

Softball Players Association

“The Fun & Rewarding Place To Play”

OFFICIAL RULE BOOK

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Softball Players Association

“The Fun & Rewarding Place To Play”

RULE 1 – DEFINITIONS

Sec. 1 ALTERED BAT: A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed to enhance its performance.

EFFECT: If the bat has been determined to have been altered, the ball is dead, the batter is out and the base runners cannot advance. The batter is ejected from the tournament and suspended from any SPA events for a period of one (1) year. If the UIC and Tournament Director cannot determine if a bat has been altered without further testing, the bat will be removed from the tournament and the player will be allowed to continue playing, with the understanding that should further test prove the bat to be altered he/she will be suspended from SPA for two (2) years.

NOTE: THERE IS "NO APPEAL" REGARDING RULE 1, SECTION 1

Sec. 2 APPEALPLAY: A play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, or before all fielders (including the pitcher) have left the field (crossed the foul lines). The appealed play does not change the type of out that is being appealed.

Sec. 3 A BALL: A pitch which does not strike the Strike Zone Mat, is not struck at, or does not conform to fairly delivered pitch stipulations.

Sec. 4 BASE PATH: The base path is an imaginary line, 3 feet on either side of a direct line between the base runner and the base he/she is attempting to obtain.

Sec. 5 BASERUNNER: A player on the team at bat, who has finished his/her batting turn, reached first base, and has not yet been put out.

Sec. 6 BATTER'S BOX: The area to which the batter is restricted. The batter must have both feet within the lines of the box prior to the pitch (the lines are considered to be within the box).

Sec. 7 BATTER-BASERUNNER: A player who has finished his turn at bat, but has not yet been put out, or touched first base.

Sec. 8 BATTING ORDER: The batting order is the official lineup of offensive players, listing the order in which team members must come to bat. A lineup card must include each player's last name, first name, uniform number, and defensive position. Names of all possible substitute players should be listed on the lineup card.

Sec. 9 BLOCKED BALL: A live ball that is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game; or which touches any object that is not part of the official equipment or playing area. Ref Rule 8 Sec 7f

Sec. 10 BUNT: A batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly.

Sec. 11 CALLED GAME: A game that the UIC or Tournament Director terminates for any reason.

Sec. 12 CATCH: A catch is a legally caught ball that occurs when a fielder secures a batted or thrown ball with his/her hand or glove. If the ball is merely held in the arms of the defensive player or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the defensive player's body or clothing, the catch is not complete until the ball is in the grasp of the defensive player's hand or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, immediately after he/she contacts the ball, collides with another player or wall (fence), or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall have complete control of the ball, and his/her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.

Sec. 13 CATCHER'S BOX: The catcher's box is that area within which the catcher must stay, until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catcher's box (the lines of the box are considered within the box).

Sec. 14 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 in the field, enters the playing field and delivers a message, by any means, to the pitcher. It is not a conference when the representative enters the field and removes the pitcher, or when the defensive team confers while the offense is in conference.

- b. (Offensive conference) the offensive team requests a suspension of play to allow the manager or other team representative, on or off the field, to confer with the batter or base runner. It is not a charged conference when an offensive pitcher is putting on a warm-up jacket after reaching base, or if the offensive team confers while the defensive team is in conference.

Sec. 15 CHOPPED BALL: When the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion so that the ball bounces high into the air this is considered a chopped hit ball. The chopping motion should resemble that of chopping a piece of wood lying on the ground.

Sec. 16 COACH: A member of the team at bat who takes his place in the coach's box to direct his/her player's in running the bases. Two coaches are allowed, one positioned in the first base coach's box and one positioned in the third base coach's box. One coach can have in his possession a scorebook and an indicator, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only. The defensive coaches/manager must remain in the dugout, as their normal position, when their team is playing defense. Coaches not participating as a player need not be on that team's roster.

Sec. 17 COMMITMENT LINE: In the Seniors Program, a six foot line drawn perpendicular to the third base line, beginning at the base line and extending into foul territory. This line is located 20' from point of home plate, measured along the 3rd base line. In the Master's Program the Commitment line is not use.

Sec. 18 COURTESY RUNNER: is a player replacing another player as a base runner. (Refer to Rule 8, Sec 2, for complete details and effect)

Sec. 19 DEAD BALL: A term used when a ball has left the playing area, is blocked, and the umpire has called time. The ball is not in play and not considered in play again until the pitcher has the ball in his possession and the umpire has called "play ball".

- A. **DELAYED DEAD BALL:** An infraction, signaled by the umpire, in which the ball remains alive until all play has been completed and the umpire has called time.

Sec. 20 DEFENSIVE TEAM: The team that is playing defensively in the field.

Sec. 21 DOUBLE PLAY: A continuous play by the defense in which two offensive players are legally put out without an intervening play or an error.

Sec. 22 DISLODGED BASE: a base removed from its proper position.

Sec. 23 FAIR BALL: A fair ball is a batted ball that:

- a. Settles on fair territory between home plate and 1st base or home plate and 3rd base.
- b. Is on or over fair territory, including any part of 1st and 3rd bases, when bounding toward the outfield, or touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base.

- c. First falls in fair territory beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d. While in or over fair territory, touches the person of any umpire or player.
- e. While over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.

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

Sec. 24 FAIR TERRITORY: Is that part of the playing field within and including the 1st and 3rd base foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the extreme playing field fence and perpendicularly upward.

Sec. 25 FAKE TAG: The act of a fielder (s), without the ball, faking a tag, Penalty for a fake tag is ejection from the game of the defensive player (s) who committed the infraction and the award of an additional base (s) from the point of the infraction.

Sec. 26 FORCE OUT: A force out is an out that can be made only when a base runner loses the right to the base he/she is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or a succeeding base runner has been put out.

Sec. 27 FOUL BALL: A foul ball is a batted ball which:

- a. Settles on foul territory between home and 1st base or home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over foul territory.
- c. Falls first on foul territory beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d. Touches an umpire, player or object foreign to the natural ground while on or over foul ground.
- e. Touches the batter, or bat in the batter's hand, while the batter is within the lines of the batter's box.
- f. A foul fly or ground ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul pole, not the position of the fielder.

Sec. 28 FOUL TIP: A foul tip is a batted ball which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's hands and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike.

NOTE: If the ball goes higher than the batter's head, and then is legally caught, the batter is out. (Foul Ball) If the ball does not go higher than the batter's head, it is merely a foul tip.

Sec. 29 HELMET: *Recommended* any helmet worn on the field must bare the Nocsae stamp approval

Sec. 30 HOME PLATE: The white portion of the strike zone mat used to record outs at home plate.

Sec. 31 ILLEGAL BAT: An illegal bat is one that does not meet the requirements of Rule 3, Sec 1.

Sec. 32 ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL: An illegally batted ball occurs when:

- a. A batter's foot is completely out of the box, and on the ground, when he/she hits the ball, fair or foul.
- b. Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate when he/she hits the ball.
- c. The batter hits the ball with an illegal or altered bat. See Rule 7 Sec 1 for Effect

Sec. 33 ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL: Occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his cap, illegal glove or any part of his/her uniform detached from its proper place.

Sec. 34 ILLEGAL PITCH: Occurs when any pitch does not comply with Rule 6 Sec. 3

Sec. 35 IN FLIGHT: In flight describes any batted, thrown or pitched ball that has not yet touched the ground or some object other than a fielder.

Sec. 36 IN JEOPARDY: A term indicating that the ball is in play and an offensive player may be put out.

Sec. 37 INFIELD: The infield is the portion of the field in fair territory that includes areas normally covered by infielders.

Sec. 38 INFIELD FLY: An infield fly is a fair ball, not including a line drive, which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases are occupied, before 2 are out. Any fielder can catch an infield fly.

NOTE: When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "INFIELD FLY - BATTER IS OUT" to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare 'INFIELD FLY - BATTER IS OUT, IF FAIR". The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after the ball has been touched. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball.

Sec. 39 INNING: An inning is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate between offense/defense and there are 3 outs for each team.

Sec. 40 INTERFERENCE: Interference is the act of an offensive team member, which impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play. If judged so by the umpire, vocal interference maybe called against any player (s) inside the playing area, whether on the field or in the dugout area.

Sec. 41 LEGAL TOUCH: A legal touch occurs when a runner or batter-runner not touching a base, is touched by the ball, while the ball is held securely in a fielders' hand. The ball is not considered as being securely held if it is juggled or dropped

by the fielder after having touched the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand of the fielder. It is sufficient for the fielder to touch the runner with the glove, which holds the ball.

Sec. 42 LEGALLY CAUGHT BALL: A legally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball, provided the ball is not caught in the fielders' cap, hat, pocket, protector or any other part of his/her uniform. It must be caught and firmly held with the hand or hands.

Sec. 43 OBSTRUCTION: Obstruction is the act of a defensive team member who hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a base runner. If judged so by the umpire, vocal obstruction may be called against any player (s) inside the playing area, whether on the field or in the dugout area.

Sec. 44 OFFENSIVE TEAM: The offensive team is the team at bat.

Sec. 45 OUTFIELD: The outfield is that portion of the field which is outside the diamond formed by the baseline or the area not normally covered by an infielder and within the foul lines beyond 1st and 3rd bases and boundaries of the grounds.

Sec. 46 OVERSLIDE: An over slide is the act of the offensive player sliding over and beyond a base he/she is attempting to reach. This is usually caused when his/her momentum causes him/her to lose contact with the base, which then causes him/her to be in jeopardy. The batter-runner may over slide 1st base, without being in jeopardy, if he/she returns to that base without attempting to advance. In the Women's 70+ and 75+ divisions only, the batter/base-runner may over slide any base, without being in jeopardy, if she returns to that base without attempting to advance.

Sec. 47 OVERTHROW: An overthrow is a play in which a ball is thrown to retire a runner who has not yet reached, or is off base, and goes into foul territory, beyond the boundary lines of the playing field.

Sec. 48 QUICK PITCH: A quick pitch is made by the pitcher, with an attempt to catch the batter off balance. This would be while the batter is still off balance as a result of the previous pitch, or when the pitcher fails to pause as required by Rule 6 Sec 1.

Sec. 49 PLAY/PLAYBALL : The verbal term used by the Home Plate Umpire to signal time is in and play will begin.

Sec. 50 STRIKE ZONE MAT: A Strike Zone Mat will be used in the Seniors Program to determine balls, strikes, and outs at home plate. The top of the mat will be placed at the top of home plate. **When the strike zone mat is displaced, the original home plate will be used to record the out.** The Strike Zone mat is not used in the Master's Program.

Sec. 51 SACRIFICE FLY: A sacrifice fly is when, with less than 2 outs, the batter scores a runner by hitting a fly ball that is caught.

Sec. 52 SCORING PLATE: In the Seniors Programs an additional base identical in dimension to home plate, and located in foul territory, eight (8) feet from the point of home plate, and in line with the first base line. Base runners must touch the scoring plate when coming from 3rd base, instead of home plate. Runners touching home plate prior to touching the scoring plate will be called out and no run will be scored. The Scoring Plate is not used in the Master's Program.

Sec 53 TIE- BREAKER RULE: International Tie Breaker Rule will be used in all SPA events. Each team will start each additional inning with a runner on second base. The runner will be the last player that **completed** his/her turn at bat when the third out was made in the previous inning. No courtesy runner is allowed to replace the runner starting at second base until he/she has advanced to third base. If this runner is unable to continue to play, for any reason, and no substitute is available, he/she will be declared out and the next previous batter will be the tiebreaker runner. The runner that was unable to continue may not play for the remainder of the game.

Sec. 54 TIME OUT: The term used by an umpire to order suspension of play.

Sec. 55 TIMING PLAY: A play in which the umpire must determine whether the runner crossed the scoring plate prior to the third (3rd) out of the inning.

Sec. 56 TURN AT BAT: A player's turn at bat begins when he enters the batter's box and continues until he/she is put out or becomes a base runner.

RULE 2 - THE PLAYING FIELD

Sec. 1 The playing field is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded. The playing field shall have a clear and unobstructed area within radius of the prescribed fence distances from home plate between the foul lines. (Diagram in back of book)

Sec. 2 Ground rules or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed upon by leagues or opposing teams whenever backstops, fences, stands, vehicles, spectators or other obstructions are within the prescribed area.

Sec. 3 PLAYING FIELD LAYOUT should include, in addition to foul lines, the following:

- a. **SCORING PLATE** is located 8 feet from the point of home plate in foul territory, and in line with the 1st base line. The Scoring plate is not used in the Master's Program.
- b. **BATTER'S ON-DECK CIRCLE** is a 5-foot circle placed between home plate and 1st base and between home plate and 3rd base.
- c. **BATTER'S BOX** - one on each side of Strike Zone Plate, shall measure **3 feet by 7 feet 6 inches**. The inside lines of the batter's box shall be **6 inches** from home plate. The front line shall be **4 feet, 6 inches** in front

of the center of the plate. A batter standing on the lines is considered as being in the box.

