

# New Evolution Sports Association



## Official Slow Pitch Rule Book

2016

**Rule Interpretations** - Definitions of basic terms used in softball, such as batter, fielders, base runners, infield fly, etc will be generally the same as defined in other major softball associations. If any agreement cannot be reached upon definition or rule interpretation in NESA play, then the Tournament Director and UIC will make a decision concerning the definition or rule interpretation in question. In the event the Tournament Director cannot reach a decision, then they may appeal to the Area or State NESA Director and UIC for a decision. Should there be no NESA Director present, then the Tournament Director may confer with the NESA/Executive Director or Region Umpire Representative. If none of the above is present, then the Tournament Director will meet with all of the NESA umpires who are present at the time of the disagreement and then make a decision. Decisions reached by the method listed above concerning rule and definition interpretations will be binding and final for that particular tournament. In no event will a team be awarded a favorable decision on a protest where that team has used trickery, deception or wrongful interpretation of a rule by an umpire, NESA Official or Tournament Director.

Under no circumstances will any NESA Director who has any interest whatsoever (such as being a team member, coach, sponsor, etc) in any team involved in a protest or ruling have any authority or say in the decision.

**Player Suspension and Appeal Process**- A State or Regional Director may issue a maximum suspension of one year from the date of incident. Suspension must be sent by registered mail to address on the Official Team Roster. Suspension beyond one year must be ruled on by the board members.

A player may appeal their suspension to a Region Vice President if issued by the State Director. If a suspension is issued by a Region Vice President, it can be appealed to the Executive Director. Appeal must be in writing and received within fifteen (15) days of appellant receiving notice in writing. Appeal letter must be sent by registered mail to the NESA Office.

Appeals must be ruled on within seven (7) calendar days and appellant notified of decision by registered mail at address listed on Official Team Roster. If not satisfied the appellant may file a final appeal to be ruled on by the Board at the next scheduled meeting. The appeal must be sent to the NESA Office within fifteen (15) days of ruling. The appellant shall be notified of time and location of meeting by registered mail within seven (7) days of NESA Office receiving the final appeal. At least thirty (30) days shall be given to the appellant, unless the next scheduled Board meeting is scheduled for less than thirty (30) days at which time the appellant may waive the thirty (30) day requirement and have his case heard at the next Board meeting.

All suspensions or disbarments for over one (1) year period must be issued by the NESA and participant has the right to appear to provide evidence on their behalf.

Participants appealing a suspension on their behalf are responsible for all personal costs incurred for attending said meeting. After conclusion of the final appeal hearing, the appellant will be notified within fifteen (15) days of the decision. This is the final judgment.

If at any time in the appeal process the appellant or Association fails to meet proper time notification deadlines the appeal process is ended and participant accepts last judgment rendered if at fault or decision will be rendered in favor of appellant if association fails to comply.

State or Region Directors may issue an indefinite suspension for players or teams who fail to meet financial responsibilities for participation in the NESA program.

### **Acts of Disbarment-**

- A. Submitting a check that cannot be negotiated for payment
- B. Physical attack on an umpire, tournament official, or director of the association during, preceding or immediately after a game.
- C. Verbal abuse or threatening an umpire, tournament official or director of the association.
- D. Fighting, using unsportsmanlike conduct or derogatory acts that are detrimental and not in the best interest of the association.
- E. Destruction of property or abuse of hotel or motel property or failure to pay hotel or motel bills.
- F. By participating in, or permitting a fraudulent act to be perpetrated.
- G. By knowingly competing with suspended or ineligible players.
- H. By using tampered or altered equipment. Anyone caught with an altered bat will be suspended from all NESA activities for a 5 year term.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**ALTERED BAT** - A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed. Vising, rolling or any other process that exerts more pressure on the bat other than the typical bat and ball collision is considered altering a bat.

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

**BASE ON BALLS** - Permits a batter to gain first base without liability to be put out and is awarded by the umpire when four (4) pitches in FP or three (3) pitches in SP have been judged to be balls by the umpire.

### **Courtesy Runner-**

- A. Can be any player listed on the legal roster.
- B. Must be announced at the coin toss/start of game.
- C. Is eligible to run as many times per half-inning as they would like.
- D. If caught on base when his or her turn at bat comes up an out will be declared.
- E. In co-ed play, teams may have a male and female courtesy runner. Males can run for males only and females can run for females only.

**BASE PATH** - An imaginary line, three (3) feet on either side of a direct line between the bases and the player or a direct line between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or is about to attempt) to tag the runner.

**BASE RUNNER** - An offensive player that has reached first base, but has not yet scored or been put out.

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

**BATTER'S BOX** - The batter's box is the 3 foot by 7 foot area to which the batter is restricted. The lines are considered as being within the batter's box.

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

**BATTING ORDER**- The official listing on the lineup card of offensive players by name, defensive position and uniform number in the order in which member of that team must come to bat.

**BLOCKED BALL** - A batted or thrown ball that is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game, or which touches any object that is not part of the official equipment or official playing area.

**BLOOD RULE** - Refers to a player, coach or umpire who is bleeding, or has blood on his uniform and treatment is required. A player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or has blood on the uniform, shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, as determined by the umpire, the player will not have to leave the game. Uniform violations occurring as a result of the blood rule will not be enforced.

**CATCH** - A catch is a legally caught ball which occurs when the fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with the hand or glove. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove that the player has complete control of it or that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball after reaching into his glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arm or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body, equipment or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, after he contacts the ball, collides with another player, umpire or a fence, or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. A ball which strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight, is ruled the same as if it struck the ground. An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a thrown or batted ball with anything other than his hand or glove in its proper place.

**CATCHER'S BOX** - The area defined by lines which are considered within the catcher's box. The catcher's body and equipment are considered within the box unless touching the ground outside of the box. The catcher must remain in the box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground or plate or reaches the catcher's box.

**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 already on the field) enters the playing field and gives the umpire cause to believe that he has delivered a message (by any means) to the pitcher. When the representative crosses into foul territory on the return to the dugout, the conference is over.
- B. **Offensive Conference.** The offensive team requests a suspension of play to allow the manager or other team representative to confer with the batter and/or base runners.

**CHOPPED BALL** - a chopped ball occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat. A ball that is pushed/slapped ball: as any soft bat swing that can be deemed as an intent to defraud the defense is illegal

**COACH** - A base coach is a member of the team at bat who takes his place within one of the two coach's boxes on the field to direct the players of his team in running the bases. One coach is allowed at first base, and the other is allowed at third base. One coach can have in his possession a score book, pen or pencil and an indicator. All of which shall be used for score keeping or record keeping.

**DEAD BALL** - The term that is used for a ball that has crossed over the dead ball line, touched a player or object not involved in the game, and/or the umpire has ruled it dead.

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

**DISLODGED BASE** - A dislodged base is a base displaced from its proper position on the field.

**DOUBLE PLAY** - A play by the defense resulting in two offensive players being legally put out.

**EJECTION** - The result of an incident that requires removal from the game by the umpire, whereby the ejected player or coach can no longer participate or remain within sight or sound of the playing area for the duration of the game. Any ejected player discovered participating will constitute a forfeit. Failure to leave the playing area will result in a forfeiture of the game.

**FAIR BALL** - A fair ball is a batted ball that

- A. Settles, or is touched in fair territory between home and first base or home and third base.
- B. Bounds over or past first or third base, which is in fair territory, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the base.
- C. While on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire.
- D. Touches first, second or third base.
- E. First falls or is touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second or third base.
- F. While over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
- G. Hits the foul line beyond first base or hits the foul pole.

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

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

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

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

**FLY BALL** - A fly ball is any fair or foul ball batted into the air.

**FORCE OUT** - A force out is an out which can be made only when the base runner loses the right to the base they are occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or succeeding runner has been put out.

**FOUL BALL** - Is a batted ball that:

- A. Settles or is touched on or over foul territory between home and first base or home and third base.
- B. Bounds or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory.
- C. While over foul territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
- D. First hits the ground or is touched over foul territory beyond first or third base. A caught fly ball is not a foul ball.
- E. Touches the batter or bat in the batter's hands a second time while the batter is still inside the confines of the batter's box.

**FOUR BASE AWARD** - Any fair ball touched by a defensive player that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, should be declared a four base award and shall not be included in the total of over the fence home runs

**GROUND RULE DOUBLE** - A batted ball that lands in fair territory and bounces over or rolls under the fence, or goes into a dead ball area.

**HOME TEAM** - The home team shall be designated by mutual agreement or by a flip of a coin, unless otherwise stated in the rules of the organization by which the schedule of the game is being played.

**ILLEGAL BAT** - An illegal bat is any bat that does not meet requirements of the NESAs rules.

**ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL** - An illegally batted ball occurs when:

- A. A batter's entire foot is completely out of the box and on the ground when the batter hits the ball fair or foul.
- B. Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate when the ball is hit.
- C. The batter hits the ball with an altered or illegal bat.

**ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL** - An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with their cap, illegal glove or any part of the uniform or equipment detached from its proper place.

**ILLEGAL PITCHER** - An illegal pitcher is a player legally in the game, but one who may not pitch as a result of being previously removed from the pitching position.

**INELIGIBLE PLAYER** - is one who does not meet the requirements of the NESAs. The determination of eligibility is the responsibility of the tournament director. The use of an ineligible player will constitute a forfeit if properly protested.

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

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

**INFIELD** - The infield is that portion of the field in fair territory that includes the area normally covered by infielders.

**INFIELD FLY** - An infield fly ball is a fair ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort; and when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied; and when there are fewer than two (2) outs. Any defensive player who positions himself in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule.

The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches the highest point based on the position of the closest infielder regardless of who makes the play. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly. If fair, the batter is out."

The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of being called out. The runner may tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching); the same as any fly ball. If a declared infield fly ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.

