must not come in contact with the ground, as described in the definition of the crow hop, before the release of the ball. There is no restriction on movement or position of the feet, except that if a step is taken forward or backward, the step and feet must be within or partially within the 24 inch lane width of the pitching plate extended.

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YOUTH BYLAWS PERTAINING TO NSA SANCTIONED TOURNAMENTS

It is the responsibility of coaches/managers/sponsors to know the NSA Rules and Bylaws. Ignorance of these Rules and Bylaws is not grounds for protest or appeal. NSA is not responsible for a player or teams travel expenses to any tournament, to including a canceled, weather related or a team elects to drop.

ARTICLE XIII INDIVIDUAL PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

SECTION 1

Player Eligibility is determined by the player's birth certificate.

SECTION 2

A player is eligible to compete as an amateur player, as long as she does not accept payment for participating in the game of softball.

SECTION 3

A player is considered an amateur if she plays the game solely for the pleasure, physical, mental and social benefits derived from participation.

SECTION 4

An amateur player is eligible to participate in the NSA program, as long as she is **listed on an official online roster of a team membership** by the association. The player's name must be entered on the online roster identical to her state driver's license, government issued photo ID or birth certificate.

SECTION 5

An amateur player is not permitted to accept awards other than a watch, charm, trophy, jacket, bat or other like award that is acceptable to the association, as an award in which amateur status should be retained.

SECTION 6

Under the guidelines set by each Regional and /or State Director, an equitable system of classifying teams and controlling team rosters will be instituted.

SECTION 7

A player may not participate in a sanctioned NSA Tournament with more than one team during the same tournament, or on the same weekend.

SECTION 8

A Tournament Director, Tournament Umpire-in-Chief or an Umpire of the National Softball Association may not manage, coach, play, or umpire in any tournament in which he/she serves as part of the tournament committee staff. However, if the tournament director or other tournament committee staff is a NSA sanctioned umpire, they may, due to emergencies or other special circumstances, umpire until replacements arrive. All NSA Championship Play tournaments must have a tournament Umpire-in-Chief present during the playing of that tournament.

SECTION 9

A player will be required to have an NSA Player ID Number to be added to a NSA Online Roster, started August 1, 2022.

ARTICLE XIV PLAYER ROSTERS (YOUTH ONLY)

Coaches must invite players to their online roster and have Player and Parent/Guardian ACCEPT the invitation to change the STATUS of the player from invited or pending to APPROVED.

All players must be invited to the online roster at PlayNSA.com and have an APPROVED STATUS to be eligible for participation. All coaches/managers must be listed online.

SECTION 1

- a) Teams must have attained a team membership to enter their roster online with all information correct and complete and the player(s) and/or team(s) will be considered ineligible to participate in any National Softball Association sanctioned event, league and tournaments, including Qualifiers, NIT's or Championship Play Tournaments.
- b) Rosters must be finalized and if required a copy turned in at ALL NSA sanctioned leagues and tournaments prior to their scheduled start or they will not be allowed to participate. Teams playing in tournament events must have their complete and correct roster entered online with all players having an APPROVED status to be eligible to participate. The Player/Parent/Guardian and coach/managers could be required at any time to physically sign a printed copy of the roster. If a league/tournament is using an NSA paper roster, all the information must be filled in completely with all signatures of player/parent/guardian and coach/managers. **EXCEPTION:** *See Youth Tryout or Paper Rosters.*
- c) No written additions to the NSA Online Roster other than signatures shall be made at any tournament site, unless approved by the appropriate State Director with approval of President/CEO.
NOTE: *Player additions must be added to the roster prior to the tournament entry deadline.*
- d) When a team qualifies for a World Series, the team's roster will be frozen no later than the date of the State Tournament. It will be at the State or Regional Director discretion if a player is eligible to be released from the qualified team to transfer to another qualified team.
- e) Roster will be frozen by the date of the State tournament.
- f) Teams may add two (2) players after the State Tournament and before the World Series Tournament deadline. Added player(s) must be of the same or lower class. Approval for a youth player(s) to play in the next highest age group must be obtained from the State or the Regional Director.
- g) Players are considered on the Official Roster when the Player/Parent/Guardian has electronically signed an online roster (physically signed an official NSA Paper Roster), unless the player is 18 years of age or older and signed for themselves.
- h) The appropriate State Director shall be responsible and required to contact the Tournament Director to rectify any late additions to the official tournament roster.
- i) Roster is limited to twenty-five (25) players per roster. A release, injury, relocation, or a player quitting the team does not open a new roster position. Only roster positions that were never occupied by a player(s) are eligible or open to add additional player(s).
EXAMPLE: *A team that has all twenty-five (25) positions filled on their roster shall not be able to add any additional player even though player(s) have been released, injured or quit.*
- j) A roster addition at the discretion of the State or Regional Director shall be allowed for injury or other legitimate reason after the cut-off date, but not at the tournament site. Player(s) additions must be added to the roster prior to the tournament entry deadline in the State Championship, NIT, and the World Series.