- d. **CATCHER'S BOX** shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be 8 feet 5 inches wide.
- e. **COACH'S BOX** is behind a line 15 feet long, drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to and 8 feet from the foul lines, extended from 1st and 3rd bases toward home plate.
- f. **OFFICIAL DIAMOND** shall have base lines of 65 feet. **In the women's 70+ program only, base lines shall be 60 feet when park facilities allow.**
- g. **PITCHER'S PLATE/BOX:** a pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, 50 feet from home plate, and extending back eight feet (8ft) and twenty-four (24) inches wide perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. The pitcher must release the ball after coming to a complete stop with one foot or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within the pitcher's box. One foot must remain in contact with the plate/box when 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. The pitcher must be facing the batter when delivering the pitch. The catcher must remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground or home plate, or reaches the catcher's box. This area should be chalked off. **EFFECT:** Allows the pitcher to release the ball from 50 feet to 58 feet from home plate.
- h. **DISTANCE ERROR:** If during the course of any game, any base distance, field distance or pitching distance is found to be in error, the error should be corrected immediately, and the game will continue. All previous plays stand. This is not a point to be protested.
- i. **STRIKE ZONE MAT:** In the Senior's program, the mat will measure **twenty-one (21) inches** wide and **thirty-five (35) inches** long with a white home plate centered at the front of the mat measuring **seventeen (17) inches** across the front, **8 1/2 inches** down each side, and **12 inches** diagonally to a point nearest the catcher. The white area will be referred to as home plate.
When the strike zone mat is displaced, the original home plate will be used to record the out. The strike zone mat is not used in the Master's program.
- j. **COMMITMENT LINE:** In the Senior's program, a 6 foot line drawn perpendicular to the 3rd base line, beginning at the base line and extending into foul territory. This line is located 20' from point of home plate, measured along the 3rd base line. The commitment line is not used in the Master's program.

RULE 3 – EQUIPMENT

NOTE: SPA reserves the right to approve or reject any softball related equipment for its intended use in the SPA program. Equipment does not merely need to meet industry standards, but must meet SPA standards before approval for its use is granted. Should SPA believe in any way, shape, or form, that a particular piece of equipment is dangerous and/or not acceptable for fair play, SPA reserves the right to ban such equipment immediately.

Sec. 1 THE OFFICIAL BAT:

- a. SPA has adopted a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.21 or less. All bats with a BPF of 1.21 or less, for the entire length of the barrel or hitting surface, are approved for use in the SPA program, unless the SPA believes that a particular bat has been altered to enhance its performance, . If a bat test over BPF 1.21, then it is not legal for S.P.A. play and the user could be suspended by SPA.
- b. All bats used in SPA play must be stamped with a BPF of 1.21 or less, and must have either a manufacturer installed non-slip grip surface, or a minimum of one wrap of tape. Bats without the BPF stamped on the bat will be considered illegal. Exception: Wooden bats do not have to be stamped with BPF 1.21 and may be used and are legal in all SPA play if they meet the standards set forth by the S.P.A. (The bat shall not be more than 34 inches in length and no more than 38 ounces in weight. Wooden bats must be stamped "Official Softball"). No tape is allowed to cover the end of the bat knob on any bat.
- c. A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed to enhance its performance. Examples of altering a bat include, but are not limited to, the following: painting a bat to disguise its true identity, shaving the wall of a bat to increase the flex of a bat, replacing or altering the handle of a bat to extend the length of the bat, changing the weight or distribution of the weight of the bat, by inserting or removing materials inside the bat. A manufactured or professionally installed flare or cone grip is considered legal.
- d. All bat protest are subject to final review by the S.P.A. Executive Director and the National Umpire-In-Chief.
- e. When a bat is suspected of being altered to enhance performance, the opposing team may protest the bat. In order for the protest to be allowed then the opposing team must submit a \$450 cash protest fee to the Home Plate Umpire. If the fee is not paid immediately then the protest is waived and the opposing team cannot make any additional protest against that bat for the duration of the tournament. A bat removed from play will remain in the custody of the SPA Umpire-In-Chief or Tournament Director until it can be forwarded to SPA National

Headquarters for further evaluation and resolution of the protest. If the bat is found to be legal that bat or a replacement bat will be provided to the challenged player at the discretion of SPA. If the bat is found to be illegal, the protest fee will be returned to the opposing manager.

- f. If the player refuses to turn over the bat. The player will be ejected from the tournament and suspended from SPA for ten (10) years, the manager of record for one (1) year, and the team will forfeit all games. If the player voluntarily releases the bat and it found to be altered. The player will be suspended for five (5) years, the manager of record for one (1) year. A second offense may result in the lifetime ban from SPA of the player

g. In the SPA Masters program, only bats listed in the SPA Masters approved bat list will be allowed.

Sec. 2 THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALL: shall be a smooth seamed, concealed stitched or flat surfaced ball. The center of the ball may be made of either long fiber kapok or mixture of cork and rubber and will be machine wound, with a fine twisted yarn and covered with latex or rubber cement or other materials approved by the SPA. The cover of the ball shall be tanned horsehide, cowhide or any other materials approved by the SPA, cemented to the ball by application of cement to the underside of the cover and sewn with waxed cotton or linen thread. The solid COR, 12" ball for men, will have a maximum COR of .44 with a maximum 375 compression and the 11" ball for women will have a maximum COR of .47 with a maximum 500 compression.

- A. **BALL:** The optic yellow softball is optional in all programs. The men's division will use a twelve (12) inch softball and the women's division will use the eleven (11) inch softball.
- B. **EXCEPTION:** The SPA Executive Director must approve the use of any balls used in SPA events that do not comply with Rule 3.
- C. **ALTERED BALL:** At any time during an SPA game the umpire has the authority to remove a ball from play whether he suspects it has been altered or not. For the purpose of this rule, umpire's decision is not subject to appeal.

An altered ball is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal ball has been changed. Example of an altered ball (BUT NOT LIMITED TO) is any ball frozen, or kept cold in a cooler to make it harder. Any ball that has been cooked in a microwave oven or the seams/stitches or cover has been altered in any way.

EFFECT: If a determination is made that a ball has been altered, we have a dead ball, the ball is immediately removed from the game, and turned over to the Tournament Director or UIC. The game is forfeited, the manager is ejected from the tournament, and may be suspended by SPA from future events.

Sec. 3 GLOVES: Gloves/Mitts must be worn by all fielders. Gloves that are entirely gray, white, or optic in color are illegal. Gloves that have circles or any other marking on the inside or outside of the glove and prove to be distracting are illegal. Gloves worn by all fielders shall be governed by the following:

- a. 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 maximum height of fifteen (15) inches.
- b. 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 top of the glove shall be measured parallel to the top end and shall not exceed 5 3/4 inches.

Sec. 4 SHOES: All players, coaches and participants must wear shoes. Sandals are not considered proper shoes for players. A shoe shall be made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar materials. The sole may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber or polyurethane cleats. Metal cleats or any type of shoe that has exposed metal on the sole, other than a rivet, **may not** be worn in any division of play.

Sec. 5 NO EQUIPMENT shall be left lying on the field, either in foul or fair territory.

Sec. 6 UNIFORM: All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color and style and not be ragged, frayed, torn or "cut-off", except as allowed in Rule 4 sec 6

- a. All headgear must be of the same predominant color and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Hard plastic visors are not approved headgear.
- b. Numbers must be worn on all uniforms. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. Numbers must be a minimum of 6 inches.
- c. Violation of uniform requirements may only be protested by the Tournament Director.

Sec. 7 JEWELRY RULE: The SPA strongly recommends that any type of jewelry not be worn in any SPA play. If determined unsafe by the umpire, it must be removed or the player will not be allowed to play.

Sec. 8 HELMET: SPA recommends any helmet worn on the field must bare the NOCSAE stamp of approval.

Sec. 9 CAST: Casts (plaster, metal, or other hard substances) judged dangerous by the umpire may not be worn during the game by any coach coaching the bases or by any player.

Note: Prosthesis maybe worn; however, any metal that is part of a brace or support must be covered by soft material and taped. CASTS are prohibited.

RECOMMENDATION: S.P.A. always recommends Protective equipment be utilized.

RULE 4 – PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTIONS

Sec. 1 OFFENSE: Teams may bat up to 20 players, and all batters must be listed in batting order on the Lineup Card. An automatic out will be recorded if a player(s) in the batting lineup is unable to bat unless a substitution can be made. However, in the 35+, 40+, and 45+ Coed Program batters must bat in an alternating male/female or female/male rotation of the batting order. Missing members in the male/female or female/male rotation will constitute an automatic out.

Sec. 2 DEFENSE: SPA will allow:

Men 35+, 40+, 45+, 50+, 55+, 60+ and 65+

and Women 35+, 40+, and 45+:

A maximum of ten (10) players on defense

A minimum of nine (9) players to start a game

A minimum of eight (8) players to finish a game

Men's 70+, 75+ and 80+ and Women's 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, and 70+:

A maximum of eleven (11) players on defense

A minimum of nine (9) players to start a game

A minimum of eight (8) players to finish a game

Women's Division 75+:

A maximum of twelve (12) players on defense

A minimum of eleven (11) players to start a game

A minimum of Ten (10) players to finish a game

Coed 35+, 40+, and 45+:

A maximum of ten(10) players on defense

Two (2) members of each gender in the outfield

Two (2) members of each gender in the infield

Pitcher and catcher positions must be of opposite gender.

A minimum of nine (9) players to start a game

A minimum of eight (8) players to finish a game.

In the case of eight (8) players, there must be an equal number of each gender represented

The following information pertains to players:

- a. Teams beginning a game with fewer than the **minimum** allowable number of players will record an automatic out at the bottom of the batting order for the missing player **for that players first turn at bat only**. The missing player may be added when he/she shows up but must be reported to both the Home Plate Umpire and score keeper, and must bat last in the batting order.
- b. **Teams that lose players (with no substitutes available) during the course of the game for reasons other than due to player ejection, and do not go below the minimum number required to finish, will record an automatic out, for that player's first missed turn at bat only. Teams that lose players**

(with no substitutes available) due to player ejection will record an automatic out each time that player's position in the batting lineup occurs.

- c. If a team has less than the minimum number required to finish the game, they must forfeit the game. The defensive team with two outs cannot intentionally or unintentionally walk the batter prior to the vacant spot in the batting order to get the automatic out. Should the defense walk the batter preceding the vacant spot in the batting order, the automatic out is skipped and the batter whose name succeeds the vacant spot now becomes the batter of record.
- d. Official line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official score keeper and the umpire at the start of each game. The Line-up card should contain the first and last name of each player, position and uniform number. Names of substitutes should be included. An automatic out will be recorded if players in the lineup are unable to bat.

NOTE: If a wrong number is on the line-up card, correct it and continue playing with no penalty. Substitutes are to be listed by their last name, first name and uniform number.

Sec. 3 RE-ENTRY RULE: The original starter may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once, provided that the players occupy their original position in the batting order.

NOTE: The original player and his/her substitute cannot be in the game at the same time except as a courtesy runner. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an illegal player. Penalty for use of an illegal player shall be the immediate ejection of the illegal player and manager when the violation is brought to the attention of the umpire, by the offended team. Violation of the re-entry is handled as a protest.

Women: In the 75+ age division, a player may leave and re-enter the game unlimited times without PENALTY. But the batting order must remain the same.

Sec. 4 A PLAYER SHALL BE OFFICIALLY IN THE GAME: At the beginning of the game when his/her name has been entered on the official score sheet, or at any time during the game has been announced and the Home Plate Umpire has been notified. The following regulations govern the substitution of players:

- a. The manager, or team representative, shall notify the plate umpire when a substitute enters the game. Failure to notify the umpire of a substitution would create an illegal substitution. The penalty for an illegal substitution will be: **IMMEDIATE PLAYER AND MANAGER EJECTION FROM THE GAME WHENEVER DISCOVERED.**

NOTE: Re-entry is considered a substitution and if an illegal substitution occurs, the penalty is the immediate ejection of the player and manager.

PLAY... (1) Smith enters the game in the 4th inning and was not reported. In the 6th inning the opposing team reports this to the umpire.

RULING: The player (Smith) is immediately ejected from the game along with the team manager. All play by or on Smith is legal.

PLAY... (2) Smith enters the game in the 4th inning, and was not reported. Smith legally reaches 1st base and before the next pitch, is reported to the Home Plate Umpire by the opposing manager.

RULING: The player Smith is called out and immediately ejected from the game along with the team manager. All runners must return to the base occupied when Smith first came to bat.

- b. Substitute players will be considered in the game as follows:
1. Batter, when he/she takes his/her place in the batter's box.
 2. Fielder, when he/she takes the place of the previous fielder.
 3. Runner, when he/she replaces the player on the base.
 4. Pitcher, when he/she takes his/her place on the pitcher's plate.

NOTE: Each pitcher (starter or substitute) must pitch until the first batter facing him/her has completed his/her turn at bat, the side has been retired, or he/she has been removed from the game. A pitcher removed from the game, by rule or ejection, is not subject to this rule.