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

**INNING ENDING OUT** - Occurs when the offensive team hits an unassisted home run that travels beyond the fair field of play after which the team has reached their home run limit for the game. The home run, which puts the team over the home run limit, will end the offensive team's at bat no matter how many outs have been recorded.

**INTENTIONAL WALK** - When a batter is awarded first base without having to be pitched to and without liability of being put out.

**INTENTIONALLY DROPPED FLY BALL** - A batted ball that is intentionally dropped, whether it is touched or untouched, for the purpose of deceiving the base runners.

**INTERFERENCE** - Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes/confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play.

**LEAP PITCH** - Occurs when the pitcher releases the ball with both feet off of the ground.

- The ball is immediately ruled dead by the umpire and a ball awarded to the batter.

**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 the fielder's hand or glove.

**LINE DRIVE** - A line drive is a fly ball that is batted sharply and directly into the playing field.

**LINE-UP CARD** - Shall consist of the batting order, including the DH & EP(s) if used.

**OBSTRUCTION** - Obstruction is the act of:

- A. A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.
- B. A fielder, while not in possession of the ball, the act of fielding a batted ball, impedes the progress of a base runner who is legally running the bases.
- C. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical, verbal or audible.

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

**OFFENSIVE EJECTION** - When a player may continue to play defense but is no longer allowed to play offense.

**ON-DECK BATTER** - The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the person currently batting.

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

**OVER-SLIDE** - An over-slide is the act of the offensive player sliding beyond a base they are attempting to reach. This is usually caused when their momentum causes them to lose contact with the base, which then causes the batter-runner to be in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over-slide first base without being in jeopardy, if they immediately return to that base.

**OVERTHROW** - An overthrow occurs when a thrown ball from a fielder goes beyond the boundary lines of the playing field into dead ball territory or becomes a blocked ball.

**PASSED BALL** - A pitched ball that the catcher fails to stop or control with ordinary effort, enabling a runner(s) to advance.

**PLAY BALL** - is the term used by the umpire to indicate that play shall start. It shall not be declared until all defensive players are in fair territory except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box.

**PROTESTS** - There are four (4) types of protests:

- A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule: must be made before the next pitch, or if on the last play of the game, before the umpire leaves the playing field.
- B. Illegal substitute or re-entry: must be made while the player is in the game and before the umpires leave the field.
- C. Ineligible player: can be made during the game under the following guidelines
  - a. if a starting player, must be made before the completion of the third inning,
  - b. if a substitute player, must be made before the completion of the inning in which that player entered the game.
- D. Illegal equipment protest: can be made at any time during the tournament.

**Note:** The protest fee is \$125, and must be paid to the tournament director in cash at the time the protest is raised.

**QUICK PITCH** - A quick pitch is made by the pitcher with an obvious attempt to catch the batter off balance. This would occur before the batter takes a position in the batter's box or while they are still off balance as a result of the previous pitch. It could also be used to catch a base-runner off the base to which the runner is returning.

**SACRIFICE** - A batter is credited with a sacrifice when, with not more than one out, a bunt or fly ball enables a runner to score and the batter-runner is put out before reaching first base; or, if a fielding error occurs and it is judged that the batter-runner would have been put out.

**STEALING** - The act of a runner attempting to advance to the next base without the aid of a base hit, being put out or as a result of a fielding error (including batter error).

- A. Runners are permitted to steal once the ball hits the ground, hits home plate or crosses home plate.
  - The ball is ruled dead and runners may not attempt to steal if the ball comes into contact with the batter; or if the batter swings at the pitch; or, if in the umpire's judgment, the batter makes any motion that disconcerts the catcher.
  - The ball is also dead if the umpire handles the ball or if the ball lodges in the umpire's clothing. NOTE: The ball merely bouncing off the umpire does not constitute a dead ball.

**STRIKE** - Is called when a legally pitched ball crosses through the strike zone of a batter.

**STRIKE ZONE** - When the batter assumes a natural batting stance, the strike zone is the space over any part of home plate between the:

- A. Back shoulder and front knee

**TRAPPED BALL** - A trapped ball is:

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

**THREE FOOT LINE** - The three foot line is a line parallel to and three feet from the base line starting at a point halfway between home plate and first base. This is the running lane in which the batter-runner is permitted to occupy when running to first base. The batter-runner is declared out when the batter runs outside the three foot line, and in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder attempting to field a batted or thrown ball.

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

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

#### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE ACT OR CONDUCT**

Coaches, players, or team members will not make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about opposing coaches, players, officials or spectators; nor will they commit other acts such as fighting or throwing objects, including unsafely discarding of a bat. A Bat flip is considered- any intentional release of a bat that can be deemed unsafe in any way.

**WILD PITCH** - Occurs when a pitch is thrown that cannot be handled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

#### **The Playing Field**

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

All fence distances are suggested

ADULT	DIVISION	BASES	PITCHING	MIN. FENCE	MAX. FENCE
Elite	Slow Pitch	70 ft	50-60 ft	300 ft	375 ft
Men	Slow Pitch	70 ft	50-60 ft	275 ft	350 ft
Co-Ed	Slow Pitch	70 ft	50-60 ft	275 ft	350 ft
Women	Slow Pitch	70 ft	50-60 ft	275 ft	350 ft

**Note:** If the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be at the wrong dimensions during the course of the game, correct the error with no penalty and continue playing the game. Every effort should be made by the umpire to obtain the correct dimensions.

## **ALTERED EQUIPMENT**

### **Altered Bats Defined**

Altered bats are bats that have been cosmetically changed in such a manner to mask the true identity of the bat, have been changed in any way from the original manufactured product such as plug removed, end load changed, walls thinned or has anything foreign added to the bat other than a legal safety grip device or tape at the handle.

- A. Vising, rolling or any other process that exerts more pressure on the bat other than the typical bat and ball collision is considered altering a bat.
- B. Bats that have been worn due to normal usage but still retain the legal markings are approved for use as long as the appropriate marks are legible.
- C. Cracked or damaged bats that cannot be identified are not altered bats but shall be removed from play by the umpire or director. A player returning with a bat removed from play shall receive the same penalty as if using an altered bat.

### **Altered Bat Appeal**

To appeal an altered bat during the game, the defensive team must file a proper protest with the umpire.

- A. If, through onsite inspection, the director is able to confirm that the bat has been altered, the penalty shall immediately take effect.
- B. If the director must confiscate the bat for further testing, the game shall resume and penalties (if any) will be implemented at the time of determination.
- C. The accused player must voluntarily allow the bat inspection by the NESAs director or by any means determined acceptable by the NESAs. This includes on the spot testing, field testing or, sending the bat to the NESAs National Office or to the manufacturer for testing.
- D. If the bat must be sent for testing,
  - a. The director shall remove the tape or rubber grip on the handle, and write down the ID number and give it to the player as a receipt.
  - b. The bat shall be sent to the NESAs National Office for additional testing.

- c. If necessary, the NESAs Office will send the bat to the manufacture for testing.

### **Altered Bat Policy**

- A. In addition to the altered bat protest procedure stated in section 2 above, the NESAs will confiscate the bat and ball when a player is struck directly by a batted ball.
- B. NESAs reserves the right to confiscate, for testing or inspection, any equipment deemed questionable for legal NESAs play.
- C. Anytime a bat is tested on site and the bat fails the onsite test, the player is to be removed for the remainder of the tournament.

### **Altered Bat Penalty**

Any player who either knowingly or unknowingly uses an altered bat in NESAs sanctioned play will be subject to the following penalties:

- A. If the player refuses to hand the bat over to the director, the player will immediately be ejected from the game/tournament and receive a lifetime suspension from NESAs play. The team will also be ejected from the tournament, be placed last in the tournament standings and shall not receive a refund of their entry fee.
  - B. If the player turns the bat over and onsite testing confirms that the bat has been altered, the player will be ejected from the game/tournament and receive a five (5) year suspension from NESAs play. The team will also be ejected from the tournament, placed last in the tournament standings and shall not receive a refund of their entry fee.
  - C. If the player turns the bat over and onsite testing is inconclusive, the bat will be sent to the NESAs National Office for additional testing. The player will be allowed to continue playing until the test process is completed.
  - D. If it is determined after the completion of the game that the bat had been altered, the results of the game shall stand.
- A. If this verification occurs after the championship game, the following will result:
    - a. If the offending player was on the winning team:
      - the championship shall be declared vacant
      - the offending player's team will be placed last in the tournament standings
      - all other teams will hold their position in the tournament standings.
  - B. If this verification occurs after the loser's bracket final (3<sup>rd</sup> place game);
    - a. If the offending player was on the winning team:
      - the defeated team will retain the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish,
      - the 2<sup>nd</sup> place spot shall be declared vacant,
      - the undefeated team will be declared the winner,

- the offending player's team will be placed last in the tournament standings and
- all other teams will hold their position in the tournament standings.

## Equipment

The NESAs reserves the right to withhold or withdraw approval of any equipment, which, in the sole determination of the NESAs, significantly changes the character of the game, affects the safety of the participants or spectators, or renders a players' performance more a product of the equipment rather than of individual skill.