- k) **The youth membership year is August 1st to July 31st.** The cutoff date for the youth age eligibility is December 31st of the current sanction season. The player's age on December 31st during the CURRENT SANCTIONING SEASON will be the age group the player is eligible for during the ENTIRE sanction year. All players must meet the age requirements to be put on a current year's roster.
Example: If a player turns 15 years old on December 31st of 2023, they CANNOT be put on a 14u roster for the 2024 sanction year that begins August 1st, 2023. A copy of the original birth certificate and/or a Government Issued photo ID must accompany youth players at all times.
- l) Player(s) may be released three (3) times during the sanction year between August 1st and July 31st. Player(s) playing in a higher age group may play down in the same season and must be age eligible.
- 1) Player(s) from a disbanded team do not lose their right of release or to be picked up by another team.
 - 2) Player(s) may be released at the request of the team manager or parent/guardian with approval of their State Director. Player(s) must be officially released by the State Director before they are eligible to be added to the new team. **Player(s) cannot be released from an "A" team to play with a class "B" or "C" team.**
- m) Players cannot be added to a roster after the tournament has started.
- n) Players may not participate in a sanctioned NSA Tournament with more than one team during the same tournament, or on the same weekend.
- o) Player(s) cannot play in two (2) age divisions in one tournament.
EXCEPTION: *18u player can play in same weekend with an 18u and 23u team as one is considered Youth and the 23u is an adult.*
- p) Players may play up one age group but not down in an age group.
EXCEPTION:
*A PLAYER eligible for a 10u roster that turns 11 years of age during the current season CAN play up two (2) age divisions on a 14u team.
 A 14u TEAM with an 11-year-old player on it would NOT be eligible to play in a 16u or High School Age Division tournament.
 A 14u TEAM can play a HIGH SCHOOL Age Division tournament ALL of their players turn 13 years of age during the season.
 A PLAYER eligible for a 12u roster that turns 13 years of age during the current season can play up two (2) age divisions on a 16u team.
 A 16u TEAM with a 13-year-old player is eligible to play in an 18u or High School Age Division tournament.
 A PLAYER eligible for a 14u roster that is 13 years of age by December 31, 2023 can play up two (2) age divisions on an 18u team.
NOTE: *A PLAYER 12 years old turning 13 years old during the current year cannot play in an 18u division.
 An 18u TEAM with a 15-year-old player on it would NOT be eligible to play an Adult Fastpitch tournament.**

HIGH SCHOOL AGE DIVISION TOURNAMENTS:

The High School Age Division Tournament is only offered for 14u teams (All players need to be turning 13 years of age during the current season), 16u teams and 18u teams to play each other. All players must be a minimum of turning 13 years old during the season in order to play in a High School Age Division Tournament

NOTE: *The 23 & under teams are considered adult teams. The 23 & under division will play by the adult rules including the age eligibility rule.*

The youth sanction year is August 1st to July 31st. All players must meet the age requirements to be put on a current year's roster.

q) **GUEST PLAYERS**

If a team uses a guest player and plays in another state, they have to play under the guidelines set in the state they are playing in. Not all states may offer the Guest Player program. Contact your State Director for details.

- 1) Request must be approved by the State Director or his/her representative 24 to 48 hours prior to the start of the tournament. Contact State Director for a Guest Player Deadline.
- 2) The State Director may require written or electronic approval from her current coach.
- 3) A player can only guest play maximum of four (4) times per sanctioned season.
- 4) Number of guest players per weekend is determined by the State or Regional Director.
- 5) Guest Players are NOT allowed in World Series Tournaments.
- 6) Any Guest Player that does not meet roster requirements will be considered an ineligible player. Player must be age and class eligible for the team classification they are guesting with.
- 7) Teams "home state" shall be determined by:
 - 1) NSA League Registration.
 - 2) Where the majority of the players reside with their primary residence.
 - 3) Where the coach resides with his/her primary residence.