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

Sec. 5 WHEEL CHAIR RULE: Coaches in wheel chairs may not be on the field of play during any live ball situations unless the chair has all exposed metal parts covered by a soft substance and taped in such a way that would eliminate the risk of bodily injury to the players/coaches/officials.

Sec. 6 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES

When a player is bleeding, or has an open wound, the bleeding must be stopped and the open wound covered with a bandage/dressing strong enough to withstand the rigors of competition. This treatment must be immediate and a suspension of play for a *reasonable amount of time will be awarded the team. Should the treatment of this wound exceed a *reasonable amount of time, the effected player must be substituted for. If no substitute is available, the team may play on with less players until the affected player can continue, with all penalties as set forth by Rule 4.in effect. When the affected player can continue, he may re-enter the line-up in the same position in the batting order. Return to play will be determined by appropriate medical personnel or the home plate umpire. Any player whose uniform is saturated with blood, regardless of the source, must follow the same guidelines as stated above for a person bleeding, and must have that uniform changed, before returning to the game.

NOTE: A reasonable amount of time will be determined by the home plate umpire, and will be no less than 5 minutes. Soiled clothing

must be changed, and the change of clothing need not be matching team clothing. This is not a point of protest.

RULE 5 - THE GAME

It is the option of the tournament director to either use or not use an official scorekeeper. If an official scorekeeper is not used, the home team will be the official score and it is obligation of the visiting team to verify the score at the end of each half inning. SPA recommends the use of Official Scorekeepers.

NOTE: No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the dugouts or on the field during any SPA Sanctioned Event.

Sec. 1 THE CHOICE OF FIRST OR LAST BAT shall be decided by a coin flip prior to each game.

Sec. 2 THE FITNESS OF THE GROUNDS shall be decided solely by the home plate umpire.

Sec. 3 REGULATION GAME shall consist of seven (7) innings. A full seven (7) innings need not be played, if the home team (the team second at bat) scores more runs in six innings or before the third out of the seventh inning the game is over. **No game is considered complete until the umpires have left the playing field.**

Sec 4 RUN RULE: The Run Rule for all SPA games (including the Championship game) will be 20 after four (4) inning or 15 after five (5) innings, or any time a team may not mathematically score enough runs to stay in the game.

Sec 5 INTERNATIONAL TIE BREAKER RULE: Tie games after seven innings shall continue until one team has scored more runs than the other at the completion of an inning. Each team will start each additional inning with a runner on second base. The runner will be the last player that completed his/her turn at bat when the third out was made in the previous inning. No courtesy runner is allowed to replace the runner starting at second base until he/she has advanced to third base. If this runner is unable to continue to play, for any reason, and no substitute is available, he/she will be declared out and the next previous batter will be the tiebreaker runner. The runner that was unable to continue may not play for the remainder of the game.

Sec 6 CALLED GAME: The umpire is empowered to suspend a game at any time because of darkness, rain, lightning, fire, panic, or for other conditions that may place the patrons or players in peril. The umpire will forfeit the game if intentionally bumped, attacked physically, or is the recipient of profanity by any team member or spectator. Tournament Director or Tournament UIC will immediately have the player(s), coach(s), or spectator(s) removed from the complex. A determination will be made by the tournament committee concerning the duration of the removal.

Sec 7 FORFEIT GAME: The umpire may forfeit a game in favor of a team not at fault in the following cases:

- a. If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field refuses to begin a game at the time the team is scheduled to play, or within a time set for forfeitures (grace period) by the organization in which the team is playing.
- b. If after the game has started, one team refuses to continue play unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- c. If one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "play ball" restarting a suspended game.
- d. If a team uses tactics to delay or to hasten the game.
- e. If, after being warned by the umpire, any one of the rules is willfully violated.
- f. If the order for the removal of a player or manager/coach, from the game, is not obeyed within one minute.
- g. If because of the removal of a player by the umpire, or for any reason, there are less than 8 players on the team.

Sec 8 REPLAYED GAME:

- a. Games that are interrupted shall be replayed from the point of interruption of that game. Original lineups may be changed when the game is replayed.
- b. During all tournament play (Qualifying and National Championships), in the event of rain or any other causes which interrupts a game, the game must be resumed at the exact point where it was stopped, unless the teams mutually agree to accept the existing score as the final score.
- c. In the event that a game cannot be completed, an official game may be called after five (5) innings of play or 4 ½ innings of play, if the home team is ahead.

Sec 9 TIME LIMIT: A time limit of one hour will be used only in pool play. The game clock will be started when the home plate umpire takes his position, and declares "Play ball" to begin the first inning. When the game has been played one hour, the home plate umpire will stop the game and notify the teams that they will finish that inning and play one additional inning. In double elimination there is no time limit in SPA sanctioned events. No game can end in a tie, if tied at the end of the last declared/regulation inning. The game must continue using the international tie breaker rule. The Tournament Director, and SPA National Headquarters reserve the right to make any changes to this policy depending on tournament format, number of available fields, weather conditions, park curfew, etc.

Sec 10 HOME RUN REQUIREMENTS: Home runs do not have to be run out in over-the-fence homeruns or four (4) base errors. (Hit & Sit)

Sec 11 ONE (1) UP RULE: In programs where specified, once both teams have reached their respective of untouched home run limits, either team may hit an additional home run, however, no team may ever go more than one home run up on the other team. The home team, in the bottom of the seventh (7th) or last declared inning, cannot use the one (1) rule up to win the game.

NOTE: In the case of inclement weather, or other unforeseen circumstances, and a time limit is implemented, the home team cannot go one-up once the time limit has been imposed.

Sec 12 THE WINNER OF THE GAME shall be the team that scores the most runs in a regulation game. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team has scored more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that at completion of the incomplete inning.

Sec 13 A RUN SHALL NOT BE scored if the third out of the inning is a result of:

- a. The batter-base runner is put out before legally touching 1st base.
- b. A base runner is forced out due to the batter becoming a base runner.
- c. A base runner leaving base before a pitched ball reaches home plate or before the pitched ball is batted or touches the ground.
- d. Appeal play at 1st base on the batter/runner for the 3rd out of the inning.
- e. Appeal play at any base on a runner for the 3rd out in an inning, such as but not limited to; tag-up, missed base, assistance, etc.
- f. If batter-base runner touches 1st base with the bat in his possession.

Sec. 14 NO SUCCEEDING RUNNER shall score a run when a preceding runner has been declared the third out of an inning.

Sec. 15 BASERUNNER SHALL not score a run, ahead of the base runner preceding him/her in the batting order, if the preceding runner has not been put out.

Sec. 16 A MANAGER AND/OR team representative shall be allowed only one charged conference with a batter or base runner in any one inning.

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

Sec. 17 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/ROSTERS: A Team Roster must be turned in to the Tournament Director (or SPA National Office if required), prior to the applicable date. Rosters should be completely filled out and signed by all players. If a manager is unable to obtain a player signature prior to submitting the roster, the roster must be signed prior to the player participating in tournament play.

Sec. 18 SPA OFFICIAL ROSTER: All teams qualifying to play in SPA Post Season Tournaments are required to have a copy of that qualified official roster into the SPA National Office 30 Days prior to the SPA event. A team may have no more than twenty (20) players on its' roster. **When a team first plays in a SPA sanctioned event, that team's roster is "OFFICIALLY FROZEN". All players should be listed on the roster even though they may not be attending or participating in the SPA qualifier.**

Note: Team manager and all players are required to read the waiver on the roster form. All managers and players are required to individually sign the team roster form. All team roster forms need to be completed. A copy of the

team's roster must accompany the entry fee to all SPA events.

Note: All players are required to sign the roster prior to playing their first game

Teams qualifying before August 1st may add up to two (2) players from the age division above them 30 days prior to National tournaments to their qualifying rosters under the following conditions. Teams may add the two players only to replace players lost because of death, injury, relocation or official release. Injured players must submit, to the SPA National Headquarters, a doctor's statement indicating the injury and the player's availability to participate. A relocated player must submit, to the SPA National Headquarters, proof of old and new address. Released players must have an official release form or letter presented to the SPA National Headquarters, to be officially removed from a qualified roster. In each case, the SPA National Headquarters must approve any roster additions or changes. Any exception must be approved by National Director.

A player from a disbanded team must notify the SPA National Headquarters prior to participating with another team in a SPA event. This letter must be received no later than two weeks prior to the SPA event.

When a team disbands, the team manager is required to send a letter of release and a copy of his roster to the SPA National Headquarters. No players will be officially released to play with other teams until this information has been received in the SPA National Headquarters.

PLAYER REGISTRATION: All SPA Senior Players (Men & Women) must be registered with the SPA National Office. All legal identification forms, such as Birth Certificates, State Drivers License, and Photo ID's must be submitted by the player, including the completed registration form and signed by the applicant.

****Note** Player's Registration forms may be printed from www.softballspa.com**

Sec. 19 QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT HOME RUN & INNING RUN LIMITS:

- a. **Women' Program:** All home runs count. A maximum of 5 runs per team per inning will be allowed (unlimited in last declared inning and all extra innings)
- b. **Senior's Program Men - Pool Play:** For all classifications a maximum of 5 runs per team per inning will be allowed, with unlimited runs in the last declared inning and all extra innings.

The home run rule will be two (2) with no "one- up" and additional over the fence home runs will be scored as a walk. The Tournament Director has the authority to change runs per inning and home runs if enough Major and Major Plus teams are present to have a separate bracket. After the pool play games have been completed, the teams will be separated into the following divisions: Platinum, Gold, or Silver Division

The Tournament Director has the authorization to place the teams in each division based upon the overall strength and skill of the team, using the following information as a guideline:

- Win – loss record
- Head to head results **(this rule only applies when all teams play one another)**
- Runs allowed
- Run differential
- Total runs scored
- Flip of a coin

NOTE: When classifications are combined into single brackets, the lower classification rules will apply.

c. Senior Men - Double Elimination (Bracket Play):

Platinum Division: Seven (7) runs per inning per team
(unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
Four (4) home runs allowed + one (1) up
Additional home run is a Walk

Gold Division: Five (5) runs per inning per team
(unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
Three (3) home runs allowed, No One (1) up
Additional home run is an out

Silver Division: Five (5) runs per inning per team
(unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
One (1) home run allowed, No One (1) up
Additional home run is an out

d. Master's Program – There will be no maximum runs per inning specified.

Major Division: Seven (7) home runs allowed + One (1) up
Additional home run scored as a Walk

AAA Division: Three (3) Home runs allowed + One (1) up
Additional home run scored as an Out

The Tournament Director has the authorization to place the teams in each division based upon the overall strength and skill of the team, using the following information as a guideline:

- Win – loss record
- Head to head results **(this rule only applies when all teams play one another)**
- Runs allowed
- Run differential
- Total runs scored
- Flip of a coin

NOTE: When classifications are combined into single brackets, the lower classification rules will apply.

Once the maximum runs per inning has been obtained, no additional runs will score as a result of an over-the-fence homerun; however, the over the fence homerun will still count in the teams total.

**Sec 20 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP- HOME RUN & INNING RUN LIMITS:
(All play pool and bracket)**

Women: All Home Runs Count. A maximum of 5 runs per team per inning will be allowed (unlimited in last declared inning and all extra innings)

Senior Program Men:

Major Plus- Nine (9) run limit per team per inning,
Unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
Seven (7) home runs, one (1) up rule in effect,
Additional home run is a walk,
Base runner(s) advance if forced.

Major - Seven (7) run limit per team per inning,
Unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
Four (4) home runs, one (1) up rule in effect,
Additional home run is a walk,
Base runner(s) advance if forced.

AAA - Five (5) run limit per team per inning,
Unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
Three (3) homeruns, One-up rule NOT in effect
Additional home run is an out,
Base runner(s) do not advance.

AA - Five (5) run limit per team per inning,
Unlimited in last declared inning, and all extra innings)
One (1) home run, One-up rule NOT in effect,
Additional home run is an out,
Base runner(s) do not advance.

Master's Program Men:

Major - Unlimited runs per inning
Seven (7) homeruns, one (1) up rule in effect
Additional home run is a walk

AAA - Unlimited runs per inning
Three (3) home runs allowed, one (1) up rule in effect
Additional home run is an out

Once the maximum runs per inning has been obtained, no additional runs will score as a result of an over-the-fence homerun; however, the over the fence homerun will still count in the teams total.

Sec. 21 EACH UNTOUCHED BALL over the fence, in Major Plus, and Major, divisions exceeding the team's home run limit, will be scored as a **walk**.

NOTE: Any untouched batted ball that goes over the fence in fair territory, shall be considered a home run against the teams home run total.