## Official Bat

- A. Shall be wood, metal, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic or any other composite material approved by the NESAs. Any new composite construction bat must be reviewed and approved by the NESAs.
- B. All non-wood bats must meet a 1.20 or less bat performance factor as measured using the ASTM standard 1890 test for softball bat performance factor with the following conditions:
  1. Bats will be tested at three spots at distances two inches apart from the center of percussion. These must be permanently marked by the manufacturer.
  2. Bats that would meet the requirement of 1.20 BPF, but were manufactured prior to 1995, may be used at the sole discretion of the umpire.
- C. A laminated bat must contain only wood or adhesive and have a clear finish, if applied to it.
- D. Shall be smooth, and if the barrel end has a knurled finish, the maximum surface roughness is no more than 4/1000 if measured by a spectrograph.
- E. Shall not be more than 34 inches long, nor exceed 38 ounces in weight
- F. Shall not be more than 2.25 inches in diameter at the largest part. A tolerance of 1/32' is permitted to allow for expansion on a round bat.
- H. Shall have no exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edge or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Metal bats shall be free of burrs, cracks or pronounced dents.
- I. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape (excluding smooth or plastic tape), or composition material. The safety grip is suggested not to exceed 15 inches from the small end of the bat, and suggested to be no less than 10 inches from the small end of the bat. If the safety grip is discovered to be less or more than the suggested length, player must either add or take away enough tape to adhere to the above suggestions. Any molded finger-formed grip made by the bat manufacturer, if used, must be permanently attached to the bat or attached to the bat with safety tape, and must be approved by the NESAs. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the safety grip are permissible on the grip only. Safety tape applied to any bat must continuously spiral. It does not have to be a solid layer of tape.
- J. If metal, and not made of one piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have an NESAs approved material insert firmly secured at the large end of the bat. Any two-piece bat must meet the manufacturer specifications and safety requirements for all inter-changeable bats. Must be designed in a way to prevent uncertified equipment alterations.

- K. Shall have a safety knob with a minimum .25 inches protruding at a 90 degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. A flare or cone grip attached to the bat is considered legal. The knob may be taped if there is no violation of this section.
- L. Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read due to wear and tear on the bat, but it is legal in all other aspects, it should be declared legal.
- M. Bats used in NESAs play must be pre-approved by the NESAs National Office.
- N. Manufacturers must submit all new design bats to the NESAs National Office.
- O. Bats that were manufactured and/or marketed to a specific group of players can only be used in that division of play.
  - 1. Baseball bats cannot be used in NESAs fast pitch or slow pitch play.
  - 2. Fast pitch bats cannot be used in adult slow pitch play.
  - 3. Senior bats cannot be used in fast pitch or adult slow pitch play.
  - 4. Womens bats cannot be used in mens slow pitch play, nor can they be used by men in co-ed play.

### **Warm-Up Bats**

No more than two (2) official softball bats, or one NESAs approved warm-up bat or a combination of the two may be used by the on deck batter in the on deck area.

No attachments are allowed on an official bat except the NESAs approved Pow'r Wrap warm-up attachment. Specifically excluded from use are fans, weighted donuts and bat rings.

### **Official Softball**

- A. All softballs must meet the standards set forth below, be optic yellow in color, and include an external stamp with the NESAs logo and the cor. and compression
- B. Shall be a regular, smooth-seamed, flat-surfaced, pebble-textured or dimple textured ball with concealed stitches.
- C. Shall have a center core made of either #1 quality long fiber kapok, a mixture of cork and rubber, a polyurethane mixture, or other materials approved by NESAs.
- D. May be hand or machine wound with a fine quality twisted yarn and covered with latex rubber cement.
- E. Shall have a cover cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover, sewn with waxed thread of cotton or linen. If the cover is molded, it may be bonded to the core or be of the same composition as the core. Either molded type must have an authentic facsimile of stitching as approved by the NESAs

- F. Shall have a cover of chrome-tanned, top-grained horsehide or cowhide, synthetic material or other material approved by the NESAs.
- G. Softballs used in NESAs play shall be in accordance with the chart below.
- H. Any ball supplied by the teams must have the cor. and compression legibly stamped on the ball. The umpire has the final determination on whether or not the cor./compression is legible.
- I. All softballs must meet the standards set forth above, and include the NESAs logo.

	<b>SOFTBALL &amp; COLOR</b>	<b>THREAD COLOR</b>	<b>DIAMETER RANGE</b>	<b>WEIGHT RANGE</b>	<b>MAX CORE /COMP</b>	<b>LOGO / MARKING</b>
Men's	12" Slow Pitch Optic Yellow	Black White	11 7/8 in to 12 1/8 in	6 1/4 oz to 7 oz	44/400	NESAs
Women's	11" Slow Pitch Optic Yellow	Black White	10 7/8 in to 11 1/8 in	5 7/8 oz to 6 1/8 oz	44/400	NESAs

### **Gloves**

- A. Gloves or mitts may be worn by any player.
- B. The height of the glove measured from the bottom edge across the center of the palm to a line even with the highest point of the glove/mitt shall be a minimum of eight (8) inches and may be increased by either 1/2 or 1 inch to reach a maximum height of fourteen (14) inches.

Width of the glove measured from the bottom edge of the webbing farthest from the thumb in a horizontal line to the outside edge of the little finger shall be eight (8) inches.

- C. The webbing across the glove shall be measured parallel to the top end and shall be 5 3/4 inches.
- D. Gloves worn by the pitcher must be uniform in color and may not be any color combination or pattern intended to disguise the ball.

### **Shoes**

Shoes must be worn by all players and coaches. 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.

- A. Metal cleats are not permitted in adult slow pitch.

## Uniforms

All players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are alike in base color, trim and style. If, because of the blood rule, a change is required and the uniform part does not match, the player will not be penalized. In National level play the team with the most players meeting the uniform standards may be awarded home team in lieu of a coin flip for any particular game. Regular Qualifiers and State tournaments are at the discretion of each tournament director.

- A. Pitchers are not permitted to wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thigh that could be distracting to the batter. Players may wear solid colored undergarments beneath their uniform shirts or shorts.
- B. Ball caps or visors must be alike and must be worn properly. Caps and visors are not
- C. mandatory, but if worn by one or more players and/or coaches, they must be identical and must be a team cap or visor (no hard visors of any kind are allowed).
- D. Numbers must be worn on all uniforms. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. If this occurs, the umpire will ensure that it is corrected immediately.
- E. Casts, prosthesis and metal braces may be worn; however, any part of the brace or support must be covered by soft material and taped.
- F. Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous must be removed, and may not be worn during the game.

**Note:** Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, they should be taped to the body so as to remain visible.

## NESA TEAM ROSTER RULES

NESA roster shall consist of 22 active players. All players and or parents must sign the roster prior to participating in an NESA event. If a player and or parent fails to sign the roster prior to playing the team will forfeit all games and be dropped from the tournament. Once a team's roster is frozen any additions must be approved in writing by the state director. Dates of rosters being frozen may vary from state to state and is set by the state director.

- A. Players frozen to a qualified roster may be released from that team's roster under the following circumstances.
  - 1 The qualified team disbands and notice is given to NESA.
  - 2 The qualified teams manager gives NESA official written notice that they are not accepting the berth.
- B. If a team releases a player from its roster it cannot replace that slot or that player cannot return to that team for the remainder of that season.
- C. That team does not send its entry fee for either its state or world tournament by the deadline given by NESA.
- D. Teams must turn in a roster each tournament.
- E. Player roster limit begins with the roster which is turned in at the first tournament they qualify.

- F. Any team caught turning in a roster with forged signatures will forfeit all games and be suspended.
- G. Any player caught not signing the roster will be suspended from NESAs.
- H. Players may play on both NESAs sanctioned league teams and a tournament team but can only play on one team per tournament.
- I. Teams may play in a higher classified World Tournament provided they use the same roster and the World Tournaments are not on the same weekend.

## Players and Substitutes

### Players

- A. 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.
  - 1. Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official scorer or umpire before the start of each game. The line-up shall contain the name, position and uniform number of each player.
 

**Note:** If a wrong number is on the line-up card, correct it and continue playing with no penalty.
  - 2. All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place by name and uniform number.
  - 3. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitution list at any time during the game.
- B. Male rosters shall include only male players and female rosters shall include only female players.
- C. A team shall consist of these players
  - 1. Slow Pitch: 10 defensive players, plus a maximum of 2 EH's
  - 2. Co-ed: 10 defensive players, plus a maximum of 2 EH's
  - 3. Fast Pitch: 9 defensive players, plus a maximum of 2 EH's and 1 DEFO
- D. Short-Handed Rule -
  - 1. If a team starts with 10, 11 or 12 players (as defined in section C above) and a player gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game, the team may continue to play as long as 9 players remain in the line-up. However, an out will be declared whenever the missing player(s) turn at bat come around in the batting order.
  - 2. No out shall be declared on the missing batter if the batter immediately prior in the batting order is walked, whether intentionally or not. The batting position will be skipped and the following batter shall take their turn at bat.

3. The game may end on an automatic out.
4. If the player leaving the game for any reason is a runner, an out shall be declared if there is no replacement for the runner.
5. A player that has left the game for the blood rule may return. A player leaving the game for any other reason may not return unless eligible for re-entry.
6. Under no circumstances will a team be permitted to play or continue a game with less than nine (9) players.
7. In the event a team does not have ten (10) or more players present at game time, the team may start with nine (9) players, of which one must be a pitcher, and another, the catcher. The remaining player positions are as desired, on the field of play.

**Note:** No out will be declared against a team for a missing player in the batting line-up when a team starts with only 9 players; the 10<sup>th</sup> player may be put in the defensive line-up immediately upon appearing at the ball field, and is placed in the 10<sup>th</sup> batting position.

### **Extra Player**

- A. The use of 1 or 2 extra player(s) (EP) is optional, but if used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game, and be listed on the line-up card.
- B. When an EP or EP's are used, all players on the line-up card must bat, and any 10 players may play defense. Defensive positions may be changed at any time. Batting positions must remain constant throughout the game.

### **Substitutions**

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

- A. The coach or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time the substitute enters. The umpire shall then report the change to the scorekeeper and to the other team. A substitute is not officially in the game until a pitch has been thrown or a play has been made.
- B. If a substitute player enters the game without reporting in, and after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown, or after a play has been made, the use of an unreported substitute must be brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team in order for action to be taken.