SECTION 2 PLAYER MEMBERSHIP and ID NUMBERS

It is required that all players have a Player ID Number (Player Membership) to be added to a roster starting for the 2024 season. A Parent or Legal Guardian of a player (under 18 years old) MUST create a PLAYER MEMBERSHIP, through an account created by the Parent/Legal Guardian.

The Player ID Number (Profile) will be used from year to year, no matter what team the player participates with.

The Parent/Legal Guardian will need to RENEW the PLAYER MEMBERSHIP for their child every season. This is how they will ACCEPT or DECLINE any invitations to play with specific teams. In the process of creating and renewing a PLAYER MEMBERSHIP, the Parent/Legal Guardian will electronically sign the release/waiver. The Parent/Legal Guardian could also be required to sign a physical roster at any time.

SECTION 3 YOUTH TRYOUT ROSTERS

- a) Team(s) involved in tournaments designated as a team tryout shall be held after the World Series and shall submit a paper roster.
- b) All rosters shall be opened to allow player(s) movement for team(s) to begin the process of forming their team for the following year.
- c) Team rosters shall be considered open for a designated team trial tournament and players shall be exempt from obtaining roster releases to participate.
- d) Team trial tournaments are to be held no later than March and are at the discretion of the State Director to allow for team formation in the fall and spring.
- e) These are non-qualifying tournaments and no berths or National points can be awarded.
- f) Tournament Director **MUST** UPLOAD copies to PlayNSA.com of **ALL** tryout rosters to the National Office after each tournament.

SECTION 4 YOUTH FALL ROSTERS

- a) Not all States allow FALL ROSTER Teams, contact your State Director for details.
- b) FALL ROSTER teams are NON-QUALIFYING teams established to allow players to continue to participate in the same age group through December 31st.
- c) No Berths and No National Points awarded for a Fall Roster Team.
- d) Fall Roster teams will use an Official Online NSA Roster.
- e) Fall Roster teams are only allowed to participate from August 1st to December 31st.
- f) Fall Roster Teams must attain a FALL ROSTER membership number.
- g) The Fall Roster team will AUTOMATICALLY be DISBANDED on December 31st and all players will be automatically released.
- h) The Fall Roster team will need to re-sanction to a qualifying roster and pay a new fee to participate between January 1st and July 31st.
- i) State Directors may also establish FALL ROSTER ONLY tournaments. These tournaments would be non-qualifying tournaments that would allow only Fall Roster teams to compete against each other from August 1st–December 31st.

SECTION 5 ODD AGE DIVISIONS ROSTERS

The ODD AGE divisions will be made up from the following

<u>Age</u>	<u>Birth Year</u>
9u Division	–2014 (or younger)
11u Division	–2012 (or younger)
13u Division	–2010 (or younger)
15u Division	–2008 (or younger)

Based on the rules in the NSA rule book

This is a “PILOT” program and not all states will offer ODD AGE Tournaments. ODD AGE Tournaments are run by the even age playing rules.

EXCEPTION: *Roster rules.*

ARTICLE XV

TEAM INSURANCE

Youth Team Insurance - All teams must submit a current copy of their team insurance certificate to the League or Tournament Director prior to participating in any level of NSA event. Teams can also upload a copy of their Insurance Certificate to PlayNSA.com

All youth teams must have a Team Insurance Policy that **includes Liability and Participant Accident or Accident Medical Coverage.**

PLEASE NOTE: Some companies are offering discounted team insurance policies that may not fully cover your team. Some offer LIABILITY ONLY, PARTICIPANT ACCIDENT/MEDICAL ONLY, or LEAGUE ONLY policies and those are NOT acceptable for play in any NSA event.

- a) Youth teams are REQUIRED to have team insurance with Liability and Participant/Accident Medical Coverage. It is the coach/manager's responsibility to make sure these requirements are met prior to participation.
- b) Teams are REQUIRED to have the NSA WestPoint Insurance policy coverages.
- c) **If the team does not have a yearly NSA WestPoint Policy**, team can still participate by turning in a copy of their yearly Insurance Policy (certificate that includes Liability and Participant/Medical Accident coverage), **no matter the company. The Tournament or League Director is then required to use the Weekend Program to ensure those teams meet the NSA WestPoint requirements for the one time the team is playing NSA.**

Adult Fastpitch Teams: Including 18 & Over, 23u and Women's Teams.

If any player on the team is UNDER the age of 18 years old: The team is REQUIRED to have TEAM INSURANCE: If all players on the team are 18 years of age or older: It is highly recommended that you have team insurance.