Sec. 22 ANY BALL TOUCHED BY a defensive player, which goes over the fence in fair territory, shall not be included in the total of over-the-fence team home run total. It shall be ruled and scored as a four (4) base error. See Rule 5 Sec 10

Sec. 23 EQUALIZER:

- a. For all play, when a team is playing against a lower age division team, the equalization rule will be in effect. At the beginning of the first (1st), second (2nd), and third (3rd) innings, 1 run will be added to the score for the older age division team. At the beginning of the fourth (4th) inning, 2 runs will be added to the score for the older age division team, with a maximum of five (5) runs added to the game. If the game is concluded before the five (5) run maximum addition is reached, only the runs added to that point will be allowed. Runs added by this rule are not included in maximum run per inning counts. (Example: If maximum per inning of 5 runs are scored, the equalizer added run results in 6 runs for that inning.)
- b. In the men's programs only, when a team is playing against a team classified in a lower classification, the lower classified team will be allowed an option to play 11 defensive players (12 defensive players in the 70+ and older divisions).
- c. Except in the women's program, when both teams meet the requirements of either a and b above in a single game, the equalization rule does not apply, and no awards will be made.
- d. Except in the women's program, when one team meets both of the requirements in a and b above, that team will be allowed the option of choosing to accept the award given in either a or b, but NOT both.

Sec. 24 FORFEITED GAME: The score of a forfeited game will be **15-0**

RULE 6 - PITCHING REGULATIONS

Sec. 1 THE PITCHER SHALL take a position with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or one foot within the box (The lines are considered within the box). Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full stop, with the ball held in the pitching hand or both hands, in front of the body. This position must be maintained at least on (1) second and not more than ten (10) seconds before making the delivery. The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in the catcher's box.

Sec. 2 THE PITCH STARTS when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his/her wind-up, after the required pause. Prior to the required pause, any wind up may be used. The pivot foot must remain in the pitcher's box until the ball leaves the hand.

NOTE: It is not necessary to step, but if a step is taken, the step may be forward, backward or sideways.

Sec. 3 A LEGAL DELIVERY shall be delivered with an underhand motion, and:

- a. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The Home Plate Umpire will issue a warning to a pitcher using excessive speed, and award a ball to the batter. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, he/she shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
- b. The hand shall be below the hip.
- c. The ball must be delivered with an arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.
- d. The catcher must be within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball reaches the plate or until the ball is batted.

EXCEPTION: If a batter strikes at any illegal pitch, it shall be a strike and there shall be no penalty. The ball remains in play if hit by the batter.

- e. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strike out or put out made by the catcher. The pitcher has 10 seconds to release the next pitch.

EFFECT: An additional "BALL" shall be awarded to the batter.

- f. Any action or motion, by the pitcher (i.e. stops or pauses in the pitching motion or fakes a pitch or any other illegal action prior to the release of the pitch) after presenting the ball is ruled a Dead ball.

EFFECT: Dead ball is called by the umpire, a ball shall be awarded to the batter and a warning issued to the pitcher. Similar act will be grounds for removal from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. These acts are considered illegal pitching actions.

Sec. 4 THE PITCHER MAY use any wind-up desired providing:

- a. He/she does not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter, whether in/out of the pitcher's box.
- b. His/her wind-up is a continuous motion.
- c. He/she does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- d. He/she delivers the ball on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.

NOTE: a-d: are illegal pitching actions.

EFFECT: Rule 6 Sec. 3 f

Sec. 5 THE PITCHER SHALL NOT: deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball to the batter, from the pitching box, after presenting the ball.

EFFECT: Rule 6, Sec 3 f

Sec. 6 THE PITCHER SHALL NOT at anytime during the game, be allowed to use tape or other substances upon the ball, the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball. Under the supervision of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands or a sheer or skin colored band-aid may be used. The pitcher may wear a sweatband on the pitching arm forearm or above.

Sec. 7 AT THE BEGINNING of each half inning or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than 1 minute may be used to deliver not more than 3 pitches to the catcher or other teammate. Play shall be suspended during this time.

EFFECT: Non compliance with above is an illegal pitch and the ball is dead. A ball shall be awarded on the batter for each excessive pitch over 3 and base runners do not advance unless forced.

Sec. 8 NO-PITCH SHALL be declared when:

- a. The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
- b. The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
- c. The pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched his/her base after a foul ball and the ball is dead.
- d. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during his/her wind-up or during the back swing.
- e. No player, manager or coach shall call "Time", employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.

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

Sec. 9 THERE SHALL BE only one charged conference between the manager or other team representative from the dugout, with each and every pitcher in an inning. The second charged conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

Sec. 10 AT NO TIME DURING the game shall a player or coach argue whether a pitch was a strike or a ball. Any player or coach that leaves his/her position on the field, including the dugout, to argue balls and strikes, will be grounds for ejection.

RULE 7 – BATTING

Sec. 1 THE BATTER SHALL take his/her position within the batter's box, and:

- a. The batter shall not have his/her entire foot on the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or touching home plate when the ball is hit.
- b. The batter shall not step directly across in front of the catcher to the other side of the batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch, and the catcher is in the catcher's box.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out, base runners may not advance.

- c. The batter shall not enter the batter's box with an illegal bat.
EFFECT: The opposing team has the option of taking the result of the play, or the ball is dead, the batter is out, and the base runner(s) may not advance.
- d. The batter shall not enter the batter's box with an altered bat.
EFFECT: The opposing team has the option of taking the result of the play, and the ball is dead, the batter is out, and without warning, is ejected from the game. Base runners may not advance. The bat will be confiscated and given to a Tournament Director or UIC to be held for an unlimited period of time.
- e. The batter must take his/her position within ten (10) seconds after the umpire has called "play ball". He/she must have both feet within the box before the start of the pitch. If the batter is standing on the line, the whole foot is considered in the box.

EFFECT: The ball is dead. The umpire will call a strike and also issue a warning to the batter to take his position or risk being called out. If the batter refuses to take his/her position after the warning, he/she will be called out. The warning will be given to a batter only one time per game. Any repeated violation during the game by that player, will result in an out being called. This rule is intended to help speed up the play of the game, and umpires, while using their discretion in enforcement of the rule, must prohibit the batter from delaying the game by taking an excessive or unnecessary amount of time entering the batter's box.

Sec. 2 EACH PLAYER OF THE side at bat shall become a batter in the order in which his/her name appears on the lineup card. The batting order of each team must be on the lineup card and delivered by **the manager or captain, to the home plate umpire, official scorekeeper, and opposing manager**. The batting order must be followed throughout the entire game, unless a player is substituted for. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the player he/she is replacing in the batting order. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the preceding inning.

EFFECT: Batting out of order is an appeal play, which may be made by the defensive team only, and:

- a. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter takes his/her place and assumes any balls and strikes.
- b. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has batted, and before the next pitch to the following batter, the player who should have batted is out. Any advance or score made because of a batted ball by the improper batter's advance to 1st base on a hit, error or a base on balls shall be nullified. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.
- c. If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter shall be the one whose name follows that of the

incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.

- d. When the third out of the inning is made before the batter has completed his/her turn at bat, he/she shall be the first batter in the next inning.

Sec. 3 MEMBERS OF THE TEAM at bat shall not interfere, physically or vocally, with a player attempting to field a fair or foul ball. This includes a base coach.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out, and base runners may not advance.

Sec. 4 THE BATTER SHALL NOT intentionally hit a fair ball a second time.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners may not advance.

NOTE: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the opinion of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play.

Sec. 5 A STRIKE IS CALLED BY the umpire:

- a. For each legally pitched ball hitting any portion of the Strike Zone Mat at which the batter does not swing.
- b. For each ball swung at and missed by the batter.
- c. For each foul tip, including the 3rd strike.
- d. For each foul ball, including the 3rd strike.

EFFECT: Ball is dead and base runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out.

NOTE: A pitched ball that hits the ground before hitting the strike zone mat is a "dead ball" and may not be hit by the batter.

Sec. 6 A BALL IS CALLED BY the umpire:

- a. For each pitch, which does not hit the strike zone mat, and is not struck at by the batter,
- b. For each illegal pitch,
- c. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required in Rule 6,
- d. When the pitcher fails to pitch within ten (10) seconds,
- e. For each additional warm-up pitch,
- f. When the pitcher attempts a quick return pitch, the pitcher shall be given a first warning.
- g. For each illegal pitching action.

EFFECT: Rule 7, Sec 6 a-g, the ball is dead and base runners may not advance.

Sec. 7 A FAIR BALL IS A LEGALLY batted ball which:

- a. Settles or is touched on fair ground between home and 1st or home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over fair ground.

- c. Touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base.
- d. While on or over fair ground, touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player (while in contact with the base).
- e. First falls on fair ground beyond 1st or 3rd base. A fair fly ball must be judged according to relative position of the ball and the foul line/pole, regardless of whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time he/she touches the ball.

EFFECT: Rule 7 Sec 7 a-e, ball is in play and base runners are entitled to advance any number of bases with liability to be put out.

The batter becomes a base runner unless the infield fly rule applies.

- f. While on or over fair ground, lands behind a fence or into a stand beyond the outfield fence. This is a home run.
- g. Hits a foul pole on the fly above the fence level, it shall be a home run.

Sec. 8 A FOUL BALL IS A LEGALLY batted ball which:

- a. Settles on foul ground between home and 1st base or between home and 3rd base.
- b. Bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over foul ground.
- c. First touches on foul ground beyond 1st or 3rd base.
- d. Touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player (while in contact with the base), while on or over foul ground.

EFFECT: Rule 7, Sec 8 a-d, Ball is dead. A strike is called on the batter for each foul ball, including the third strike. Base runners must return to their bases without liability to be put out. Base runners may not advance on a third strike caught foul fly.

- e. If caught, with less than two strikes, all runners may tag-up and advance at their own risk of being put out.

Sec. 9 THE BATTER IS OUT:

- a. When the 3rd strike is struck at, and missed.
- b. When a batter appears in the batter's box with, or is discovered using an altered bat, prior to or after hitting the ball. The batter is also ejected from the game for using an altered bat. The altered bat will be confiscated and given to the Tournament Director or UIC, to be held for an unlimited period of time.
- c. When a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.
- d. Immediately when he/she hits an infield fly and the umpire has declared "Infield Fly".
- e. If a fielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, which can be caught with ordinary effort.

EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. This does not apply to an infield fly; the dropped ball remains alive on an infield fly.

NOTE: A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

- f. If a preceding runner, in the umpire's opinion, intentionally interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball, or is attempting to throw a ball in an attempt to complete a play, the preceding runner and the batter are both declared out.
- g. When the batter bunts or chops the ball downward.

EFFECT: The ball is dead the batter is out and runners may not

advance.

- h. Any batter-runner that carries the bat and touches first base, while still holding the bat, during a live ball situation, will be declared out. Should this be the 3rd out of an inning, no preceding runner shall score.

EFFECT: If less than two (2) outs, a delayed dead ball signal will be given and the ball will remain alive.

- i. On a third strike foul ball,
- j. When hit by his/her batted ball in fair territory, outside batter's box.
- k. When the batter has his/her entire foot on the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or touching home plate when the ball is hit.
- l. If the batter steps directly across in front of the catcher to the other side of the batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch, and the catcher is in the catcher's box.

Sec. 10 THE BATTER OR BASERUNNER is not out if a fielder making a play on him/her uses an illegal glove. The manager of the offended team has the option of having the batter bat over and assuming the ball and strike count he/she had prior to the pitch he/she hit, or taking the result of the play. The umpire(s) will signal a delayed dead ball.

Sec. 11 ON-DECK BATTER:

- a. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order.
- b. The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest his/her bench.
- c. The on-deck batter may loosen up with two official softball bats, an official warm-up bat, or the player may use the Power Wrap, Worth WBS, H & B BW1 or any other official warm-up bat or product that has been approved by the SPA National Office.
- d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle when he/she becomes the batter, or to direct base runners advancing from 3rd base to home plate or to avoid contact with a defensive player..
- e. When the on-deck batter interferes with the defensive players' opportunity to make a play on a runner, the runner closest to home plate, at the time of the interference, is declared out.

NOTE: The provision of Rule 7, Sec 3, shall apply to the on-deck batter.

RULE 8 - BASERUNNING

Sec 1 DOUBLE BASE AT 1ST BASE: At facilities that use the white and orange safety bag at first base. The following rule will be implemented. Batter-runner must use the base in foul territory (orange) if the first play is at first base, either from the infield or outfield. A runner *may* be called out for touching the inside bag (white). **(This is an appeal play.)** If the play is elsewhere, the inside base (white) may be tagged in a continuation toward second base. The runner running toward first base may cross over to the inside bag to avoid a collision if a wild throw occurs. A defensive player may not tag the base in foul territory (orange) to record an out in this situation. The inside bag (white) will be used by

the batter-runner if attempting to get back to first base. The runner may maintain contact with either base (orange or white) once they are safe at 1st base.