**Effect:** The coach of the offending team shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.

- C. If the coach or player in violation informs the umpire prior to the opposing team bringing this violation to the attention of the umpire, there is no violation. All action prior to the discovery is legal.
- D. After one half-inning of being in the game, the unannounced substitute is considered legally in the game, and no ejections shall occur.
- E. Any player may be removed from the game during any dead

## Illegal Player Protests

- F. Illegal player protests must be filed by the offended team during the game and under the following conditions:
  - a. If the player in question is a starting player, the protest must be made before the completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
  - b. If the player in question is a substitute, the protest must be made before the completion of the inning in which that player entered the game.
- G. If a player eligibility protest is filed during NESA tournament play and cannot be settled at the time the protest is made, the game shall be completed.
- H. If the eligibility protest cannot be settled until the tournament is completed, and it is later found that the player in question was indeed illegal the following shall occur:
  - a. The illegal player will be suspended from NESA sanctioned play for the remainder of the year.
  - b. The offending team with which the person played will forfeit games won by them during that tournament, and will forfeit any State, Regional or National berths won by that team during that tournament or any previous NESA tournaments that season.

## Re-entry

- A. Any of the starting players and substitutes may be substituted and re-entered once provided players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the line-up. The player and the substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.
- B. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest when brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team, and may be made any time during the game. The protest need not be made prior to the next pitch.

**Effect:** Both the manager and illegally re-entered player are ejected. All play that occurred while the illegal re-entry was in the game will stand.

**Note:** If the re-entry violation also violates the unreported substitute ruling, those penalties would also be in effect.

- C. A starting player removed from the pitching position by the umpire and substituted for, can re-enter the game at another position, but cannot return to the pitching position.

**Effect:** If an illegal pitcher returns to the pitching position and has thrown one pitch, the pitcher is ejected from the game.

**Note:** This is not considered a re-entry violation, so the manager is not ejected.

## Courtesy Runner

- A. Can be any player listed on the legal roster.
- B. Must be announced at the coin toss.
- C. Is eligible to run multiple times per half-inning.

- D. In co-ed play, teams may have a male and female courtesy runner. Males can run for males and females can run for males or females.

### **Ejected Player or Coach**

An ejection is the result of an incident that requires removal of a player or coach from the game by the umpire, whereby the ejected player or coach can no longer participate or remain within sight or sound of the playing area for the duration of the game.

- A. Any ejected player or coach discovered participating in a game from which that person was ejected will constitute a forfeit by the team to which the player or coach belongs.
- B. Failure to leave the playing area will result in a forfeiture of the game.
- C. A player or coach shall be immediately removed from a game or tournament and subject to a suspension when any NESAs or park official witnesses a gesture or verbal phrasing by the player that can be taken as a threat against a player, official or fan.

### **Blood Rule**

A player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or has blood on the uniform, shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time (as determined by the umpire) the player will not have to leave the game. Uniform violations occurring as a result of the blood rule will not be enforced.

- A. Procedural Note 1: If a base runner needs to leave the game to cover a wound, then the player making the last out will take his position on the base. If no outs have been recorded, then the batter listed closest behind the injured player in the line-up (but not currently on base) shall take his place on the base.
- B. Procedural Note 2: If the Courtesy Runner takes the place of an injured runner, standard Courtesy Runner rules would apply.
- C. Procedural Note 3: If the injury is to a defensive player, and the team is already playing with ten (10) or fewer, then the teams must wait until first aid has been completed.
- D. Procedural Note 4: Any player that leaves the game for first aid must return to the field of play as soon as aid has been given.
  - a. Exception – Use of courtesy runner or official substitute would not require immediate re-entry.
- E. Procedural Note 5: If a coach has a bleeding wound, the coach will leave the playing area to receive first aid. Play will continue.
- F. Procedural Note 6: If an Umpire needs to leave the game, the teams must wait until first aid has been completed.

### **The Game**

#### **Home Team**

The team designated as home team shall bat last in the inning.

## Fitness of the Ground

The fitness of the ground shall be decided solely by the home plate umpire.

## Time

- A. The umpire shall call time after a batted ball or an unintentional walk, when the ball is in possession of an infielder within the baselines and all play ceases.
- B. The umpire shall call "Dead Ball" and allow or seek aid when any injured player that, in the umpire's judgment, requires immediate attention.
  - a. Any runners will be awarded the base(s) that they would have reached in the umpire's judgment.
- C. Time shall be called when a ball that has been batted or thrown 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.
- D. The umpire shall call time for any blocked ball.

## Regulation Game

- A. An inning is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate from offense to defense, and in which there are three (3) outs for each team. A new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning.
- B. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if one team has met the requirements of the pre-determined run rule as covered in the chart below.
- C. NESAs tournament directors have the right to modify the game in the event of inclement weather, or field availability issues in any manner deemed necessary, provided that the teams were informed before the start of the game.
- D. Tournament games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.
- E. A pre-determined run rule in NESAs will award a win to a team in all games, as follows:

Division	After 3 innings of play	After 4 innings of play	After 5 innings of play
Men's Platinum	20 runs	15 runs	10 runs
Men's Gold	15 runs	12 runs	10 runs
Men's Silver	15 runs	12 runs	10 runs
Men's Bronze	15 runs	12 runs	10 runs
Women	15 runs	12 runs	10 runs
Any Co-Ed	15 runs	12 runs	10 runs

- F. An umpire has the right to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the players or patrons in peril.
- G. A regulation tie game shall be declared when the game is called if the score is equal and at least three and ½ innings have been completed.
- H. Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

### **Extra Innings / International Tie Breaker**

If after completion of seven innings of play, the score is tied, the following will take place:

- A. Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the last batter of the previous inning being placed on second base.
- B. Teams shall continue playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the home team has scored more runs in their half of the inning, before the third out is made.

### **Forfeited Games**

A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following case(s):

- A. If the umpire is physically attacked by any team member and/or spectator.
- B. If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within the time set for forfeiture.
- C. If one team refuses to continue to play after the game has begun, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- D. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one team fails to resume playing within two minutes after "Play Ball" has been declared by the umpire.
- E. If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or hasten the game.
- F. If, after a warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
- G. If the order for the ejection of a player is not obeyed within one (1) minute.
- H. If the ejection of a player or players from a game results in fewer than the required number of players to continue the game.
- I. NESAs Directors may declare a game a forfeit in the event of unsportsmanlike conduct by any team, team member or fans of the team.
  - a. Umpires shall warn the offending team to control the actions of its fans.
  - b. If the team is unable to do so, then the umpire or tournament director can declare a forfeit.

**Note:** If deemed necessary, the NESA Tournament Directors may allow a grace period before declaring a forfeit during the first round of play. After the first round of play has been completed, whether by play or by forfeit, each team will be responsible for being at the correct field, at the correct scheduled time.

### **Scoring Runs**

- A. One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches all bases before the third out of an inning is recorded.
- B. In all classes, a batter hitting a home run or earning a four base award is not required to touch any base. This is known as the "Hit and Sit" rule.
  - a. Runners on base at the time of the home run or the four base award are not required to touch the next base.
- C. No run shall be scored if the third out of an inning is the result of:
  - 1. A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base.
  - 2. Any runner being forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
  - 3. A runner being put out by a tag or live ball appeal prior to the runner touching home plate.
  - 4. A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.
    - a. An appeal can be made after the third out of an inning to nullify a run.

### **Game Winner**

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

- A. Called Regulation Game: The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the team has scored an equal number or more than the first team at bat in the incomplete inning.
- B. Tied Regulation Game: The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.
- C. Forfeited Game: The score of a forfeited game shall be 7 to 0 in favor of the team not at fault.

### **Charged Conference**

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

**Effect:** Ejection of the manager or team representative who insists on another conference.

- B. Defensive Conference- There shall be only two (2) charged conferences between the manager or other bench representative with any defensive player in a game:

**Effect:** All conferences with any defensive player, beginning with the third conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from that position for the remainder of the game. If that pitcher returns to the pitcher's position at any time during the remainder of the game, it will cause an immediate ejection of that player. The removed pitcher can play any other position on defense.

## Home Run Limits / Penalty

A limit of over the fence home runs will be used in the program on the following chart. All balls hit over the fence by a team in excess of the following limitations per game will be ruled on as shown on the chart.

**All classification are based on State Directors discretion and may be subject to review by the Presidents council review board before they are final**

### Men's Platinum

2 HR per inning, with excess being declared out  
Roster Restrictions none

### Men's Gold

1 HR per inning, with excess being declared outs

### Men's Silver

3 HR with excess being declared outs.

### Men's Bronze

2 HR with excess being declared inning ending outs.

- A. Batters hitting a home run, or earning a four base award do not have to touch a base. Runners on base at the time of the home run / four base awards are also not required to touch a base.
- B. Inning Ending Out- per the chart, when the offensive team has exceeded its home run limit, the home run that puts the team over the limit will end that half of the inning, no matter how many outs are left.
- C. The game may end on an automatic out.

## Pitching Regulations

### Preliminaries

- A. When starting the game and at each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver 3 warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.
- B. No warm-up pitches shall be thrown with excessive speed.

**Effect:** The pitcher shall be warned. If the act is repeated, the pitcher shall be removed from the pitching position.

### Legal Delivery

A pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, 50 feet from home plate, and extending back 10 feet perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. One foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate/box with the pitch is released with an underhand motion. A step simultaneous with the release of the ball may be taken in any direction with the free foot. This area

should be chalked off. The pitcher's box allows the pitcher to release the ball from 50 to 60 feet from home plate.

The catcher shall remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, touches home plate, or reaches the catcher's box.