ARTICLE XVI

CLASSIFICATIONS

SECTION 1

Under the guidelines set by each Regional and /or State Director, an equitable system of classifying teams and controlling team rosters will be instituted.

SECTION 2

The Regional and/or the State Director have the authority to upgrade other teams in class if necessary. A Regional and/or the State Director may upgrade any team up in class, at any time, due to the advanced play of the team in question.

SECTION 3

The Tournament Director or Tournament UIC may declare a higher-class player(s) ineligible without having a team protest

SECTION 4

- a) NO college player may play on a "B" Class team. **College Players who have officially signed to play or have been redshirted on a college softball roster, or Players who have not played in an official college games are eligible to play in NSA Youth Fast Pitch Class "B".**
- b) The State Youth Director or Regional Director may reclassify a team in a division at any time during the season.

- c) The State Youth Director who registers a "B" or "C" Division team must approve any out-of-state player(s) on the team roster.
- d) Any player that participates or qualifies with an "A" Division team may not play in the "B" or "C" Division for that year.
- e) Class "C" Division is for only 10 & under, 12 & under and 14 & under ages

SECTION 5

Any team that wins multiple berths to Championship Play events must participate in the highest class in which the team has qualified, and forfeits any berths, and is not allowed to participate, in the lower classification.

ARTICLE XVII QUALIFYING TOURNAMENTS

SECTION 1

Only a properly registered team with a current team membership number from the National Softball Association may compete in ANY NSA SANCTIONED EVENT, including qualifying, NIT and state championships. Teams must have registered and entered their roster online with all information correct and complete or the player(s) and/or the team(s) will be considered ineligible to participate in any National Softball Association Qualifiers, NIT or Championship Play Tournaments. **All rosters shall be entered online with ALL players having an APPROVED STATUS from the NSA Online System and teams MUST provide a copy of their team insurance.** (Review Article XV – TEAM INSURANCE in the bylaws for full insurance details and requirements.) No written additions other than signatures shall be made unless approved by the appropriate State Director with approval of the Regional Director. The appropriate State Director shall be responsible and required to contact the Tournament Director to rectify any late additions to the official tournament roster.

SECTION 2

All applicable Team and Umpire Membership Fees must be paid to the National Headquarters of the National Softball Association before any tournament is considered a sanctioned NSA tournament. **NSA sanctioned tournaments must be approved by the State Director and posted online at PlayNSA.com.**

SECTION 3

All approved qualifying leagues and tournaments, in which a berth to a Championship Play tournament shall be awarded, must be completed one (1) week prior to the particular Championship Play Tournament.

SECTION 4

The following is a list of the ways teams may qualify to participate in World Series tournaments: **Approved qualified league, World Series qualifier, State Championship and NIT.**

SECTION 5 ODD AGE TOURNAMENTS

If your team is a true 9u, 11u, 13u or 15u age team, please ask your state director to add the age group to your team's name.

ODD Age World Series – ALL Players must meet the ODD age requirements.

- a) Not all states will offer ODD AGE tournaments.
- b) ODD AGE Tournaments are run by the even age playing rules. Example: 9u plays by 10u, 11u plays by 12u, 13u plays by 14u and 15u plays by 16u rules. EXCEPT by the roster rules.

- c) If your area offers an ODD AGE tournament, please contact your state director regarding the roster rules they will allow at the State level.
- d) Most directors will only allow the true odd age team to participate, at the State level, the director could allow some 12u players to participate in 11u division. The state director can put local stipulations that the 12u players cannot be a pitcher or other position.

SECTION 6 YOUTH FALL QUALIFIERS

- a) Teams must participate in age and class they are trying to qualify for the following year's World Series.
- b) Teams qualifying under these conditions must retain a minimum of six (6) players or 50% of the qualified roster whichever is greater to retain their berth. The appropriate state director could impose or set higher standards in this regard.
- c) Teams must participate in no less than one (1) qualifier and the state tournament the following year to validate a fall berth.

EXCEPTION: *18U teams may bypass their State Tournament in order to participate in the World Series. However, they must have obtained a berth by participating in a World Series Qualifier in the fall or spring and retain 50% of the qualified roster whichever is greater to retain their berth. The appropriate State Director could impose or set higher standards in this regard.*

- d) **Online rosters are mandatory for Fall Qualifiers.**
- e) Youth State Tournament – youth teams may be required to participate in an NSA sanctioned league or qualifying tournament in order to participate in the State Tournament. Check with your State Director.

SECTION 7

NO youth player will be charged admission to any youth tournament they are participating in above and beyond the team entry fee.