Sec 2 COURTESY RUNNER: Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed in all Senior programs, however, in the Master's program only one (1) courtesy runner per inning may be used. A player may only be a courtesy runner once per inning. A courtesy runner may be any player on the roster, whether or not he/she is in the line-up. A courtesy runner may only be replaced by another courtesy runner due to an injury or illness. The replaced courtesy runner will be removed from the game. The original runner cannot re-enter as a courtesy runner for another player in the same inning. Once a designated player or any roster player touches a base, they are the courtesy runner for that player at that base. Removal of that courtesy runner for any reason other than illness, injury or by legal substitution for the line-up position being run for, is a violation of the illegal substitution rule. Courtesy runners are to be inserted into the game only during time-out and with verbal notification to the Home Plate Umpire. If a courtesy runner is on base when his/her time at bat occurs, an "OUT" is registered on the base and the courtesy runner must bat unless it is the third out of the inning, in which case that courtesy runner will be the lead-off batter in the following inning. (During international tie breaker – see Rule 5, Sec 5 for differences)

In the **Women's - 70+, 75+** age division, players may run as a courtesy runner an unlimited number of times per half inning.

Sec. 3 THE BASE RUNNER MUST touch bases in legal order that is 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Scoring Plate, except as allowed in Rule 5, Sec 10 and:

- a. When a base runner must return to bases while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.

EFFECT: The ball is in play and base runners must return with liability to be put out.

- b. When a base runner acquires the right to a base, by touching it before being put out, he/she may hold the base until he/she has legally touched the next base, or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.
- c. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position neither, he/she nor the succeeding runners in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position. The ball is in play and runners may advance with liability of being put out.
- d. A base runner may not run the bases in reverse order, either to confuse the fielders, or to make a travesty of the game.

EFFECT: The ball is dead and the runner is out.

NOTE: A runner in a double play situation, who stops or retreats back towards the base left, is not to be considered as running the bases in reverse order or considered making a travesty of the game.

- e. Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously.

EFFECT: The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it. The other runner may be put out if touched with the ball.

- f. Failure of a preceding runner to touch a base or to leave a base legally on a caught fly ball, that is declared out, does not affect the status of a succeeding runner who touches the bases in proper order. However, if the preceding runner were to be called out for the 3rd out of the inning,

- no succeeding runner may score.
- g. No runner may return to touch home plate after a following runner has scored.
 - h. When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or a base he/she has left illegally, even after the ball becomes alive. However, when a dead ball occurs, a runner may return to a missed base or a base he/she left illegally, if he/she is required to by the umpire in the awarding or determination of bases. The runner is not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he/she is awarded by the umpire. The runner is not liable to be put out for missing a base beyond the base he/she is required to return to.
 - i. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left illegally once he/she enters his/her dugout or bench area.
 - j. When a walk is issued, runners must touch all bases in legal order. Base runners do not advance unless forced.
 - k. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases. Awarded bases must also be touched in proper order.
 - l. Runners must continue towards the scoring plate once he/she touches or passes the commitment line. A runner that retreats toward 3rd base and re-touches or re-crosses the commitment line will be called out.
 - NOTE:** If runner touches home plate and not the scoring plate in a not-over-the-fence home run situation, the runner is automatically out.
 - NOTE:** If a defensive player attempts to tag the runner after the runner has crossed the commitment line or touches the scoring plate the runner is automatically safe.

Sec. 4 THE BATTER BECOMES a batter-runner:

- a. As soon as he/she hits the ball,
- b. When four (4) pitches have been judged balls or batter has been intentionally walked
- c. When the catcher or any other fielder obstructs or hinders the batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball,
- d. When a fair ball strikes the umpire, base runner, and the defensive player has had an opportunity to make a play.

Sec. 5 BASERUNNERS ARE entitled to advance with liability to be put out:

- a. When the ball is thrown and is not blocked.
- b. When the ball is batted into fair territory and is not blocked.
- c. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- d. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner in contact with a base.

Sec. 6 A PLAYER FORFEITS his/her exemption from liability to be put out:

- a. If, while the ball is in play, he/she is off the base he/she is entitled to.
- b. If, after over running 1st base, the batter-runner attempts to advance toward second base. In the Women's 70+ and 75+ divisions only, if after over running any base, the batter/base-runner attempts to advance toward the next base.
- c. If, after dislodging the base, the batter-runner attempts to continue to the next base.

- Sec. 7 BASERUNNERS ARE** entitled to advance without liability to be put out:
- a. When he/she is forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls or for catcher obstruction. The ball is dead.
 - b. When a fielder obstructs a base runner from advancing to a base.

EFFECT: When obstruction occurs, the umpire shall call and signal obstruction. If play is being made on the obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching 1st base, the ball is dead and all runners advance without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached in the umpire's opinion, if there had been no obstruction.

EXCEPTION: A base runner obstructed in a run-down shall be awarded the lead base at the time of the obstruction. Any preceding runners, forced to advance by the award of bases for obstruction, shall advance without liability to be put out.
 - c. If no play is being made on the obstructed runner at the time of obstruction, the play shall proceed until the play is completed (delayed dead ball). The umpire shall call "time" and impose such penalties if any, as in his opinion, will nullify the act of obstruction.
 - d. If a fielder, without the ball, fakes a tag, the umpire may award the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have reached, had there been no obstruction.

NOTE: In the case of a "fake tag", the fielder will be automatically ejected from the game.
 - e. When, by throwing his glove, hat, or any part of his uniform, a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball.

NOTE: The umpire(s) will give a "delayed dead ball" signal.

EFFECT: The runner shall be entitled to three bases if a batted ball or two bases if a thrown ball. In either case runners may advance further at their own risk. If the illegal act was made on a fair ball that, in the opinion of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded.
 - f. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines), or is blocked.

EFFECT: Awarded bases shall be determined by the position of the base runners at the time of the infraction.

EFFECT: For offensive equipment causing a blocked ball, the player closest to home plate is declared out, and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball became blocked.
 - g. In all cases where a thrown ball goes into the spectators seats, goes over, through or under any fence surrounding the playing field; hits any person or object not engaged in the game; goes into the players benches, including bats lying near benches, whether the ball rebounds onto the playing field or not, or remains in the meshes of any wire screen, each and every base runner shall be awarded two bases.
 - h. When the first throw is made by an infielder, two (2) bases shall be awarded. The award shall be governed by the position of each runner at the time the pitch was made; however, if all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one (1) base when the infielder makes the wild throw, on the first play after a pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners, when the wild throw was made.
 - i. When a throw is made by an outfielder, or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the two (2) base award shall be governed by the

position of each runner and the last base he/she has touched at the time the throw was made. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

- j. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters a dead ball area or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one (1) base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked. If a runner touches the next base and returns to his/her original base, the original base he/she left, is considered the "last base touched" for the purposes of an over throw award.
- k. When a fair ball bounds or rolls into a stand; over, under or through a fence; bounds out of play unintentionally off a defensive player or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field.
EFFECT: Rule 8 Sec 7(k), The ball is dead and all base runners are awarded two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.
- l. When a fielder carries a live ball unintentionally, from playable territory into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead. All base runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory. If, in the opinion of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time he/she entered the dead ball area.

Sec. 8 A BASERUNNER MUST return to his/her base:

- a. When a foul ball is illegally caught and so declared by the umpire.
- b. When the umpire declares an illegally batted ball.
- c. When a batter or base runner is called out for interference. Other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- d. When a pitched ball that is swung at and missed touches any part of the batters' person.
- e. When a foul ball is not caught.
EFFECT: The ball is dead and base runners must return to base except when forced by the batter becoming a base runner. Base runners need not touch the intervening bases in returning, but must return promptly; however, they must be allowed sufficient time to return.

Sec. 9 BATTER-BASERUNNER is out:

- a. When, after hitting a fair ball, he/she is legally touched with the ball before he/she touches 1st base.
- b. When, after hitting a fair ball, the ball is held by a fielder touching 1st base (white base) with any part of his/her person, before the batter-base runner touches 1st base.
- c. When, a fly ball is legally caught.
- d. When after hitting a fair ball or being awarded a base on balls, he/she fails to advance to 1st base and enters his/her dug out.
EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec 9 a-d, the ball is in play and the batter-runner is out.
- e. When he/she runs outside the 3 foot line, and in the opinion of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at 1st base; however,

he/she may run outside the 3 foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or over throw.

- f. When he/she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If the interference, in the opinion of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the base runner closest to home plate shall also be called out.
- g. When a batter-runner interferes with a play at home in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate, the runner is also out.
- h. When he/she moves back towards the commit line to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec 9 (e-h), The ball is dead and the batter-runner is out. Other base runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action

- i. When it is discovered he/she is using an illegal bat.
EFFECT: The opposing team has the option of taking the result of the play, or the ball is dead, the batter is out, and the base runner(s) may not advance.

- j. When it is discovered he/she is using an altered bat.
EFFECT: The opposing team has the option of taking the result of the play, and the ball is dead, the batter is out, and without warning, is ejected from the game. Base runners may not advance. The bat will be confiscated, given to, and held by the Tournament Director or UIC for an unlimited period of time.

Sec. 10 THE BASERUNNER IS OUT:

- a. When, in running to any base, he/she runs more than 3 feet from a direct line between that base and the next base in regular or reverse order to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder. When a play, such as a rundown, is made on a runner who has "rounded" a base, and that runner is outside of a direct line between bases, the runner establishes his/her baseline as a direct line between him/her and the next base in regular or reverse order.
- b. While off the base and the ball is in play, the ball touches him/her while in the hand of the fielder or by a batted ball.
- c. When, on a force out, a fielder tags him/her with the ball or tags the base/home plate.
- d. When the base runner fails to return to touch the base he/she previously occupied when play is resumed after suspension of play.
- e. When a base runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.
- f. When the base runner leaves his/her base to advance to another base, when the batter hits a fly ball, before the ball has been touched by a fielder, provided the ball is returned to a fielder and legally held on that base, or a fielder legally touches the base runner before he/she returns to his/her base and the fielder appeals to the umpire for a decision.
- g. When the base runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases, in regular or reverse order, and the ball is in play and legally held on that base; or the base runner is legally touched while off the base he/she missed.
- h. When the batter-runner over runs 1st base attempts to run to 2nd base and is legally touched while off the base. In the Women's 70+ and 75+

divisions only, when the batter/base-runner over runs any base, attempts to run to the next base, and is legally touched while off the base.

- i. In running or sliding for the scoring plate, he/she fails to touch scoring plate and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in his/her hand while touching home plate and appeals to the umpire for a decision.

EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec 10f-i, These are appeal plays, and the defensive team loses the privilege of putting the base runner out if the appeal is not made before the next legal or illegal pitch. If an appeal is made after the ball is dead and before the next pitch is made, the ball remains dead and runners may not advance. Any player may then make an appeal by stating which runner is being appealed; which base has been missed; or which base has been left too soon. Any player may also make an appeal while the ball is still alive, and before the ball becomes dead, by tagging the runner or the base being appealed, with the ball.

- j. When the base runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the opinion of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, and occurs before the base runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall be called out also.
- k. When a base runner is struck with a batted ball in fair territory while off base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher.
- l. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball, which an infielder has missed.
- m. When, with a base runner on 3rd base, the batter interferes with a play being made at home plate with less than 2 outs.
- n. When anyone, other than another base runner, physically assists a base runner while the ball is in play.
- o. When the coach near 3rd base runs in the direction of home plate, on or near the baseline, while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The base runner nearest to 3rd base shall be declared out.
- p. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect at or around a base, which a base runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. This includes the bat boy/girl or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.
- q. When any base runner runs the bases in reverse order to confuse the defensive team, or to make a farce of the game. This includes the batter-runner moving backward toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag.
- r. When a coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.
- s. When a runner, after being declared out or after scoring, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate, at the time of the interference, shall also be called out.

EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec 10j-s, the ball is dead and the base runner is out. Other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the illegal action.

- t. When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner remains on his feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player, the runner is declared out. The ball is dead and all runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision

unless Rule 8, Sec 10j or 10s applies.

NOTE: IF THE ACT IS DETERMINED TO BE FLAGRANT, THE OFFENDER SHALL BE EJECTED.

- u. When the base runner fails to keep contact with his/her base until a legally pitched ball has reached home plate. The ball is dead. "No Pitch" is declared and the base runner is called out.
- v. When he/she abandons a base, does not attempt to advance to the next base, and enters the team area or leaves the field of play. The base runner shall be called out immediately when he/she enters the team area or leaves the field of play.
- w. If hit by the ball which is an infield fly, when not in contact with the base. The ball is dead and the runner and the batter are both declared out. Other runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- x. When the base runner crosses the commitment line towards home then re-crosses the commitment line back towards 3rd base.
EFFECT: Rule 8, Sec. 10 (x) the runner will be declared out and the ball remains alive.
- y. When the base runner touches home plate instead of the scoring plate
- z. If a courtesy runner is on base when it is his turn to bat, an out will be declared on the base, and runner becomes the batter.