- A. The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the wind-up after the required stop. The pitcher must keep 1 foot in contact with the ground at all times. Any type of wind-up may be used. The ball shall be delivered toward home plate below the hip, from the pitching hand, at a moderate speed, which is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire. The umpire shall warn a pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the act is repeated, the pitcher will be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. PENALTY: dead ball and a ball awarded to the batter.
- B. The ball must be released within 3 seconds of the start of the wind-up or of the umpire saying "Play Ball."
  - the ball is dead
  - a ball is awarded to the batter.
- C. The pitch must have a perceptible arch, having a minimum height of 4 feet and a maximum of 10 feet from the ground, in the umpire's judgment.
- D. If a batter swings at a pitch, after it hits the ground or the plate, the batter is out and ejected from the game.
- E. Neither a pitcher, nor any other player shall be allowed to use a foreign substance on the ball, pitching hand or fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands. Batting gloves may not be worn on the pitching hand. A non-distractive color bandage may be worn on the pitching hand, for injury only.

### **Illegal Delivery**

Any pitcher's action that does not conform to the NESAs pitching regulations will be illegal, resulting in a ball being awarded to the batter. If the batter swings at any illegal pitch other than one hitting the ground or the plate, the play shall stand on the result of the swing.

### **Quick Pitch**

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

**Effect:** The ball is immediately ruled dead and a ball is awarded to the batter.

### **Leap Pitch**

The pitcher shall not release the ball with both feet off of the ground.

**Effect:**

- The ball is immediately ruled dead by the umpire and a ball is awarded to the batter.

## **Defensive Positioning**

No defensive player shall take a position in the batter's line of vision with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, or act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.

**Effect:** The offending team shall get 1 warning per game with additional offenses resulting in an ejection.

## **No Pitch**

No pitch shall be declared when:

- A. A pitch is thrown during suspension of play.
- B. A runner is called out for leaving a base before the pitched ball hits the ground, hits home plate or crosses home plate.
- C. A pitch is thrown before a runner has retouched a base after a foul ball has been declared and the ball was dead.
- D. A member of the offensive team at bat requests time, employs any other word or phrase or commits any act while the ball is in play, for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal act.

**Note:** A warning shall be issued to the offending team. Any repeat act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

**Effect: Section 7 Sub-sections A-D:** The ball is dead and all subsequent action as a result of the pitch is canceled.

## **Illegal Pitcher**

An illegal pitcher is a player legally in the game, but one who may not pitch as a result of being removed from the pitching position by the umpire.

**Effect:** The illegal pitcher who returns to the pitching position and throws one legal or illegal pitch shall be ejected.

## **Questioning of Balls and Strikes**

No questioning, commenting or gestures of balls or strikes called by the umpire will be tolerated. One warning will be given per team. On the second offense the offending player or member of the team shall be ejected.

## **Batting**

### **Ball/Strike Count & Foul Balls**

NESA Slow Pitch has a 3 ball and 2 strike pitch count, and does allow 1 extra foul.

- A. After taking a position in the batter's box, an out will be declared when the batter does not swing at a 2<sup>nd</sup> strike, or fouls the second strike and the next pitch is called either a strike or a foul ball
- B. Foul balls will be live with runners being able to tag and advance with liability to be put out.

### **On-Deck Batter**

- A. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the person currently batting.
- B. The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than 2 official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or combination not to exceed 2. Any detachable piece placed on the bat must be approved by the NESAs.
- C. The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

#### **Effect:**

- If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home at the time of the interference shall be called out.
- If the interference is with the defensive player fielding a fly ball, the batter is declared out.

### **Batting Order**

- A. The batting order showing each player's name, uniform number and position must be on the line-up card and must be delivered to the umpire or scorekeeper before the game begins.
- B. The batting order must be followed throughout the game unless a starting player is replaced by a substitute. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.
- C. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the previous inning.
- D. Each player on the side at bat shall become the batter and enter the batter's box in the order in which that batter's name appears on the score sheet. This begins the batter's turn at bat, and it continues until the batter is put out, becomes a batter-runner or is substituted for while at bat.
- E. When the third out of an inning is made before the batter can complete a turn at bat, the same batter will be the first batter in the next inning, and all previous called balls and strikes will be canceled.

### **Batting out of Order**

Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter, or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the dugout area.

- A. If an incorrect batter is discovered before the batter completes the turn at bat, the correct batter may take its proper place, assuming any accumulated balls and strikes with no penalty.
- B. If the mistake is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his or her turn at bat, and before a pitch has been made to the next batter, the batter who should have batted is called out. All base runners, if they have advanced, must return to the base occupied at the time the

incorrect batter took a position in the batter's box. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the batter called out for the failure to bat.

- C. If the mistake is not discovered until after a pitch is made to the next batter, then the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is deemed legal. All bases advanced or runs scored are counted, and the next batter shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter who has just finished a turn at bat. No one is called out for failure to bat. The batter merely misses the turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following in the batting order becomes the legal batter.
- D. No runner shall be removed from the bases that a runner is occupying, except the batter-runner who has been taken off base by the umpire as in the case of sub-section B above. The batter merely misses the turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following in the batting order becomes the legal batter.

### **Batting Position**

- A. The batter must have both feet completely on, or within the lines of the batter's box prior to the start of the pitch.
- B. The batter must take a position in the batter's box, within 5 seconds of the umpire declaring, "play ball."

**Effect:** The umpire will call a strike when a batter fails to get into the box in the allotted time. No pitch needs to be thrown, and the ball remains dead.

- C. The batter shall not step directly in front of the catcher and into the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch.

**Effect:** The batter is declared out and no runners may advance on the play.

- D. The batter must request time from the home plate umpire before stepping out of the batter's box. Granting time is at the discretion of the umpire.

### **Strike is Called by the Umpire**

- A. For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone before touching the ground, not struck at by the batter.

The umpire shall not let the batter's position in the batter's box be of influence in calling strikes. Each pitch shall be judged according to the height of any part of the ball as it is crossing only above or over any part of home plate.

- B. For each legally pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter.
- C. For each pitched ball swung at and missed which touches any part of the batter.
- D. When any part of the batter's person or clothing is hit with the batter's own batted ball when the batter is in the batter's box, and has fewer than two strikes.
- E. When a pitched ball hits the batter while he is in the strike zone.
- F. If the batter does not take a position within the batter's box within five (5) seconds after the umpire declares "play ball."
- G. For each foul ball not caught on the fly, with less than two (2) strikes.

**Effect: Sub-sections B-G:**

- The ball is dead
- All runners must return to their base without liability of being put out.

**Ball is Called by the Umpire**

- A. For each legally pitched ball which does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing.
- B. When a pitched ball hits the batter or is touched by the batter outside of the strike zone.

**Effect:** The ball is ruled dead by the umpire

- C. When any illegally delivered pitch is made and not swung at.
- D. When there is an illegal pitching action.

**Effect:** The ball is immediately ruled dead by the umpire

**The Batter is Out**

- A. When the second strike is swung at and:
  - a. Missed.
  - b. Tipped and goes directly from the bat, higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's hands or glove and is legally caught by the catcher.
- B. When a batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using an altered bat. The batter is also ejected from the game.
- C. When the batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using an illegal bat, which does not meet the requirements of NESAs rules.
  - a. The illegal bat shall be removed from the game
  - b. Any other player discovered using that bat will be ejected from the game.
- D. When the batter has batted a ball either fair or foul:
  - a. And the batter's entire foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and on the ground at the time the ball is struck by the bat.
  - b. And any part of the foot is touching home plate at the time the ball is struck by the bat.
- E. When the batter intentionally bunts the ball, either fair or foul, without swinging.
- F. When the batter strikes the ball downward with a chopping, pushing, or slapping motion of the bat with the intent to defraud the defense.
- G. When the batter hits a ball that is in fair territory with the bat a second time.

**Exception:** If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is unintentionally made while the bat is in the batter's hand, a foul ball shall be ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.

- H. When the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the umpire's judgment, the batter intended to interfere with the course of the ball.

**Sub-sections A-H:**

- The batter is out
- The ball is dead
- Each runner must return to the base legally held at the time of the pitch.

- I. When the batter hits an Infield Fly.

- J. When the batter hits a line drive or fly ball that an infielder intentionally does not catch, with any of the bases occupied before two are out.

**Effect:** the batter is out, the ball is dead, and all runners must return to the base occupied prior to the pitch.

- K. When the batter hits a fly ball that is legally caught.

**Effect:** The ball is live and in play. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.

- L. If the catcher is attempting to make a play on a base runner, the batter shall not hinder the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or intentionally hindering the catcher while in the batter's box.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and the batter is declared out. Each runner must return to the last base that, in the judgment of the umpire, was last touched at the time of the interference.

- M. Any batter-runner who carries the bat during a live ball and legally touches or passes first base while still holding the bat will be declared out. Should this be the third out of the inning, it is treated as a forced out and no preceding runner shall score.

- N. When the batter hits a home run and that team has already hit their limit of home runs in that particular classification.

**Note:** Refer to the home run / penalty chart as additional penalties may apply.

- O. When the batter swings at a pitched ball after it hits the ground or home plate.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and the batter is ejected.

- P. When the batter hits a foul ball after one (1) strike and one (1) foul.

**Effect:** The batter is out.

- Q. The batter shall not wave the bat or make any motion with an obvious intention of interfering with the catcher receiving the pitch. The second offense by the same batter in the same at bat shall cause the batter to be declared out.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and all base runners shall return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

- R. When the batter is hit by a fair batted ball while outside the batter's box and advancing.

### **Batter-Runner and Runner**

#### **Batter-Runner**

The batter becomes a batter-runner:

- A. After finishing a turn at bat, but has not yet been put out, or touched a base.
- B. As soon as the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- C. When three balls have been declared by the umpire

**Effect:** The ball is live and the batter-runner is awarded first base without liability to be put out.

- D. If the batter is intentionally walked.
  - a. The defense desires to intentionally walk a batter, it may do so only by the coach, catcher, or pitcher notifying the umpire.
- E. When the catcher obstructs, hinders or prevents the batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and the batter-runner is awarded first base. All other runners move up one base, if forced as a result of the batter becoming a batter-runner.