ARTICLE XVII CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY TOURNAMENTS

Championship Play Tournaments – State, National Invitational (NIT), Regional, Nationals and World Series in the National Softball Association.

SECTION 1

All teams must participate in an NSA State Championship Tournament in order to validate a berth to play in an NSA World Series Tournament. Team(s) cannot qualify from a canceled tournament and no berths will be awarded from a tournament that is not physically played.

EXCEPTION: *Approved by President/CEO.*

EXCEPTION: *18U teams may bypass their State Tournament in order to participate in the World Series. However, they must have obtained a berth by participating in a World Series Qualifier in the fall or spring and retain 50% of the qualified roster whichever is greater to retain their berth. The appropriate State Director could impose or set higher standards in this regard.*

SECTION 2

All sanctioned tournaments conducted by a State or Area Director shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules, Bylaws and Regulations of the National Softball Association. That director must ensure that proper administration is being conducted at all times.

SECTION 3

The Tournament Director's report along with all rosters and paperwork should be **UPLOADED** or sent to the NSA National Headquarters within seven (7) days of the Tournament. Results posted on www.PlayNSA.com

SECTION 4

The National Headquarters of the National Softball Association shall determine the amounts to be charged as entry fee for all Championship Play and Invitational Tournaments.

EXCEPTION: *Qualifying tournaments are left up to the discretion of the State or Regional Director but should remain within the accepted guidelines of the industry.*

SECTION 5

Under the guidelines set by each Regional and/or State Director, an acceptable system must be developed to qualify teams for Championship Play tournaments. Teams may qualify directly from an approved qualified league. The Regional and/or the State Director approval, in conjunction with the National Headquarters, must be sought for determining how many berths will be awarded from approved league play.

NOTE: *Check with your State Director or Regional Director on how they award leftover or at-large berths.*

SECTION 6

Fast Pitch World Series Director must play with a four (4), (5) or (6) game format that is approved by the NSA National Headquarters.

SECTION 7

No State Tournament is allowed to be conducted on the dates of a World Series Tournament, within that region, no competitive tournament can be run on the same weekend as an NSA World Series.

SECTION 8

The Executive Committee of the National Softball Association will decide each year, at the annual National Convention, what tournaments will be classified as Championship Play Tournaments. The Executive Committee will also determine all dates and locations of such tournaments. Anyone wishing to hold such tournaments must submit a written request at the National Convention.

- a) All Championship Play will be treated the same as World Series Tournaments. The National Headquarters must approve any changes to this procedure.
- b) The Executive Committee at the National Convention will determine the number of NIT'S per/Region. No tournament will be considered an NIT unless approved in writing by the National Headquarters and accompanied with a contract executed by the proper personnel.

SECTION 9

An applicant may submit a written request to conduct such tournaments; provided the applicant has one year of proven participation with the NSA. Only in the case where a new program in a State, has less than one year of proven experience, will a written request to conduct a Championship Play Tournament.

SECTION 10

Any written application requesting to conduct a Championship Play or World Series Tournament must include complete and detailed information concerning all aspects of the tournament. This information will be included in the mandatory contract for these tournaments.

- a) Any Tournament Sponsor must be approved and specified by the National Headquarters.

- b) A complete description of the facilities must be submitted. This description must include the number of playing fields, dimensions, lighting, location, seating arrangements, scoreboards, sound systems, and any other details pertinent to the tournament location and the facilities it may provide.
- c) A complete list of motels, their accommodations, prices, addresses, and phone numbers; plus, the proximity to the playing fields must be submitted. Included in this listing must be discounted team prices and adequate comp rooms for out of state umpires and NSA personnel.
- d) The availability of any media. This would include social media, newspaper, radio, and television coverage.
- e) A list of special events or attractions for participating teams. This would include parties, opening ceremonies, manager's breakfast, and any other social activities provided.
- f) The financial responsibilities of the tournament must be specified between that of the Sponsor, Tournament Director, Park Owner, and the National Softball Association.
- g) Any other facts or aspects of the tournament, not covered in (a) through (g), will be incorporated and made a part of the application and contract for the specific tournament being requested.

SECTION 11

Championship Play, World Series and Super World Tournament Sponsors, must sign a contract with the National Headquarters of the NSA. The contract will define the roles and responsibilities of both the Sponsor and the NSA, as they pertain to the specific tournament.

SECTION 12

The playing fields, under contract, to be used in a Championship Play tournament must meet the guidelines and specifications as outlined in the Official Rule Book of the NSA. All playing fields must have outfield fences. The Executive Committee of the National Softball Association must approve any on field specifications that deviate from the Official Rule Book in advance.