Sec. 11 BASERUNNER IS NOT OUT:

- a. When a base runner runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder who is attempting to field the ball in the baseline.
- b. When a base runner does not run in a direct line to the base, providing the fielder, in the direct line, does not have the ball in his/her possession.
- c. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, and the base runner comes into contact with the fielder who, in the umpires opinion was not entitled to field the ball.
- d. When a base runner is hit with a fair ball that has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the opinion of the umpire, no other fielder has a chance to make a play on the ball.
- e. When a base runner is touched with a ball not securely held by a fielder.
- f. When the defensive team does not appeal a play, until after the next pitch.
- g. When a batter-runner over runs 1st base and makes no attempt to advance. In the Women's 70+ and 75+ divisions only, when a batter/base-runner over runs **any** base, and makes no attempt to advance.
- h. When the base runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, he/she shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher pitches the ball. The umpire shall call no pitch.
- i. When a runner has started to advance before the umpire calls time.
- j. When a base runner holds his/her base until a fielder touches a fly ball, then attempts to advance.
- k. When a runner is in contact with the base, and is hit by a batted ground ball or fly ball in fair territory, the base runner is not out and the ball remains live.
- l. When a base runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper place. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

Reference: Rule 8 Sec 3c and Sec 6c.

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

Reference: Rule 7, Sec 10, for option given to the manager of the offensive team.

- n. When a runner is struck by a fair ball, after it is touched or touches any fielder, including the pitcher.
- o. When the defensive player makes an attempt to tag a runner that has crossed the Commitment Line or touches the scoring plate on a base runner advancing to score.

RULE 9 - DEAD BALL

Sec. 1 THE BALL IS DEAD AND Base runners may not advance:

- a. When the ball is batted illegally.
- b. When a batter steps from one box to another when the pitcher is ready to pitch.
- c. When a ball is pitched illegally.
EXCEPTION: If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the play stands.
- d. When the umpire declares "No Pitch".
- e. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batters person or clothing, whether or not the ball is struck at.
- f. When a foul ball is not caught.
- g. When a base runner is called out for leaving a base too soon on a pitched ball.
- h. When the offensive team causes interference.
- i. When the ball is outside the playing limits of the playing field. A ball is considered "out of play" when it touches the ground, person on the ground or object outside the playing area.
- j. When an accident to a runner prevents him/her from proceeding to a base he/she is awarded. A substitute or courtesy runner shall be permitted for the injured player.
- k. In case of interference with the batter or fielder,
- l. When the batter bunts or chops a pitched ball.
- m. When the umpire calls time out.
- n. When the umpire calls time out and an appeal play follows; the ball remains dead throughout the appeal.
- o. When any part of the batter's person is hit by his/her batted ball while he/she is in the batter's box.
- p. If a base runner runs the bases in reverse order,
- q. When a coach touches or physically helps a runner or when a coach near 3rd base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while the fielder is attempting to make a play, and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- r. When a base runner fails to keep contact with his/her base, until the pitched ball has reached home plate.
- s. When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he/she reaches 1st base.
- t. When a blocked ball is declared.
- u. When the batter enters the batter's box with, or uses, an illegal bat or

altered bat.

- v. When a caught fair ball, including a line drive, which can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped, with less than 2 outs, and with a runner on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or 1st, 2nd or 3rd bases.
- w. When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- x. When a foul ball is caught, after 2 strikes.
- y. When a batter is out of the batter's box, in fair territory, and is hit by his/her own batted ball.

Sec. 2 THE BALL IS IN PLAY:

- a. When the pitcher has the ball in the pitching position and the umpire has called Play "Ball".
- b. When the infield fly rule is enforced.
- c. When a thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
- d. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground after passing or touching an infielder.
- e. When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- f. When the base runners have reached the bases to which they are entitled.
- g. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- h. When no play is being made on an obstructed runner. The ball shall remain alive until the play is over.
- i. When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- j. When a base runner must return, in reverse order, while the ball is already in play.
- k. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out.
- l. When a base is dislodged while runners are running the bases.
- m. When a runner runs out of the base line in regular or reverse order to avoid a tag by a fielder.
- n. When a runner is forced or tagged out.
- o. When the umpire calls the base runner out for failure to return and touch the base after a suspension of play.
- p. When a ball strikes a groundskeeper, photographer, policeman etc. assigned to the game.
- q. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
- r. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the opinion of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play.
- s. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- t. When a thrown ball strikes a coach.
- u. When there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This would include an immediate live ball appeal before the umpire has called "time". Once the umpire has called "time" however, the ball will continue to be dead during a subsequent appeal play.
- v. When a foul ball is caught with less than 2 strikes on the batter and less than 2 outs.
- w. When the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
- x. When the base runner is in contact with 1st or 3rd base, and is standing in foul territory and is hit by the batted ball.

Sec. 3 THE BALL REMAINS ALIVE until the umpire grants “time”, which will be done only when the ball is held by a player in the infield and in the opinion of the umpire, all play has ceased.

RULE 10 – UMPIRES

Sec. 1 POWERS AND DUTIES OF UMPIRES: The umpires are representatives of the SPA organization for the particular game which they have been assigned. They are authorized and required to enforce the rules contained in this book. The umpires have the power to order a player, coach, captain or manager to do, or refrain from doing, any act that is necessary to enforce any of these rules; and to inflict any penalties prescribed.

- a. The plate umpire, after consulting with his/her partner, shall have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules. However, should this rule be used, the home plate umpire **MUST** notify the National Umpire-in Chief immediately. The Home Plate Umpire is to also notify the Tournament Director and the Tournament UIC.
- b. An umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e. player, coach, official scorer or sponsor).
- c. An umpire will wear an Official SPA umpiring uniform, consisting of the following:
 - Official SPA 3 button White Umpire Shirt w/SPA logo
(Any clothing worn under the official umpire shirt must be white. No logos or printing is allowed on this clothing.)
 - Navy Trousers/ Navy Socks
 - Navy Jacket or Pullover - Rain gear should be clear if possible
 - Navy Shorts with Solid White Crew Socks
(Trousers do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants or other pants or slacks that would not be considered dress trousers.)
 - Black Shoes / Shoes bearing the white logo, trademark or manufacturers name is legal.
 - Plate Brush & Clicker
 - Red cap w/official SPA Logo
 - Navy Ball Bag w/official SPA Logo
- d. Navy shorts, with belt loops, may be worn at all levels of SPA sanctioned play. All belts worn must be black or blue to match uniform. It is up to the discretion of the Tournament Director/UIC to allow umpires to wear shorts or slacks during all post-season play. It is recommended that umpires, in cooperation with the league/tournament Umpire-In-Chief, coordinate their uniforms to look alike, i.e. one wears shorts, both wear shorts. This is the same for slacks. When shorts are worn, then solid white crew socks, not ankle socks, must be worn properly. The official uniform as described above cannot be changed without approval of the National UIC or the Executive Director
 - Note:** No player or coach, during the course of any SPA sanctioned softball event may wear an official umpire’s uniform or any part thereof.
- e. The umpire should inspect the playing field, equipment, and clarify all ground rules to both teams and managers/coaches prior to the start of the game.

- f. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed anytime during playing time or suspension of play until the game is over.
- g. No umpire has the authority to set aside or question decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his/her respective duties.
- h. An umpire may consult with his/her partners at any time; however, the final decision shall rest with the umpire whose authority it is to make the decision and who requested the opinion of the other umpires.
- i. The plate and base umpires shall have equal authority to:
 - 1. Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon.
 - 2. Call "time" for suspension of play.
 - 3. Remove a player, manager, coach or other team member from the game for violation of the rules.

NOTE: Unless appealed, the plate umpire shall not call a player out for having failed to touch a base, leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, batting out of order or making an attempt to go to 2nd base after reaching 1st base.
- j. At no time will an umpire enforce a rule which is to the benefit of a team offending the rule.
- k. Any time a stoppage of play occurs due to injuries, protests, rules interpretations, or for other extended time periods, the home plate umpire must notify either the Tournament Director or the UIC at the time of the stoppage of the circumstances. Tournament Director and UIC must subsequently collaborate to review the circumstances surrounding the event.

Sec. 2 THE PLATE UMPIRE:

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

Sec. 3 THE BASE UMPIRE:

- a. Shall take a position(s) on the playing field to be in the most advantageous position to make a call. At the beginning of each inning they should start out 10-15 feet behind first base in foul territory.
- b. Shall assist the plate umpire in every way, to enforce the rules of the game.
- c. Can call an Infield Fly.
- d. If the base umpire is hit by a fair batted ball, the ball remains live and in play.

Sec. 4 CHANGING OF UMPIRE: Umpires cannot be changed during a game by the consent of the opposing teams, unless injury or illness incapacitates an umpire. EXCEPTION: Unless they are removed by the Tournament Director, Tournament UIC, by approval of the National Umpire-in-Chief, or Executive Director, for failure to perform their assigned duties as prescribed by this rule book and any additional special rule requirements.

Sec. 5 UMPIRES JUDGEMENT: There shall be no appeal of any call by an umpire on the grounds that he/she was not correct in his/her decision that a batted ball was fair or foul, a base runner was out or safe, a pitched ball was a ball or a strike, or any other play involving accuracy of a call. Any argument is grounds for a player or coach to be ejected from the game. No decision of an umpire shall be reversed, except when he/she is convinced it is in violation of a rule. If the manager, captain or either team does not seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question, shall, if in doubt, confer with his/her associates before taking any action. But under no circumstances shall any player or person, other than the manager or captain of either team, have any legal right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules. Under no circumstances should any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by his/her associates; nor shall any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of his/her associates, unless asked to do so by his/her associate.

Sec. 6 SUSPENSION OF PLAY:

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

EXCEPT: To prevent confusion and to promote safety

- e. When, in the opinion of the umpire, all play is apparently completed, and the ball is in the possession of a player in the infield, umpire shall call "Time".
- f. In the case of any injury to a player or coach, the Umpire may suspend play immediately.

Sec. 7 VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES:

- a. Players, managers, coaches or other team members shall not make disparaging or insulting remarks to, or about any opposing players, officials or spectators; or commit other acts that could be considered inappropriate conduct.
- b. The penalty for violations of Sec a, by a team member(s) is prompt removal of the offender from the game and must leave the grounds within 3 minutes. A warning will be issued to the manager or coach. For second offense in the same game, the team member(s) and the manager or coach is removed from the game and must leave the grounds within 3

minutes. Failure to do so will warrant a forfeiture of the game, and the team member(s), manager, and/or coach may be suspended for the remainder of the tournament. The SPA National Headquarters will suspend an ejected player(s), manager, coach, or team member(s) for any additional flagrant or un-sportsman act for a period of 1 year from all SPA events.

- c. **Players ejected other than for violations of Sec a, must immediately leave the playing field and dugout area, and may not participate further in the game in any way.**
- d. There shall be no more than two coaches for each team, to give words of assistance and direction to the members of the team, while at bat. One coach shall be stationed near 1st base and the other near 3rd base. Each coach must remain in the coach's box.
- e. Any player or coach that leaves his/her position on the field, including the dugout, to argue balls and strikes, will be subject to ejection.

RULE 11 – PROTESTS

Sec. 1 PROTESTS SHALL NOT be allowed or considered if they are based solely upon a decision involving an opinion of an umpire. Examples of a protest, which will not be considered, are:

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

SEC. 2 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY PROTEST

- a. All play ceases until the protest is resolved. A cash protest fee of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) per player must be paid immediately at the time of the protest, and prior to the end of the game being protested. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee shall be returned.
- b. Player Eligibility will be determined by a Player Eligibility Committee appointed by the SPA Executive Director. NOTE: The tournament director/coordinator or tournament UIC may inspect the SPA player card and picture I.D. (i.e. Drivers License) at anytime. Play ceases until the protest is resolved.
- c. When Player eligibility protest found invalid, game stands as played.
- d. When protests for eligibility are upheld, the offending team shall forfeit the game.

SEC. 3 BAT LEGALITY PROTEST: See Rule 3, Sec. 1e

SEC. 4 ALL OTHER PROTESTS:

- a. The Notification of intent to protest for rules interpretations must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch.
- b. For all Protest, the manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire will then notify the Tournament Director, the Tournament UIC, scorekeeper, and the opposing manager.
- c. The Tournament Director or UIC will contact a protest committee appointed by the SPA Executive Director for a final decision. NOTE: The tournament director/coordinator or tournament UIC may talk to any player, spectator, umpire, director, or other individual that it deems necessary to reach a correct decision. Play ceases until the protest is resolved.
- d. It is the umpire's responsibility to record the surrounding conditions to aid in the correct determination of the issue. (i.e. inning, outs, names of players involved, runners on base.
- e. If the protest is found invalid and the game stands as played
- f. When a protest is allowed for misinterpretation of a playing rule, the game is replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made, with the corrected decision.
- g. Decisions rendered by the Protest Committee are final.

SEC. 5 If a **written protest** is requested by the UIC and Tournament Director, it must be submitted by the protesting team Manager, and should contain the following information:

- a. The date time and place of the game,
- b. The names of the umpires and scorekeeper,
- c. The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision.
- d. All essential facts involved in the matter protested.

SEC. 6 DECISION made on a protested game must result in one of the following:

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

SOFTBALL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Player Eligibility

The calendar year will determine the age and eligibility of the player.