- F. When the catcher obstructs and the ball is hit
  - 1. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal
  - 2. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher's obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given.

**Note:** Once the runner has passed a base, the runner is considered to have reached that base and no option is given.

- 3. If the manager does not take the result of the play, the obstruction is enforced by awarding the batter first base. Each runner on base is advanced, if forced.
- G. When a ball is caught with an illegal glove in any manner.
- H. When an untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner while in fair territory and in contact with a base.

#### **Effect: Sub-sections G-H:**

- the ball is dead.
- the batter-runner is awarded first base.
- All other runners move up one base, only if forced.

- I. When an untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner while in fair territory and not in contact with a base, with less than two outs.

**Effect:** The ball is dead, the batter-runner is awarded first base and the hit runner is declared out. Each runner on base is advanced, if forced.

### **Batter-Runner is Out**

- A. When the batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after a fair, batted ball or a base on balls.
- B. When a safety base is present and the runner does not touch the orange portion of the base on the initial play if the defense is making a play on the batter runner

**Effect:** The ball is dead and runner(s) must return to the last legally touched base at the time the batter-runner becomes out.

- C. When the batter-runner runs outside of the three-foot line and, in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw or making a play at first base.

**Note:** The batter-runner may run outside of the three-foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

- D. When the batter-runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw a ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base.

**Note:** If this interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home shall be called out.

**Note:** A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.

- E. When the batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and both the batter and the runner going to home are out.

### **Effect: Sub-sections B-E:**

- The ball is dead
- All runners must return to the last legally touched base at the time of the interference.

- F. When the batter-runner moves back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder, or flagrantly gives up the right to first base by entering dead ball territory.
- G. When the immediate preceding runner, who is not yet out, intentionally interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball, or throw a ball in an attempt to complete the play.
- H. When, after hitting a fair ball, the batter-runner is touched with the ball by a fielder while the batter-runner is off base.
- I. When, after hitting a fair ball, a fielder holds the ball on first base before the batter-runner touches or passes that base.

- J. When the batter-runner impedes or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.

### **Touching Bases in Legal Order**

- A. When a runner must return to a base while the base is in play, the runner must touch the base(s) in reverse order.
- B. When a batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, they are entitled to hold the base until they have legally touched the next base, or are forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.
- C. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither that runner, nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base out of position.

**Effect:** B-C: The ball is in play and the runner may advance or return with liability to be put out.

A runner shall 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.

- D. Two (2) runners may not simultaneously occupy the same base.

**Effect:** The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.

- E. Failure of a preceding runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball and who is declared out, does not affect the status of the succeeding runner who touches the bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base, touch bases in proper order, or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no succeeding runner shall score a run.
- F. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one that the runner had left soon after a following runner has scored, or once that runner leaves the field if play.
- G. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing onto other bases.
- H. Awarded base must be touched in legal order.

### **Runners are Entitled to Advance with Liability to be Put Out**

- A. On a thrown ball or fair batted ball that is not blocked.
- B. On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.
- C. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- D. If a fair ball strikes an umpire or strikes a runner after having passed an infielder other than the pitcher, and provided no other infielder had a chance to make an out, or a fair ball has been touched by any infielder including the pitcher.
- E. When a runner attempts to advance after a pitch to the batter, in which the ball hits the ground, hits home plate or crosses home plate.

- F. When a live ball strikes a non-player (e.g. photographer, grounds keeper, policeman, etc) and the non-player is assigned to the field as part of the game.

**Note:** Section 4; A-F: The ball remains live and in play.

### **Runners Forfeit Their Exemption from Liability to be Put Out**

- A. If the runner fails to touch a base before advancing to the next base while the ball is in play, or on awarded bases.
- B. If the runner attempts to continue to second base after over-running first base.
- C. If a runner attempts to continue to the next base after dislodging a base.

### **Runners are Entitled to Advance without Liability to be Put Out**

- A. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded an unintentional or intentional base on balls. All runners affected are entitled to one base and may advance farther at their own risk.

**Note:** The ball is live.

- B. When a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner that is legally running the bases.

**Note:** Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in proper order or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

1. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base that the runner would have reached had there not been an obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and any other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base or bases they would have reached, in the judgment of the umpire, had there not been an obstruction.
2. An obstructed runner may never be called out between the two bases where an obstruction occurred. This runner would either be advanced, or return to the last base touched.
3. Should an act of interference occur following any obstruction call, the enforcement of the interference penalty would take priority.
4. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base the runner would have reached had there not been an obstruction, the obstructed runner will be called out.

**Note:** The ball remains live.

5. When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base is obstructed by a fielder who does not have the ball, is not attempting to field a batted ball, or is faking a tag without the ball; the obstructed runner and any other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base or bases the runner would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.

**Note:** If the umpire feels there is justification, a defensive player making a fake tag may be ejected from the game.

6. If a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight carries or draws him into the path of the runner, this would not constitute obstruction.
  7. If the ball, runner and defensive player all arrive at the same time and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke a collision rule (interference or obstruction) as this is considered incidental contact.
- C. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted or thrown ball with a cap, helmet, mask, protector, pocket, detached glove or any part of their uniform which is detached from its proper place on their person.

**Effect:** The runners would be entitled to 3 bases from the time of the pitch ball, if a batted, or 2 bases from the time of the throw.

1. Runners may advance farther at their own risk.
  2. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair, batted ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, the batter-runner shall be awarded a four base award.
- D. When the ball is in play and is thrown beyond the boundary lines of the field or becomes blocked.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and all runners will be awarded 2 bases, and the award will be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

**EXCEPTION:**

1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag and the ball enters dead ball territory, or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded 1 base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered dead ball territory or became blocked.
  2. If the runner touches the next base and returns to the original base, the original base the runner left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.
  3. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, the runner being played on is called out.
- E. When a fair, batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.

**Effect:** The batter is awarded a home run

- F. When a fair ball deflects off of a defensive player and goes out of play in foul territory, deflects off of a runner or umpire after having passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher) and provided no other infielder had a chance to make an out.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and all runners are awarded 2 bases from the time of the pitch.

- G. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and each runner is awarded 1 base from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered dead ball territory.

**Note:** A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout area to tag a player is considered to have unintentionally carried it there.

- H. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead ball territory.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and each runner is awarded 2 bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered, or the ball was kicked, pushed or thrown into dead ball territory.

### Runners Must Return to Their Base

- A. When a batted ball is foul
- B. When an illegally batted ball is declared by the umpire
- C. When a batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. All other runners shall return to the last base which, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched by the runner at the time of the interference.
- D. Runners must immediately return to their base or continue to the next base, after each pitched ball is returned to the pitcher. Any kind of cat and mouse action by the runner is illegal.

**Effect:** After a team warning, the runner will be called out.

### The Runner is Out

- A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order, the runner runs out of the base path to avoid be touched by the ball while in the hand(s) of the fielder.
- B. When the ball is in play, and while not in contact with the base, the runner is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.
- C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base or tags the runner before the he reaches the base.
- D. When the runner fails to return to touch the base previously occupied or missed and is properly appealed.
- E. When the runner physically passes the lead runner before that runner has been put out.

**Effect: A-E:** The ball is in play and the runner is out.

- F. When the runner leaves the base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder, provided the runner leaving the base early is properly appealed.

- G. When the runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and is properly appealed.
- H. When legally over-runs first base, attempts to run to second base, and is touched with the ball while not in contact with a base.
- I. When running or sliding into home plate and the runner fails to touch it and makes no attempt to return to it, and a fielder properly appeals to the umpire for a decision.
- J. When the runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw a 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 runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall be called out

**Note:** If a ball ricochets off of one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make an out, the runner will be called out if the runner interferes with the second fielder.

- K. When the runner is struck with a fair, untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and runners return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch.

- L. When a base runner leaves the base to advance to the next base before a fly ball has been touched by a defender or touches some object, provided that the ball is caught and legally held and the appeal to the umpire has been properly made.
- M. When a base runner leaves the base to advance to the next base before a fly ball has been touched by a defender or touches some object, provided that the ball is caught and legally held and a fielder
- N. touches the runner with the ball before the runner returns to retouch the original base.
- O. When a runner fails to touch an intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order while the ball is in play, and the ball is legally held on the missed base, or the runner is touched with the ball while off the base.

**Effect: Sub-sections K-N:** When runners are called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.

- P. When a base runner jumps over a defensive player waiting to tag the runner out.

**Note:** If the feet go over waist high, or if the defensive player is kneeling, and the base runner's feet go over the head.

**Effect:** The runner is declared out, and may be ejected from the game.

- Q. When the runner intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.
- R. When anyone other than another runner physically assists the runner while the ball is in play. If the assistance occurs prior to a caught, batted fly ball, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul, a delayed dead ball call will be made, after which time the runner will be declared out.
- S. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the third base foul line while a defender is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate, the runner closest to home will be declared out.

- T. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielder and adding to the difficulty of making the play.

**Note:** Members of the team include a bat boy or any other people authorized to sit on the team's bench.

- U. When a coach intentionally interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.

**Effect: Sub-sections P-T:** The ball is dead and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.

- V. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

**Effect:** The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.

- W. When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains on his feet and deliberately, with great force crashes into the defensive player.

**Effect:** The runner is out and ejected from the game. The ball also becomes dead, and all runners must return to the last base occupied at the time of the interference.

- X. When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until a pitched ball touches the ground, passes home plate, or is batted.