SECTION 13

The amount a team is to pay, as entry fee for a Championship Play or World Series tournament will be decided by the Executive Committee of the NSA. The Executive Committee will also decide the distribution and percentage of this entry fee.

SECTION 14

All Championship Play and World Series tournament play will be under the jurisdiction and direction of the Executive Committee with full cooperation from the host city committee. The NSA President/CEO shall appoint a qualified individual to serve as Tournament Director and a qualified individual to serve as Tournament Umpire-in-Chief. The Regional Director of the region that is hosting the tournament, will act as liaison officer between the host city committee and the Executive Committee. All Championship Play Tournaments will have an appointed tournament committee that will ensure that the tournament is run according to the guideline rules and bylaws of the NSA. This committee will also rule on any protest. The tournament committee will be under the direction of the Tournament Director and the Tournament U.I.C.

SECTION 15

The following is a list of the way teams may qualify to participate in a World Series tournaments:

- a) A registered team of the National Softball Association which qualifies either through approved qualified league or tournament must also participate in the state championship in order to validate the berth. NIT winners does not need to play in state if they choose.
- b) NIT berths awarded: 4-7 teams are 1 berth; 8-11 teams are 2 berths and 12+ teams is 3 berths. Per age division. Winner can bypass the State Championships if they choose.
- c) State Championships berths awarded are TOP 4 in each age group and class.
- d) At-Large berths awarded by State and Regional Director and approved by NSA President/CEO.
- e) A registered team of the National Softball Association that is named as a host team from the area where the World Series tournament is being played. The host team must play in the state tournament and must be approved by the Regional Director and the National Headquarters.

SECTION 16

If a team has qualified to compete in a Championship Play tournament and due to a legitimate reason cannot attend; they may be replaced by the next qualified team chosen by the State or Regional Director.

SECTION 17

The Tournament Director, with approval from the President/CEO of the NSA, will set a deadline for accepting entries for World Series tournaments. A one (1) week minimum is required.

SECTION 18

Any team that wins multiple berths to Championship Play events must participate in the highest class in which the team has qualified and forfeits any berths and is not allowed to participate in the lower classification.

SECTION 19

Once a World Series Tournament is scheduled, a State Director may issue a travel permit (or give permission) with the approval of the Regional Director and the National Headquarters to a team to participate in a World Series outside of the scheduled area that the team is from.

SECTION 20

NO youth player will be charged admission to any youth tournament they are participating in above and beyond the team entry fee.

ARTICLE XVIII PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETION and REFUNDS OF TOURNAMENTS

SECTION 1

The National Softball Association shall use the following format for completing in Championship Play and World Series tournaments:

- a) Normal rain delay, push games back without any changes.
Look at the option of playing games later in the evening with no changes in the format.
- b) Shorten time limits
- c) Drop Pool Play and go directly to bracket play.
- d) Drop the loser's bracket. Refer to Section 2 below, for order of finish at a point and time when the tournament cannot be completed.

SECTION 2

The National Softball Association shall use the following methods in determining the order of finish in a Championship Play tournament that cannot be completed: (bracket play)

- a) Any single undefeated team will be declared the Tournament Winner.
- b) If there is more than one (1) undefeated team in the Winner's Bracket, those teams will be declared Co-Champions.
- c) Head to head competition.
- d) Average per game of the total runs allowed in the tournament.
- e) Average per game of the total runs scored in the tournament. If a tie still remains from the results of the above criteria, then and only then can a Tournament Director use a coin flip or other approved methods to determine the final standings in the Tournament. The National Headquarters must approve any method not listed above.
- f) "IF GAME" can't be started or completed it will result in Co-Champions.

NOTE: Bracket Play. Once teams are seeded into Bracket Play, the bracket will determine the order of finish, no matter the record of the team in pool play.

SECTION 3

A team may receive a refund of an entry fee for a sanctioned NSA tournament only under the following condition:

- a) A request for refund, sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, sent to the Tournament Director and received prior to the published cutoff date for receiving entries. The U.S. Post Office postmark will be considered as the date of the refund request. The Tournament Director will forward a check to the team making the request. A refund is not required, regardless of when the request for refund was postmarked, if received after the tournament is drawn.
- b) NO Refund after tournament deadline
- c) NO REFUND after the brackets have been drawn and posted.
- d) NO REFUND required if an age group is marked on www.PlayNSA.com as FULL.

