



Softball



Rule Book

FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION

FREEDOM SPORTS



SOFTBALL RULE BOOK

Revised January 03, 2022

Freedom Sports Association

www.FreedomSoftball.com

www.myrtlebeachwinterworlds.com

Freedom@FSASlowpitch.com

Wilmington, North Carolina 28412

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in Any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher.

Copyright © 2022
Freedom Sports Association
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION

SOFTBALL RULES



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

General Guidelines	Pg. 4
Definitions	Pg. 4
Classification and Roster Guidelines	Pg. 9
Field of Play	Pg. 13
Equipment	Pg. 14
The Game	Pg. 15
The Players and Substitutions	Pg. 20
Base Running	Pg. 22
Pitching	Pg. 27
Batting	Pg. 28
Dead Ball in Play	Pg. 30
Appeals	Pg. 32
Protest	Pg. 33
Conduct	Pg. 34
Umpire	Pg. 35
Women's Program	Pg. 36
Coed Program	Pg. 37
Master's Program	Pg. 40
Military Program	Pg. 42
World Tournament	Pg. 44
Covid 19 Guidelines	Pg. 45

FREEDOM ADULT SLOWPITCH

GENERAL GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of coaches, managers, sponsors and players to know the FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION Rules and By-Laws. Ignorance of these Rules and By-Laws is not grounds for protest or appeal. Softball is a contact sport, played with Composite, Aluminum, Wood and other approved materials in design of approved bats. The game of softball can be a dangerous sport to participate in. Playing the game of softball, the player(s) participating in the game of softball assume for themselves the risk of serious injury or possible death. By agreeing to be placed on a FREEDOM SPORTS roster, the participants understand these risks.

Freedom Sports Association has implemented a ZERO alcohol tolerance rule at all parks that don't serve alcohol. Players and/or other participants caught consuming alcohol at the fields will be asked to leave the facility. If player argues they will be subject to suspension. We will no longer tolerate drinking and the resulting bad behavior. Players' will never be permitted to consume alcohol in dugout areas during game play at a park that even does allow alcohol.

RULE INTERPRETATIONS

Freedom Sports Association: Any rule that is not outlined or has grey area in this rule book, said director of that event will be able to make an active decision and ruling on that situation. This will cover all scenario's that aren't completely outlined and/or are missing from the rule book

General slow-pitch terms used in FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION softball play, such as batter, runner, fielder, infield fly, etc., will be generally the same as defined by all major softball associations. If an interpretation is unable to be made by the Tournament Director and/or the UIC of a specific event, then a team may protest to the Area Director for a decision. Should there be no Area Director binding, any Freedom Director or Umpire who has any interest in an appeal (whether player, coach, sponsor, etc.) may have any involvement on the final ruling.

DEFINITIONS

ALTERED BAT – A bat is considered to be altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or a non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat. Using any process that exerts more pressure on a bat than is experienced during normal play, such as rolling or shaving a bat, is considered altering a bat. Bats with cracks will be considered illegal and are not deemed allowed in play and can result in a suspension if player is caught using one. **EFFECT:** *Player will be warned and if caught using the cracked bat again player will be immediately ejected and suspended for (1) year from any FSA event*

APPEAL PLAY - A play in which an umpire cannot make a ruling until requested by a team manager, coach, or player. Appeal must be made to the umpire making the call. Appeal must be made ANYTIME before any of the following:

- A. Next legal pitch
 - B. The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory
 - C. The Officials have left the field of play.
- **Judgment calls cannot be appealed.

BALL - Official "FREEDOM SPORTS" stamped 44-400 or 44-425 core-compression softballs must be used in all Freedom play. The ball must be optic yellow and 12 inches in circumference. **NOTE:** *Use of a non-approved ball may be protested by the opposing team (once batter has taken the batter's box.) and an out will be declared. If protested before the batter has taken the batter's box, the ball is to be replaced with the correct ball and no penalty will be enforced. Opposing team may also protest a ball that has been put in play. EFFECT: All runners shall return to last base occupied, and player hitting the ball is out. NOTE: Freedom Sports optic yellow ball is the only ball legal for game play.*