**Effect:** The ball is dead.

- Y. When the runner abandons a base and enters the team area or leaves the field of play.

- Z. If a base runner does not return to the base and be in contact with the base at the time that pitcher releases a legally pitched ball to the batter.

**Note:** Each team shall receive one warning per game for this infraction, before the runner is called out.

- AA. When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which he is entitled until a pitched ball touches the ground, reaches home plate or is batted.

**Note:** No warning is given. Batter is out.

- BB. When a runner legitimately steps off of the base after a pitch or as a result of a batter competing his turn at bat, and after the ball has been returned to the pitcher on the pitcher's rubber or box the runner must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.

1. Failure to immediately return to the base or proceed to the next base once the pitcher has the ball on the pitcher's rubber or box will result in the runner being declared out.
2. Once the runner returns to the base for any reason, the runner will be declared out if the runner leaves the base unless a play is made on him or another runner and the pitcher no

longer has possession of the ball or unless the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

### **The Runner is Not Out**

- A. When the runner runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
- B. When the runner does not run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in his possession.
- C. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made an out.
- D. When the runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball over foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had a chance to make an out.
- E. When the runner is touched with a ball that is 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 legal or illegal pitch, or until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area.
- G. When a batter-runner over runs first base after touching it and returns to the base.
- H. When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, the runner will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball.

**Effect:** "No Pitch" shall be declared by the umpire.

- I. The runner may not be stopped when the runner has legally started to advance before the pitcher has received the ball while on the pitcher's plate or before the pitcher steps on the plate with the ball in his possession.
- J. When the runner holds the base until a fly ball touches a fielder then attempts to advance.
- K. When hit by a batted ball when in contact with a base unless the runner intentionally interferes with the ball or fielder making a play.
- L. When the runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its original position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**Effect:** A runner reaching a base safely will not be out for being off that base when it becomes dislodged. The runner may return without liability to be put out when the base has been replaced. A runner forfeits this exemption if the runner attempts to advance beyond the dislodged base before it is again in proper position.

### **Verbal Interference**

- A. Any vocal distraction to the fielder attempting to complete a play, or vocal act that might cause injury.

**Effect:** The ball is dead and runners must return to the last base occupied at the time of the interference. The offending player or the runner closest to home is declared out. The offending player may be ejected in the event of an injury.

## **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Managers, coaches, players or any other person affiliated with a team shall not:

- A. Incite, or try to incite by word, sign or demonstration either opponents or spectators or other team members.
- B. Use abusive language, which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, umpires, tournament officials or spectators.
- C. Commit any act that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Effect:** Section 11; A-C:

- 1. Any action, deemed by the umpire to be unsportsmanlike, shall result in either a player warning or ejection from the game.
- 2. All flagrant offenses will result in immediate ejection, with no warning given. Ejected players must leave the sight and sound of the field they were ejected from, in a reasonable amount of time, or a forfeit will be declared by the umpire, tournament UIC, or Tournament Director.
- 3. When umpires suffer continued harassment from a team's bench and are unable to detect the person(s) responsible, the umpire shall first warn the members of the offending bench. If the harassment continues, the umpire shall have the right to eject all members of the bench or dugout including the manager. Failure of those ejected to leave the playing area will call for the team to forfeit.

## **Live Ball and Dead Ball**

### **The ball is legally put in play by the umpire**

- A. At the start of the game when the pitcher has the ball while standing at the initial pitcher's position, on the pitcher's plate / box, the batter is in the batter's box, and the umpire calls "Play Ball."
- B. In each instance after the ball becomes dead and the above procedure is followed.

### **The ball is declared live and in play**

- A. When the pitcher has the ball in his possession at the pitcher's box.

**Note:** The ball is not live when a play is over and the umpire has called "Time", and the next batter has not yet taken position in the batters box.

- B. When the pitcher delivers the ball towards home plate.
- C. When the batter legally hits a pitched ball.

- D. As long as there is a play resulting from a legally batted ball.
- E. When a live ball strikes a photographer, groundskeeper, policeman, or other non-player when assigned to the field as part of the game.
- F. When a fly ball is legally caught.
- G. At all times during enforcement of the infield fly rule.
- H. When any thrown ball goes into foul territory and is not blocked.
- I. When a batted or thrown live ball accidentally strikes a coach while in the coach's box.
- J. When a fair, batted ball or a thrown ball strikes an umpire or defensive player.
- K. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or base-runner after touching any fielder, or passing any fielder including the pitcher/infielder.
- L. When a fair ball strikes the umpire or offensive player on foul ground.
- M. When base runners have reached the base to which they are entitled because the fielder illegally touched or fielded a batted or thrown ball.
- N. When obstruction is called, but the obstructed runner cannot be put out until he reaches the base to which he is entitled because of the obstruction.
- O. When a base runner must return to a base in reverse order while the ball is live and in play.
- P. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- Q. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by legally touching it before being put out.
- R. When a base is dislodged while base runners are progressing around the bases.
- S. When a base runner is called out for being out of the base lines.
- T. When a base runner is forced out, or tagged out.
- U. When an appeal play is involved or enforced.
- V. When a batted fair ball hits an umpire regardless of whether touched by a defensive player or not.
- W. When a pitched or thrown ball hits an umpire regardless of whether touched by a defensive player or not.
- X. When a batter is awarded an unintentional base on balls.
  - a. The ball is live until the ball is returned to the pitcher and the pitcher holds the ball on the pitcher's mound.

**The ball is dead and not in play**

- A. When no pitch is declared.
- B. When a base runner is called out for leaving a base too soon on a pitched ball.

- C. When an illegal pitcher's action is declared.
- D. When a batter swings at a pitched ball and fails to make contact.
- E. When a pitched ball touches any part of a batter's person or clothing.
- F. When a batter bats illegally or hits with an illegal bat.
- G. When a batter bunts or intentionally chops downward on the ball.
- H. When the batter-runner is hit by the batted ball while outside of the batter's box.
- I. When a foul ball is not caught on the fly.
- J. When a batter steps completely across the plate while the pitcher is in the pitching position.
- K. Intentionally dropped fair fly ball or line drive by an infielder.
- L. When an offensive team member causes interference.
- M. When the base runner deliberately crashes into a defensive player who is waiting or attempting to make a tag.
- N. When a base runner is off base and is hit by a fair, batted ball before the ball is touched by or passes through infielders.
- O. When a blocked ball occurs.
- P. When the ball gets outside of the established limits of the playing field.
- Q. When a coach intentionally interferes with a thrown or batted ball.
- R. When a ball is caught with an illegal glove in any manner.
- S. When a spectator or other person not in the game causes interference.
- T. When a pitched ball is intentionally touched by an umpire or accidentally lodges on his person.
- U. When "time" is called by the umpire for any reason.
- V. When there is interference with the batter, which is enforced.
- W. The ball is dead on an intentional walk.

## **Protests**

### **Types of Protest**

- A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule:
  - a. must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, or if on the last play of the game, before the umpires have left the field of play.

- B. Illegal substitute or re-entry must be made while the player(s) are in the game, and before the umpires have left the field of play.
- C. Ineligible player
  - a. Must be made before completion of the third inning if protesting a starting player
  - b. Must be made before completion of the inning in which an ineligible substitute entered the game, if protesting a substitute player.
- D. Protest of Altered Equipment
  - a. can be made at any time.

#### **Protests Not to be Considered**

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

#### **Protest Procedure**

- A. The manager, acting manager or captain of the protesting team shall immediately notify the home plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The umpire shall then notify the opposing manager, scorekeeper and tournament director before the next pitch. After a pitch has been thrown, no protest is allowed on that particular play or rule interpretation.
- B. To aid in correct determination of the issue, all interested parties shall take notice of the information, details and conditions surrounding the decision that is being protested.
- C. A protest fee in the amount of \$125 shall be put up by the protesting team. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be returned.

#### **Protest Decision**

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

- A. The protest is considered invalid and the game continues.
- B. When a protest for ineligibility is determined to be valid, the offending team shall forfeit the game being played, or the game last played by the offending team.
- C. In tournament play, when an ineligible player is discovered during the game, the offending team shall forfeit the game, be ejected from the tournament, and placed last in the tournament standings.
  - a. If the ineligible player is discovered after the game but before the next scheduled game for either team, the same penalties as above apply and the proper team will be placed in the bracket.
  - b. If the next scheduled game for either team has already begun, the game shall stand as played but the offending team shall be ejected from the tournament and placed last in the tournament standings.

## Classification and Appeals

### Top 3 finishers in World Series Tournaments

The top 3 finishers in the Men's, Co-ed, Women's and Specialty World Series tournaments will advance to the next higher class for the following season.

- A. Each team may appeal, in order to move down in class, to their Regional Director. That appeal will then go to a vote by the other Regional Directors as well as the Executive Board.
  - a. If the appeal is upheld, that team may move down one class.
  - b. If the appeal is voted down, that team must remain in the class in which they started the season.

**Exception:** With less than 20 teams in the tournament, only the first place team will be moved up with same appeal privileges.

- B. Any player who played on or was on the roster of a World Series team that was advanced in classification may join a team whose classification is the same as that of the team on which the player played in the previous year's World Series tournament. However, no more than two (2) players from any team that was advanced in classification may join the same lower classification team.
  - a. If more than 2 players from any World Series team that was advanced to the next classification level join a team that is classified at the previous year's classification, that team must play in the next higher classification.
  - b. At no time shall a player who was on a team that was advanced to the next classification play below the class of the team on which the player played in the previous year's World Series tournament.

### Specialty Rules:

#### Co-Ed Program

With the following exceptions, the rules established for NESAs Men's play will govern the Co-ed program.

You can not throw a female out at 1st base if the throw originates from the outfield. Result - they will be awarded 3rd base.

#### Divisions of Play

Teams participating in the NESAs Co-ed program will be classified into three (3) divisions.