ARTICLE XX ACTS OF DISBARMENT OR SUSPENSION

SECTION 1

Any team, player, manager/coach or other team representative, whose conduct on or off the field that would be detrimental to the National Softball Association will be dealt with immediately. The National Softball Association expects that all managers/coaches, players and team representatives to act in a manner where sportsmanship is always practiced. The Association also expects team coaches or officials to have complete control of their players and **spectators** at all times during the playing of a National Softball Association sanctioned tournament. The National Softball Association through its Regional Director and the National Headquarters shall have and reserve the right to withdraw membership during the playing of any NSA Sanctioned Tournament.

SECTION 2

The National Softball Association will not tolerate any of the following unsportsmanlike behaviors.

- a) Any coach, player, team official or parent/guardian that displays abusive behavior or language in any form during the playing of an NSA event.

- b) Any coach, player or team official using words or actions that will incite demonstrations.
- c) Using any form of intimidation tactics (profanity, baiting, ridicule, etc.) in the taunting of the opposing team and its members.
- d) The use of any behavior that is not conducive to fair play.
- e) Fighting and/or leaving the bench area when a fight has broken out will cause all participants engaged in the altercation to be immediately ejected from the game.
- f) Any type of physical attack on a coach, player, umpire or tournament official during the playing of the game or immediately following the game.

EFFECT: Any coaches, players or team officials that take part in any of the above conduct shall be ejected and/or suspended for one (1) or more games during the remainder of the tournament.

Upon further investigation by the NSA Director if any of the above unsportsmanlike conduct is warranted to be severe enough in its nature, the NSA has the right to issue additional penalties. Such penalties can involve the suspension of further play of the team and/or its members in the tournament. Any of the above behaviors can also warrant the NSA to issue further suspensions and even disbarment of the guilty parties from the National Softball Association.

SECTION 3

- a) Any type of physical attack of any player, umpire, league or tournament official or any officer of the National Softball Association during a game or immediately following a game, being held under the administration of/or sanctioned by the National Softball Association. A person that has pending charges or a conviction of battery toward an NSA Official or any NSA Representative may be banned from participating in any NSA activity with the approval of the National Softball Association's VP and/or NSA President/CEO.
- b) A team member(s) using audible obscene language, or any display of flagrant actions considered as unsportsmanlike gestures.
- c) A player or team receiving money or financial benefits in consideration of participating in softball competition.
- d) A team, coach or player knowingly competes with or against ineligible, illegal or suspended players.
- e) **A team, coach, player or parent/guardian participating in or permitting a fraud to be perpetrated.**
- f) **A team, player, coach/manager, or parent/guardian participating in or permitting a fraud to be perpetrated by electronically or physically signing another person name(s) on an NSA roster.**
- g) Any NSA Official who refuses to submit collected or owed funds that are due the National Softball Association.
- h) Any player or team that competes under an assumed name.
- i) **At any time a submitted roster is found to not have been individually signed electronically or physically by players or parents/guardians, it will be considered illegal, and players will be ineligible to participate.**
PENALTY: The team can be removed from a current tournament or if it is discovered after the tournament is completed, the team will lose any

berths and points from the tournament and in either case, the coach/manager and team can be suspended for a year.

- j) Any person or persons or team submitting a bad check, stopping payment on a check, or doing a credit card chargeback or providing a bogus credit card number to the National Softball Association or to any Director acting on their behalf will be suspended. This may include all players on the roster of the team that is involved and may also hold responsible the legal guardian of any minor.
- k) Any person who purposely uses false information to damage the reputation, image, or credibility of the National Softball Association.
- l) All suspensions MUST be submitted through the State Director, and then forwarded to the respective Regional Director, and the Regional Director will forward to the National Headquarters. The suspension will be posted by the National Headquarters ONLY. Directors are to be advised that if they have information concerning suspension(s) on their web site that should be linked to the National web site.

SECTION 4 SUSPENSION

- a) Any NSA Officer, Director or persons representing the NSA that violates any Articles of these Constitution/Bylaws or does not adhere to the Policies or Procedures of the National Softball Association, may be suspended.
- b) Any NSA Officer, Director, or persons representing the NSA that fail to submit fees and/or information due the NSA, not meeting requirements in a timely manner, may be suspended and will have no insurance coverage.
- c) What makes an NSA Sanctioned Event?
 - 1) NSA teams sanctioned online with signed electronically or physically NSA roster and proof of insurance turned in.
 - 2) NSA umpires sanctioned online prior to taking the field with current membership number.
 - 3) NSA rule book must be followed. Any special rules must be submitted in writing to the National Office for approval at least one week prior to the event.
 - 4) NSA approved equipment – NO EXCEPTIONS
 - 5) Tournaments must be approved by the State Director.
 - 6) Tournaments and tournament results are to be posted on PlayNSA.com