BATS – The official bat shall be round in cross section, straight in length and measure 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. Its weight shall be at least 25 ounces but not more than 38 ounces. The bat must be stamped USSSA approved with either of old or new USSSA stamps. All bats that meet the USSSA Bat Testing Standard of BPF 1.20 (New Thumbprint or Old Logo, 220 and 240) will be allowed in Freedom Sports Slow Pitch Play. **EXCEPTION:** We do not allow bats that only have the ASA stamp, DeMarini Aftermath, DeMarini Flipper, senior bats (See Masters Rulebook for exceptions) or ANY bat that does not allowing testing in the normal Freedom Sports testing methods in the field of play of any FSA events. The bat shall have a safety grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter’s swing. The safety grip shall be not less than 6 inches long, nor extend more than 15 inches from the small end, or handle end, of the bat. The bat must be smooth, round and free from deep dents, cracks, flat spots, rivets or other such hazardous defects. **NOTE:** Any bat with such defects will be deemed unsafe and removed from game play. Graphics, including BPF markings, must be permanent and cannot be decals or any other method that can be easily removed or added to the bat. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF testing procedure. The bat shall be made of aluminum, composite, fiberglass, wood, or other such materials approved by FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION.

BASE PATH –The imaginary direct line, as well as (3) feet to either side of the direct line, between a base and a runner’s position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag.

BLOCKED BALL - Any ball hitting a player or offensive equipment other than the on-deck batter or batter’s equipment, shall be declared an out. Baserunner closest to home plate shall be the out and all other runners must return to their last held base. A Blocked Ball is **NOT** declared when the ball strikes a base coach, or an Official as an Official is deemed part of the playing field.

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

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

CATCH - A catch is a legally caught ball that occurs when a fielder secures a batted or thrown ball with his/her hand or glove. If the ball is merely held in the fielder’s arms or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder’s body or clothing, the catch is not complete until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder’s hand or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, immediately after he/she contacts the ball, collides with another player, 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. Exclusion applies only when fielder drops the ball during the transfer in an attempt to make another play.

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. **EFFECT:** *A chopped ball is a legal swing in FSA.*

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

COUNT BALLS/STRIKES - Batters start with a 1 and 1 count and no courtesy foul. Any Qualifier, State & National Tournaments shall be 1 and 1 count and no courtesy foul as well.

DISLODGED EQUIPMENT – When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with his or her cap, glove or any part of his or her uniform while detached from its proper place.

EFFECT: *The ball is dead, and the runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. If the illegal act was made on a fair ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded, and a four (4) base error will be scored on the play with the home run not counting against the team’s home run total.*

DEAD BALL - 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”.

DELAYED DEAD BALL - An infraction, signaled by the umpire, in which the ball remains live until all play has been completed and the umpire calls time.

DIVISIONS OF PLAY –The different divisions of play offered are: **A** – (12hr), **B** – (8hr), **C** – (5hr), **D** - (4hr), **E** (3hr), **Rec** - (1hr). Coed Divisions as followed **Open Coed** (8hr), **D Coed** (5hr), **E Coed** (3hr), **Rec Coed** (1hr). **Military Divisions: Military Upper** (12HR) and **Military Lower** (6HR). **Women’s Divisions: Upper Women** - (B or Higher) (Unlimited Homeruns), **Lower Women** - (C) (3hr) and **REC Women** - (D and Below) (1hr). **Master’s Divisions: 35+, 40+, 50+ - (Age Based Only) (5 Homeruns)**. Women may participate in every division of play with no minimums (except as specified in Coed Rules) or maximums per team. Meaning, they can play in the Men’s division, Coed divisions or Women’s division, they like any other player must be 18 yrs. of age and have registered, signed the online waivers and purchased a Freedom Sports Slow Pitch Players Card.

DROPPED BALL – Any ball touched by a fielder not ruled to be a "catch" **EFFECT: Any ball ruled to be dropped intentionally should be declared a dead ball. This includes a ball that's natural path has been altered by a fielder. A fielder may allow a ball to drop intentionally without penalty as long as the fielder does not make contact with the ball. If the fielder does make contact with the ball all runners return to their last held base and batter should be declared out. A warning shall be given to defensive player, a second infraction deeming said defensive player ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.**

EQUALIZER: When combining divisions, the lower of the teams will be given an equalizer when playing against a team above their said division. Equalizer will be 5 runs or 11 fielders unless the Director feel it’s necessary to award the teams both 5 runs & 11 fielders.