Senior competition shall begin at the age of fifty (50).

All players must be a minimum of fifty years old (50) during the calendar year to be eligible to play in the Senior's program and register with the S.P.A.

Master's competition shall begin at the age of thirty-five.

Player Registration

All players participating in an SPA Senior event must be registered with the association, and must submit the following:

- a. A completed and signed SPA National Player Registration application.
- b. Copy of a valid Birth Certificate or a Government issued document, (a valid military discharge, DD214) or passport with a date of birth, location of birth, city, county, state.
- c. Copy of a resident valid Driver's License to verify bordering states rule.
- d. A high quality color photo of yourself (1" wide by 1 1/4" high)
- e. Registration Fee - check, cashier's check, or money order made payable to SPA

Form available on www.softballspa.com

"PLAYERS PLEASE CHECK YOUR CARD FOR THE EXPIRATION DATE"

If a Senior player has failed to respond to SPA National Headquarters request for updating their player card, they will be responsible for an additional \$25 reinstatement fee.

Registration Applications are available from the S.P.A. National Headquarters

S.P.A. National Headquarters

P.O. Box 1307

Mustang, OK 73064

(405) 376-7034 – office

(405) 376-7035 - fax

or online at www.softballspa.com

Team Registration Fee

All teams that participate in a S.P.A. sanctioned event are required to be registered with the S.P.A. National Headquarters prior to participating in the event. The fee is \$30 per calendar year. A team adding more than two (2) new players from the age group above or any new players from the team's own age group

must disband and re-register with SPA. That team must then re-qualify to be eligible for National play. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the S.P.A. Executive Director. S.P.A. will issue your team a National Registration card. This card will need to be shown at all S.P.A. sanctioned events.

Team Classification

The S.P.A. reserves the right to classify or reclassify a team at any time, including the National Championship. S.P.A. reserves the right to issue an invitation to a team for the **National** Championships, based upon that classification and teams conduct. Teams are classified based upon their overall offensive and defensive strength and skills.

Teams may request reclassification by writing or via e-mail to the SPA website after participating in three (3) qualifying events. There is a specific form that will need to be filled out and submitted. The request must have supporting information, i.e. team scores, teams played, tournament location and affiliation with a written reason and detailed explanation of why the classification should be changed. The decision of the SPA National Classification Committee is final. The SPA participates in cooperating with the National Senior Softball Ratings Committee. Reclassifications request will be reviewed May 15, June 15, July 15, and August 15 of each year.

All teams will start the season classified as AAA (Excluding Major Plus and Major Teams). No requests for reclassification will be accepted after August 1st. No team will be reclassified down after August 15th.

A team wanting to play AA must play a minimum of three (3) qualifying tournaments before they will be considered eligible for AA classification. All exceptions to this rule must be approved by the SPA National Headquarters.

All teams that won a 2009 SPA National Championship in the Major, AAA, or AA classification, that had six (6) or more teams (eight (8) or more teams if Co-Champions), are required to move up a division for the entire 2010 season. If a team had five (5) or less teams in their division, a team may enter an appeal after playing three (3) tournaments in the 2010 season.

Note: If your team divides and you have six (6) or more players, from the Official National Championship Roster, on your roster you are required to move up a division for the 2010 season. None of the above teams will be reclassified. No exceptions.

Impact Player List

Players declared as "Impact Players" by way of the Official SPA Impact Players list (as published on the SPA web site - <http://www.softballspa.com>) will be limited to play in the Major Plus and Major classifications only, and will no longer be eligible to play in the AAA or AA programs.

In the Seniors Program, no more than two (2) "Impact Players" will be allowed on a given Major team's roster. Major Plus team rosters are allowed unlimited "Impact Players."

In the Master's Program "Impact Players" may participate only in the Major classification, and are not eligible for play in the AAA classification. Master's Program Major team rosters are allowed unlimited "Impact Players."

Impact Players will automatically be removed from the Impact Players List when they reach their 70th birthday. Prior to turning age 70, Impact Players will only be removed from the list upon submission of the SPA Impact Player Appeal form, and then only with the concurrence of the Impact Players Committee and the SPA Executive Director.

Team Roster

Geographic Guidelines: Except in the, Master's Major, and Women's Programs, teams may only select players from their state and the bordering states. The Home State of a team will be determined by where the majority of the players reside.

Men's Major Plus teams may select two (2) players from that team's geographic area, defined as East or West of the Mississippi river.

Master's Major and Women's Program teams may select players without geographic restriction.

(Master's AAA Program teams must follow the geographic guidelines as stated above).

All players are required to carefully read and sign the official team roster before playing their first game in an S.P.A. sanctioned event.

Frozen Roster: A player is frozen to a team roster as soon as they participate for that team in an S.P.A. sanctioned event. Once a player is frozen to a roster they may only make one (1) move to an unqualified team during the current season and they cannot return to their original team. Players that are going to play in the same age division are required to play at the same or higher classification level.

Roster Releases: A player is required to fill out an official S.P.A. Players Release form prior to participating with another team in an S.P.A. sanctioned event. This form must be sent (Mail, Fax, or E-mailed) to the team manager and the S.P.A. National Headquarters. This form must be received in the S.P. A. Headquarters prior to the player participating in another S.P.A. sanctioned event.

A released player may only play in the classification he was released from or higher.

Roster Additions: A team may add a maximum of two (2) players to their roster after their first S.P.A. invitational/qualifier tournament. These players must come from a higher age group, no more than one higher classification and must not change the team's classification. Deadline: These players must be added to the roster thirty days prior to their specific National Championship entry deadline. The S.P.A. Executive Director or S.P.A. National Headquarters must approve any exceptions to this policy.

Example: A 60 year old team may add two (2) sixty-five or over players to their roster.

A team desiring to add more than two (2) new players from a higher age division must re-register with SPA to include submission of a new roster to the SPA National office and re-qualify for National Tournament play. All roster additions must participate in at least one tournament with the team with which they are being added to re-qualify that team.

Qualified teams adding new players from their same age divisions must re-register with SPA to include submission of a new roster to the SPA National office and re-qualify for National tournament play.

Roster additions must be submitted to the National SPA Headquarters seven (7) days prior to the player's participation, or 30 days prior the National Championship Tournaments, whichever is earlier.

PLAYING IN TWO DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Except Women's programs, a player may play in two different age groups on any given weekend including **National Tournaments** for which he is eligible at the same level of classification or at the next lower level of classification on the younger team. **Example:** A 65+ player playing on a 65+ Senior Major team may also play on a 60+ Senior Major or 60+ AAA team. However, if the 65+ Senior player is playing on a 60+ Senior Major team then he would not be eligible to also play on a 65+ AAA team. For Equalizer see Rule 5 Sec (23)

Player Participation Rules

All Senior SPA Players will be required to show their National Player Registration card and in the men's program their driver's license, prior to participating in any SPA event.

A player on a Major Plus roster will only be allowed to play for a Major Plus, or Major team.

A player on a Master's Program Major roster will only be allowed to play for a Major team.

A player may not participate in more than two age divisions (one age division in the Women's program) during any S.P.A. sanctioned event.

There may only be two (2) players from an upper age division team playing on a lower age division team in any S.P.A. sanctioned event on the same weekend.

When player "wrist bands" or other check-in registration identifiers are employed, players must properly wear and display the bands/identifiers during all play. Players found to be in violation of the "wrist-band" rule will be immediately removed from the game until they obtain and properly display a valid band/identifier. Play will not be suspended to accommodate the offending player, and if he/she is a batter/base runner, an out will be recorded.

All exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Tournament Director, UIC, or the SPA Executive Director.

Snowbird Rule

Any player wanting to apply for Snowbird Status must fill out an "OFFICIAL SPA" application and have it approved. The following rules will apply for all snowbirds:

- a. All applicants must reside for a period of a minimum of three (3) consecutive and complete months.
- b. All applicants will be validated and location and residency will be checked by an SPA representative.
- c. Owning property is not the only requirement for Snowbird Status. Residing in the property for the required length of time is mandatory.
- d. Leasing property is acceptable but the same residency requirements must be met.
- e. Applicant must declare what team they will play for.
- f. Applicant must provide the following information: snowbird address, snowbird phone number,
- g. Three (3) months of residency, current Player card number, Age/Classification/Division.
- h. The team manager's name, address, and phone number.
- i. All applications submitted for Snowbird Status must include a \$15 processing fee.

Team Participation Rules

Except in the Master's Program, a team is required to participate in an S.P.A. Invitational tournament to be eligible to advance to the National Championships as follows:

- AA and AAA teams in the 50+ through 70+ age groups must play in two (2) SPA Qualifiers to be eligible.
- MAJOR teams in the 50+ thru 70+ age group must play in one (1) SPA qualifier to be eligible.
- Master's Program, Senior Program MAJOR PLUS and 75+ and 80+ age group teams are not required to qualify

A team that enters an S.P.A. sanctioned event must play in all pool play or round robins games to be eligible to advance and play in the championship tournament bracket. Penalty: Any failure to do so will result in the team being eliminated from the tournament. The S.P.A. tournament director or the S.P.A. Executive Director must approve exceptions to this rule.

Women's 65+ Age Division Rosters

In the Women's 65+ age division, teams may have a maximum of two (2) player(s) age 64.

Women's 70+ Age Division Rosters

In the Women's 70+ age division, teams may have a maximum of two (2) player(s) age 69, and one (1) player age 68.

75+ Age Division Rosters

In the Men's 75+ age divisions, teams may have a maximum of five (5) player(s) that are 74 years of age.

In the Women's 75+ age divisions, teams may have a maximum of three (3) player(s) 73 – 74 years of age.

Players on Men's 75+ Major Plus, Major and AAA rosters must be from their specific area of the country based upon being East or West of the Mississippi.

Example: A team from Georgia may only select players that reside in the states that are East of the Mississippi river.

Men's 75+ AA teams may only select players from their state and bordering states.

Men's 80+ Division Roster

In the Men's 80+ age division, teams may have a maximum of seven (7) players that are younger than 80. No more than 3 of these players may be 78. The remaining players under this rule must be 79.

Players on Men's 80+ Division rosters may be from any area of the country.

The S.P.A. Executive Director must approve any exceptions to these rules.

S.P.A. Tournament Guidelines

WEATHER DELAY POLICY:

When issues arise around field availability, due to inclement weather (ie. Rain, temperature, etc.) or other circumstances beyond our control, the following S.P.A. policies will be implemented as required by the Tournament Director.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS OPTIONS

- A Time limit of 50 minutes may be enforced.
Once the time limit has expired, the teams will then complete that inning and 1 more.
- All games may be started with the strike count of 1 ball and 1 strike.
A time limit of 50 minutes may be enforced.
Once the time limit has expired, the teams will then complete that inning and 1 more.
- All games may be started with the count of 3 balls and 2 strikes. (1 Pitch)
A time limit of 50 minutes may be enforced.
Once the time limit has expired, the teams will then complete that inning and 1 more.
- Tournament **bracket or pool play format change**. (may include a change to single elimination)
- Suspension or cancellation of the event.

The following tournament guidelines are to be used when hosting an S.P.A. sanctioned event:

- All S.P.A. playing rules will be enforced
- All S.P.A. Policies and Procedures will be enforced.
- All teams are required to be S.P.A. registered
- All players must have a current S.P.A. player card
- S.P.A. recommends the use of two umpires in all SPA sanctioned play, however, one (1) umpire may be used in all pool play games based on umpire availabilities. Two (2) umpires will be used for all bracket games.
- Whenever possible SPA umpires should be used
- Scorekeepers for each game
- Softballs, Men, 12" inch, maximum COR .44 and a maximum 375 compression, Women, 11" inch, maximum COR .47 and a maximum 500 Compression
- Bats, all bats used must be stamped with a BPF 1.21 or less, except for wooden.
- **Unapproved Bats for 2011: Titanium Bats. Original Gray Miken, Lady Virus**
- Awards Package
 - All-Tournament Awards
 - MVP - Champion Team
 - Best Defensive - Finalist Team
 - All-Star Team (A minimum of 10 selections per age division)
- Player Maintenance - Container of ice water and cups in each dugout will be provided. First aid items will be available.
- S.P.A. tournament sanction FEE of \$25 per team for sanction fee, \$10 per umpire insurance fee, and \$10 per team with \$300 minimum if a Tournament Director is provided by SPA. These fees will be sent to the S.P.A. Headquarters along with the following tournament information:
 - Tournament standings
 - Team scores in both pool play and double elimination tournament, or any other formats.
 - Team Rosters
 - Player Exception Forms and any Exception fees.

All administrative forms and information and fees are due in the S.P.A. National office **within ten days** of conclusion of the tournament. **Note: this information must be sent Express Mail, Second Day Air, or Overnight to allow tracking.** This will enable us to update our web site. This tournament information, (i.e. Team standings and game scores are passed onto the National Classification Board for the use of classifying teams nationally.

The S.P.A. Executive Director or Tournament Director must approve any exceptions to these rules.