- A. Upper
  - 1. Men who play Silver or above are required to play in the Co-Ed Upper division.
  - 2. Women who play class Silver or above are required to play in the Co-Ed Upper division.
- B. Lower
  - 1. Men who play Bronze are required to play in the Co-Ed Lower division, or higher.
  - 2. Women who play Bronze are required to play in the Co-Ed Lower division, or higher.

C. Recreational

1. Men who play REC are permitted to play in any Co-Ed division.
2. Women who play Rec are permitted to play in any Co-Ed division.

**Note:** The NESAs reserves the right to move a Co-Ed team to a different division any time it feels a team is not playing in the NESAs class that it should. If the team in question refuses to play in the class as instructed by the NESAs Tournament or Area Director, then that team will forfeit out of the tournament and shall not receive a refund of its sanction fee or entry fee.

**Team Roster Rules**

- A. A legal team consists of five (5) male and five (5) female players. If using the EH, teams may have six (6) male and six (6) female players.
- B. It will be permissible to have more female players in the line-up than male players, but never more males than females.

**Exception:** A team may start a game with a minimum of five (5) female players. If a female player gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game the team may continue to play as long as four (4) female players remain in the line-up. At no time will six (6) males be permitted to play defense at the same time.

- C. Teams participating in the Women's Competitive division shall have no more than two (2) players that have play Class C or higher in any other organization.

**Defensive Positioning**

- A. Teams can have a maximum of ten (10) defensive players on the field at one time.
- B. Defensive positioning can be altered once per inning or once at the time of a pitching change.

**EFFECT:** The penalty for this rule is, time shall be called, no pitch will be thrown and the coach will be issued a warning. A second offense will result in the coach being ejected for the remainder of the game.

1. At no time will more than five (5) male players be permitted on the field at the same time.
  2. Pitchers can be either male or female, but catchers must be the opposite sex.
- C. Any defensive player considered to be an infielder shall remain in their normal defensive position until the female batter has actually hit the pitched ball.

**Effect:** The penalty for violating this rule by a defensive player shall result in the female player being awarded first base. Runners already on base return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch, unless forced as a result of the awarded base.

**Note:** This is a judgment call by the umpire, who shall immediately declare a "dead ball" when the violation occurs (no appeal is necessary).

**Batting Order**

- A. The lead-off batter may either be male or female.

- B. The batting order in Co-Ed play must always alternate between the sexes.
- C. Two (2) female players may bat back-to-back, but male players may never bat back-to back.
- D. If a player leaves the game due to injury and no substitute is available, an out will be declared each time that batting position comes up provided that the preceding batter was not walked.
- E. The game may end on an automatic out.

#### **Walk Rule**

- A. Any male batter that receives a base on balls, whether intentional or unintentional, will be awarded second base.
- B. The female batter following the walked male batter has the option of taking her normal at bat, or accepting a walk.
- C. In 16" or 14" co-ed, any female batter that receives a base on balls, whether intentional or unintentional, will be awarded second base.
- D. In 16" or 14" co-ed, the male batter following the walked female batter has the option of taking his normal at bat, or accepting a walk.
- E. Runners on base at the time of the walk will advance only if forced.

#### **Courtesy Runner**

- A. Teams are permitted the use of one (1) male and one (1) female courtesy runner, provided that they are designated at the start of the game.
- B. Male courtesy runners can run for male runners.
- C. Female courtesy runners can run for female runners.

**Effect:** Same penalty as the Men's Slow Pitch rule.

#### **Official Ball and Ball Rotation**

- A. Males will hit the 12" NESA 44/400 ball.
- B. Females will hit the 11" NESA 44/400 ball.
- C. The current play must stop and time be called by the umpire before ball can be rotated out.

**Effect:** If the pitcher throws the wrong size ball to the batter, the offensive team will have the option to keep the result of the play, or re-hit, whether the ball was hit or not. Only the preceding pitch will be nullified, and the batter shall assume the count as it was before that pitch.

#### **Home Run Limits**

The following Home Run Limits shall be played used in the Co-Ed Program:

Co-Ed Upper	1 HR per Inning	Outs
Co-Ed Lower	3 HRs	Inning Ending Outs
Co-Ed Recreational	1 HR	Inning Ending Outs

### **Pumpkin Ball Coed.**

All above coed rules will regulate with the following exceptions.

Men will hit the 16 inch or 14 inch NESAs approved softball

Women will hit the 12 inch NESAs approved softball 44/400

When a female is walked, they will advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The male batter has the choice to bat or take a walk.

**YOU CAN NOT** throw a female batter-runner out at first base if the throw originates from the outfield.

**Effect:** the batter/runner is awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> base, and all runners will advance accordingly.

### **Women's Program**

With the following exceptions, the rules established for NESAs Men's play will govern the Women's program.

### **Divisions of Play**

Teams participating in the NESAs Women's program will be classified into three (3) divisions.

- A. Upper
- B. Lower
- C. Recreational

### **Team Roster Rules**

- A. Any player who plays on a Class C or higher with any other softball organization must play in the NESAs Upper division. Under no circumstances will these players be allowed to play in the NESAs Recreational division.
- B. Teams participating in the Women's Lower division shall have no more than two (2) players that have to play Class C or higher in any other organization.

### **Run-Spotting**

In an effort to grow the overall program, NESAs State, Tournament and League Directors reserve the right to equalize teams through run-spotting at any event where it is deemed appropriate. The equalization standard for such tournaments will be set by the respective State Director or Women's Program Representative.

### **Official Ball**

The official ball for NESAs Women's play shall be an 11" ball with a maximum COR/Compression of 44/400.

### Home Run Limits

The following Home Run Limits shall be used in the Women's Program:

Women's Upper	1 HR per inning	Outs
Women's Lower	3 HRs	Inning Ending Outs
Women's Recreational	1 HR	Inning Ending Outs

### Church Program

With the following exceptions, the rules established for NESAs Men's play will govern the Church program.

### Divisions of Play

Teams participating in the NESAs Church program will be classified into three (3) divisions.

- A. Upper
- B. Lower
- C. Recreational

### Religious Affiliation

- A. A team may legally compete in the NESAs Church program if members of the organization have regularly scheduled religious services, and the roster is signed by a priest, minister, pastor, or rabbi.
- B. Church teams must register with, and use the name of their church during Church competition. Church teams may have additional sponsors, and are welcome to display those sponsors on their uniforms.
- C. All Ministry teams must play at the Major level, unless the tournament director or state director allows the team/teams to play down to the competitive level. No Ministry team will be allowed to play at the recreational level

### Team Roster Rules

- A. Any player who participates in the Church World Tournament must have played previously in their state church program during the current season.
- B. Any player who plays on NESAs Elite or at the Major, A or B level with any other softball organization must play at the Major or Competitive division. Under no circumstances will these players be allowed to play in the Recreational division.
- C. Teams participating in the Church Competitive division shall have no more than two (2) players that have played at the Elite, Major, A or B level in regular men's ball.

## Run-Spotting

In an effort to grow the overall program, NESAs State, Tournament and League Directors reserve the right to equalize teams through run-spotting at any event where it is deemed appropriate. The equalization standard for such tournaments will be set by the respective State Director or Church Program Representative.

## Home Run Limits

The following Home Run Limits shall be played used in the Church Program:

Church Upper	1 HR per inning	Outs
Church Lower	3 HRs	Inning Ending Outs
Church Recreational	1 HR	Inning Ending Outs

## Men's Master's Program

With the following exceptions, the rules established for NESAs Men's play will govern the Men's Master's Program.

### Divisions of Play

Teams participating in the NESAs Master's program will be classified into two (2) divisions.

- A. Competitive
- B. Recreational

### Age Certification

- A. December 31 is the official cut-off date. Any player who turns 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95 in that calendar year is eligible to participate

**Example:** A 34 year old may compete in the 35 & over program if he will turn 35 during that calendar year.

- B. Players must provide proof of age and identity when requested by a tournament official. Any player that is not able to provide this information will be declared ineligible until proof of age is furnished.

### Team Roster Rules

Any player who plays on an NESAs Elite team or at the Major, A, B or C level with any other softball organization must play in the Competitive division. Under no circumstances will these players be allowed to play in the Recreational division.

## Run-Spotting

In an effort to grow the overall program, NESAs State, Tournament and League Directors reserve the right to equalize teams through run-spotting at any event where run spotting is deemed appropriate. The equalization standard for such tournaments will be set by the respective State Director or Masters Program Representative.

## Home Run Limits

The following Home Run Limits shall be played used in the Masters Program:

Masters Competitive	6 HRs	Outs
Masters Recreational	3 HRs	Outs

## Black American / Native American

With the following exceptions, the rules established for NESAs Men's play will govern the Black American and Native American Programs.

### Divisions of Play

Teams participating in the Black American / Native American program will be classified into two (2) divisions.

- A. Upper
- B. Lower

### Team Roster Rules

- A. Any player who plays on an NESAs Elite team or at the Major, A, B or C level with any other softball organization must play in the Competitive division. Under no circumstances will these players be allowed to play in the Recreational division.
- B. No more than three (3) "non" Black American / Native American players may be in the game at any given time.

## Run-Spotting

In an effort to grow the overall program, NESAs State, Tournament and League Directors reserve the right to equalize teams through run-spotting at any event where run spotting is deemed appropriate. The equalization standard for such tournaments will be set by the respective State Director or Specialty division program representative.

## Home Run Limits

The following Home Run Limits shall be played used in the Black American / Native American Division:

Upper	2 HRs per inning	Outs
Lower	1 HR per inning	Inning Ending Outs

### **Senior Program**

The NESAs Senior Program will follow the Senior Softball USA rule book. If any variations should exist, they will be posted at the pre-tournament manager's meeting and tournament site.