* If any of these requirements is not met, insurance coverage will be void.
- d) Any Officer, Director, Umpire, Participant, or persons representing the NSA that are suspended for any reason, will not be allowed to participate in any capacity within the Association, until such suspension has been lifted. This would include any sanctioned event, or any event being conducted under the Administration of the National Softball Association.
- e) The NSA has adopted the following procedure with regard to disagreements that threaten legal action or that lead to legal action. By any of the following, but not limited to, a player, coach, team or related persons against any affiliated person director, park, umpire or facility of the NSA. Any participant, team, coach, sponsor or any other party who threatens in writing, through legal counsel or otherwise to take legal action against the NSA, files a legal action against the NSA or has a lawyer contact the NSA verbally regarding a dispute will

automatically and immediately be suspended from all NSA activities until the legal discussions are concluded to the satisfaction of the NSA. Additionally, if legal action is filed against NSA or a NSA affiliated person, park, or facility by any participant, team, coach or any other person, the person filing the action, the person's team (if a player or coach), and each of its members may be suspended from any and all NSA events until the legal actions are resolved to the satisfaction of NSA.

ARTICLE XXI APPEAL PROCESS PROCEDURES

SECTION 1

Outline of the National Softball Association's Appeal Procedures:

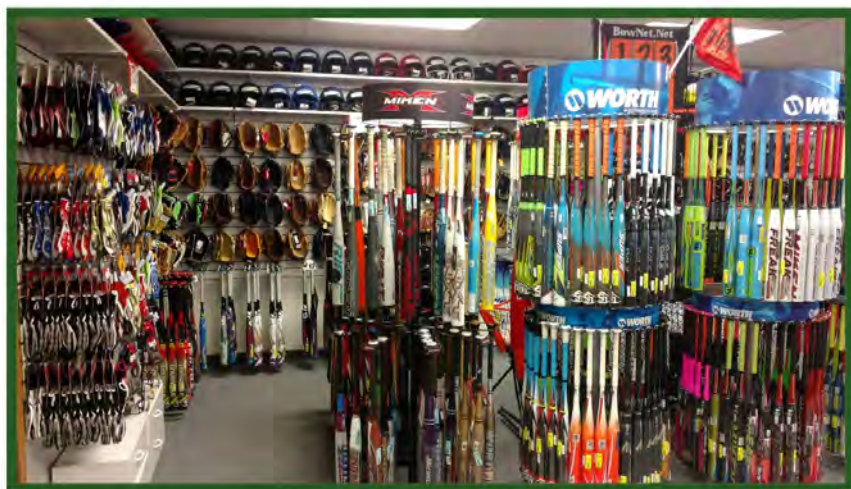
- a) Step 1: Any team or player affected by the occurrence or condition that would cause an appeal may present that appeal in writing to the appropriate Regional Director within fifteen (15) days after the occurrence or condition. If not filed within fifteen (15) days, the applicant loses their right to appeal.
- b) Step 2: If the appealing team/person does not receive a satisfactory resolution to the first appeal, the applicant may indicate dissatisfaction with the first appeal. The applicant may then submit the proper forms within fifteen (15) days to the appropriate National Softball Association Vice President duly appointed by the NSA President/CEO to conduct the second step of the appeal process. If not filed within fifteen (15) days, the applicant loses their right to appeal.
- c) If the appealing team/person does not receive a satisfactory resolution to the second appeal, the applicant may indicate dissatisfaction with the second appeal. The applicant may submit within ten (10) days the proper information that he/or she feels has been misunderstood to the NSA President/CEO of the National Softball Association, unless there has been a mutual agreement for an extension. The applicant may submit this final appeal in writing or may request that a hearing be conducted. All parties involved may have legal counsel and any witnesses at this hearing. The applicant must pay all financial responsibilities for such legal counsel or witnesses. The NSA President/CEO must render a decision within ten (10) days pertaining to the final appeal. The decision rendered by the NSA President/ CEO is final and under no circumstances will another appeal be granted.

The NSA President/CEO and/or the Executive Vice President must approve any exceptions to the above bylaws.

PENALTY: Violation of any part(s) of the above bylaw will cause the player(s), team(s), umpire and director to become ineligible to participate in any officially approved sanctioned National Softball Association league or tournament.



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