NORTH AMERICAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tournament Format

S.P.A. will use the following format for its National Championships:

Men's Major and Major Plus (50+, 55+, and 60+): (2) games in pool play and a Double Elimination tournament.

All other Age Divisions: (3) games in pool play and a Double Elimination Tournament

Seeding Process: The following guidelines will be used for the determination of the seeding process. This process can be used for any SPA event.

Win - loss record

Head to head results (**applies when all teams play one another**)

Runs allowed

Run differential

Total runs scored

Flip of a coin

North American National Championship Awards Policy

The following awards policies have been established by the S.P.A.:

- A. Individual awards will only be given to players on the roster who are in attendance at the SPA North American National Championship.
- B. Teams winning the SPA North American National Championship will be given the option of receiving a Championship watch, jacket, or a partial payment towards a championship ring.

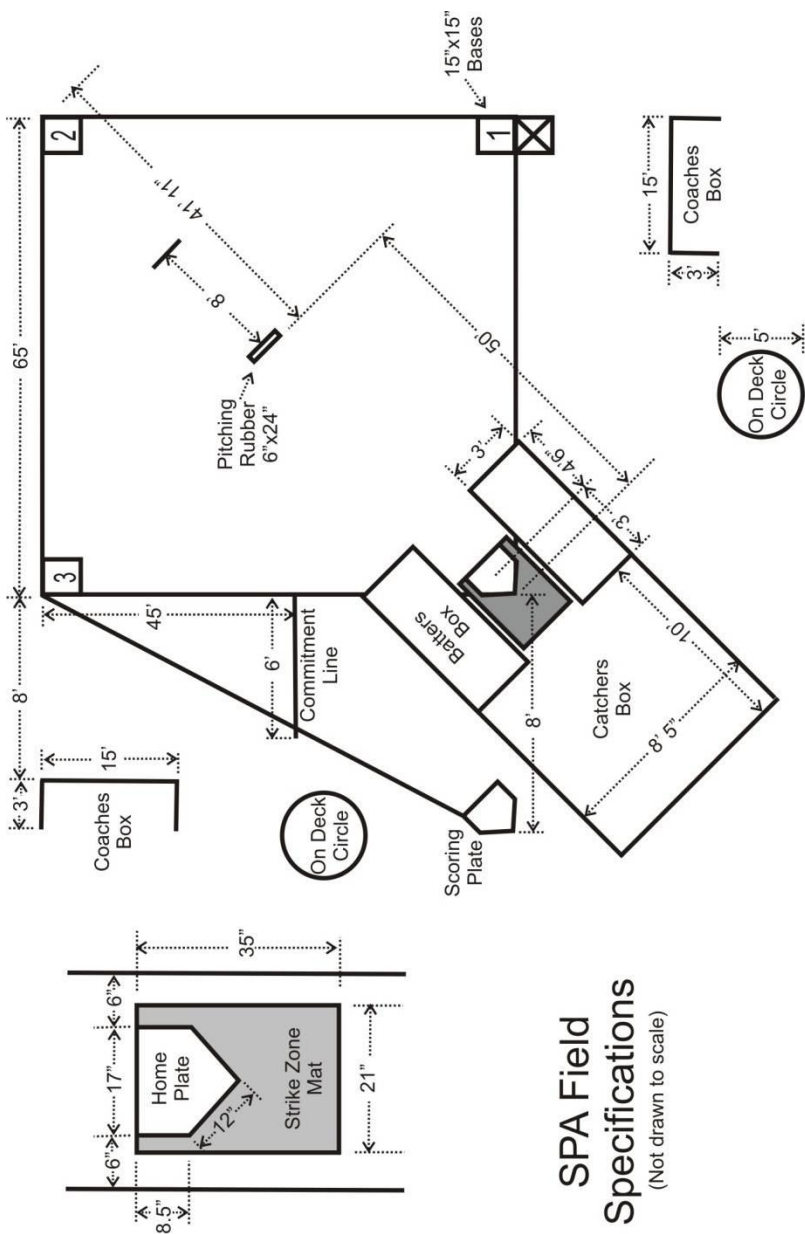
NOTE: Championship awards request form submitted no later than 15 days after the completion of the National Tournament. After the allotted 15 days has expired, players on the championship team may order the above awards at their own expense.

Entry Fee Refund Policy

No entry fee refunds will be given after the specific entry fee deadline for any SPA National Championships.

Financial Responsibility Policy

S.P.A. and its Directors are not responsible for any expenses incurred by a team, player, or players as a result making arrangements (Hotel, airplane flights, etc.) to attend a S.P.A. sanctioned event. All participants are solely responsible for any and all expenses incurred as a result of attending or making arrangements to attend a S.P.A. event.



ACTS OF DISBARMENT OR SUSPENSION

Any team, player, manager/coach, umpire, director, or any other person, whose conduct on or off the field would be detrimental to SPA, will be dealt with immediately. SPA expects all managers/coaches, players, and team representatives to act in a manner where sportsmanship is always practiced. The SPA also expects team coaches or officials to ensure that all tournaments in which they participate are sanctioned. SPA, through its Directors and National Headquarters, shall have and reserve the right to withdraw membership at any time to include during the playing of any sanctioned tournament.

The SPA will not tolerate and may eject, suspend, or disbar any coach, player, team official, umpire, director, or any other person for any of the following unsportsmanlike actions or behaviors:

- The display of abusive behavior in any form during the playing of a SPA event.

- Using words or actions that will incite demonstrations.

- Using any form of intimidation tactics (profanity, baiting, ridicule, etc.) in the taunting of any team and its members.

- The use of any behavior that is not conducive to fair play.

- Fighting and/or leaving the bench area when a fight has broken out.

- Any type of physical attack on a player, umpire, or tournament official during the playing of the game, or at any time following the game.

If upon further investigation by the SPA Director, any of the above unsportsmanlike conduct is warranted to be severe enough in nature, the SPA has the right to issue additional penalties. Such penalties may involve the suspension of further play of the team and/or its members, or disbarment of the guilty parties from the SPA.

Further Acts of Disbarment or Suspension:

- Any team, coach, player, umpire or director, participating in a tournament in which cash prizes are offered. The following shall define cash prizes. "Cash prize" refers to prizes in cash or in merchandise that can be easily converted into cash, that is awarded to players or teams based on the first standings or a tournament or other competition. A player or team may receive reimbursement, if that reimbursement is not dependent on the standings of the event.

- Any player or team receiving money or financial benefits in consideration of participation in softball competition.

- Any player or team receiving money directly or indirectly by capitalizing on athletic ability or athletic prominence in softball such as allowing the use of a player's name to advertise, recommend, or otherwise promote the sale of softball goods, or by accepting compensation for the use of such softball goods.

- Any team or player knowingly competing with or against ineligible or

suspended players.

Any team, player, coach, umpire, director, or any other person participating in, or permitting a fraud to be perpetrated.

Any person, official or director who refuses to submit collected or owed funds that are due the SPA.

Any player, coach, or team that competes under an assumed name.

Any person or persons submitting a bad check/credit card charge to the SPA or any of its tournament hosts.

Any team failing to show up after entering an SPA Qualifying National Tournament, or North American Championship unless reasonable advance notice has been given. Reasonable advance notice, in most cases, will be the tournament entry deadline or fifteen (15) days prior to the start of the tournament.

Any person purposely using false information to damage the reputation, image, or credibility of the SPA or its Officials.

Any SPA officer, Director, or persons representing the SPA, that does not adhere to the Policies or Procedures of the SPA.

Any SPA officer, Director, or persons representing SPA, that fail to submit fees and/or information due the SPA, in a timely manner.

Any participant, team, or other party who threatens in writing, through legal council or otherwise to take legal action against the SPA, files a legal action against the SPA, or has a lawyer contact the SPA verbally regarding a dispute will automatically be suspended from all SPA activities until the legal discussions are concluded to the satisfaction of the SPA.

Additionally, if legal action is filed against SPA or an SPA affiliated person, park, or facility by an participant, team, coach, or any related person, the person filing the action, the person's team and each of its members may be suspended from any and all SPA events until the legal actions are resolved to the satisfaction of SPA.

Any person suspended for any reason, will not be allowed to participate in any capacity within the SPA, until such suspension has been lifted. This would include any Sanctioned event or any event being conducted under the administration of the SPA.

Outline of the SPA Appeal Procedure:

Step 1: Any team or player affected by the occurrence or condition that would cause an appeal may present that appeal in writing to the appropriate Director within fifteen (15) days after the occurrence or condition. If not filed within fifteen (15) days, the applicant will lose their right to appeal.

Step 2: If the appealing team/person does not receive a satisfactory resolution to the first appeal, the applicant may indicate dissatisfaction with the first appeal. The applicant may then submit the proper forms within fifteen (15) days to the appropriate SPA Official duly appointed by the Executive Director to conduct the second step of the appeal process. If not filed within fifteen (15) days, the applicant loses their right to appeal.

Step 3: If the appealing team/person does not receive a satisfactory resolution to the second appeal, the applicant may indicate dissatisfaction with the second appeal. The applicant may submit within ten (10) days the proper forms to the Executive Director of the SPA, unless there has been a mutual agreement for an extension. The applicant may submit this final appeal in writing or may request that a hearing be conducted. All parties involved may have legal counsel and any witnesses at this hearing. The applicant must pay all financial responsibilities for such legal counsel or witnesses.

NOTE: The Executive Director must render a decision within twenty (20) days pertaining to the final appeal. The decision rendered by the Executive Director is final and under no circumstances will another appeal be granted.

DISCLAIMER: THE SOFTBALL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (SPA), ITS OFFICIALS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS, LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND AFFILIATES ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INJURY (INCLUDING DEATH) OR LOSS OF PROPERTY TO ANY PERSON SUFFERED WHILE WATCHING , PLAYING, PRACTICING, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY AT OR INVOLVED IN THE GAME OF SOFTBALL FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER, INCLUDING ORDINARY NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF SPA OR ITS AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, THE OWNERS AND LESSORS OF THE PREMISES AND ALL OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED AND INCLUDING THE RECKLESS CONDUCT OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS. SPA EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ANY AND ALL LIABILITY FOR ANY INJURY OR PROPERTY LOSS RELATED IN ANY WAY TO THE GAME OF SOFTBALL. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED HEREIN IS PROVIDED "AS-IS" AND WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND. SPA MAKES NO WARRANTY THAT THE INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE WILL PREVENT INJURIES OR ELIMINATE THE RISK OF INJURIES. THE INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE IS BELIEVED TO BE ACCURATE BUT IS NOT WARRANTED TO BE ACCURATE. This warning, disclosure and disclaimer is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by applicable laws. If any portion is held invalid the remainder of the warning, disclosure and disclaimer will continue in full legal force and effect.

SPA TEAM INSURANCE

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE - \$2,000,000 & ACCIDENT MEDICAL EXPENSE - \$10,000

IMPORTANT POLICY FEATURES

- Team insurance covers the play and practice of amateur activities in the game of softball, including organized/sanctioned activities of any association.
- Coverage begins the day after postmark on the envelope containing your application and check, and all coverage expires on 12-31-2010
- General Liability coverage is provided for players, coaches, managers, sponsors, and volunteers of the team.
- Accident Medical Coverage is secondary to any other collectible insurance; primary, if no other insurance is in force.
- The entire premium is earned when enrollment is accepted. There are no cancellation refunds.

ACCIDENT MEDICAL EXPENSE BENEFIT - \$10,000 LIMIT

The plan pays for covered medical expenses incurred within one year after an accident, to a maximum of \$10,000 per accident for each insured person. Treatment must begin within 30 days of an accident.

Coverage is provided on a secondary basis, and \$500 deductible applies. If other collectible insurance is in force, it must be used as primary. If no other coverage is in force, this coverage becomes primary.

Some of the policy exclusions are:

- Losses resulting from being intoxicated or under the influence of a narcotic unless administered on the advice of a doctor;
- Injuries sustained while traveling other than as specially stated in the policy;
- The cost of eyeglasses, contact lenses or examinations for either;
- The cost of dental treatment, except as specifically provided for injuries to sound, natural teeth.

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE - \$2,000,000 LIMIT

Lawsuits against players, coaches, sponsors, volunteers and league officials are increasing at an alarming rate. Play with peace of mind knowing you will be covered by one of the best sports liability programs available.

Liability coverage is provided during:

- **Games**
- **Award Banquets**
- **Fundraisers**
- **Team Meetings**
- **Practices**

This general liability policy provides \$2,000,000 coverage for bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury claims for which you are legally obligated.

Protection also for: Lawsuits brought by Athletic Participants and Product Liability

Some of the policy exclusions are: the use of motor vehicles, watercraft and aircraft, injury to an employee, medical malpractice, and liquor liability.

This is a brief description of the coverage. Full disclosure of definitions, exclusions and limitations for this coverage can be found in the master policy. If any discrepancy exists between this description and the policy, the policy will prevail.

Contact: Chappell Insurance Agency - 1-800-447-6797