EXTRA INNINGS - When a regulation game ends in a tie, OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired and the score is tied. **EFFECT: The Tie Breaker rule will be used. At the beginning of each team's at-bat the last batted out from the previous inning (the player that last completed a turn at bat) or the FREEDOM RUNNER is placed on 2nd base. Extra innings shall be 1-Pitch, no courtesy foul. It is not sudden death. Each team has an opportunity to bat each inning. No additional homeruns are given, but teams may still hit any remaining homeruns per Division rules. Per Division rules with “One Up” option the home team cannot go “One Up” in the bottom of any extra inning. The game ends when one team is ahead at the end of an inning.**

FAKE TAG - When a fielder not receiving a throw fakes the catching motion. **EFFECT: Fake tags are prohibited. Fake tags shall result in each base runner being awarded one additional base. Player shall also be warned. A second offense shall result in player being ejected from the game.**

FAIR BALL - A batted ball that:

1. Is on or over fair territory when stopped in the infield or is bounding toward the outfield. Contact with any Base shall be a fair ball.
2. First makes contact in fair territory beyond 1B or 3B including the foul line.
3. Passes over the outfield fence while over fair territory or hits the foul poles.
4. Hits an outfield fence on or between the foul poles.

FIELDING GLOVE - all fielders must wear a Glove. Players have the FREEDOM to use ANY glove (not greater than 15 fifteen inches) at any position, at any time.

FOUL BALL - Any batted ball that stops or settles in foul territory without first being touched in fair territory, or which is first touched in foul territory, or that first touches some out-of-play object or area in foul territory, or that first touches foul ground beyond first and third base, or which does not conform to the requirements that would make it a fair ball. **EFFECT: Baserunners have the freedom to make an attempt to advance on any caught ball, this includes third strike caught ball.**

FOUL TIP - A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batters head, to the catcher's hands or glove, and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike. The batter is out if it is the third strike. A foul tip is also a Dead Ball.

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

FORFEIT - Score of a forfeit game shall be deemed a 7-0 win for the non-forfeiting team in such case as the tournament director is unable to obtain an alternate team to play in the forfeiting team's place. Forfeit games are considered a guaranteed game. Teams winning a forfeit game will not be given additional guaranteed games as a result.

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL – Batters have the freedom to hit the ball when at least one portion of his/her foot is making contact with the batter's box and the other foot is not touching the ground completely outside of the batter's box or is making any contact with home plate. Penalty shall be a dead ball out.

ILLEGAL PLAYER - Player playing without a Freedom Sports Players Card, playing under a false name, playing in a class he/she doesn't belong and playing with too many drop downs on the team. Tournament Director or UIC may declare a player illegal immediately without having a team protest, regardless of their roster status. **EFFECT:** Penalty shall result in immediate Forfeit of game if protested properly. Players playing without a current Freedom Sports Players Card will face possible suspension based on the Freedom Sports Players Card Rule. The Tournament Director may remove any player without penalty when there is no protest as deemed necessary based on classification rules (too many drop downs, playing in a class he/she doesn't belong or incorrect age for division). If the Tournament Director removes a player that player will be treated as being ejected and cannot be substituted for once deemed removed.

INELIGIBLE PLAYER - Illegal use of re-entry rule, or an unreported substitute or base runner shall be deemed an Ineligible Player. This ineligible player will be deemed an ejection and will be an out in the lineup. This player cannot be substituted for per the ejection rule once deemed ineligible.

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 two 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 signal and 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 live, and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after a fielder touches the ball.*

INTERFERENCE – The act of an offensive player, which impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play. Vocal interference may be deemed interference. An example would be a baserunner attempting to intentionally block a thrown ball. That said player would automatically be out.

INNING - An inning is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate between offense/defense and there are three outs for each team. A new inning begins when the third out of the bottom of an inning is recorded.

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 fielder's cap, hat, pocket, protector or any other part of his/her uniform. It must be caught and firmly held with the hand, hands or glove.

LINEUP – Teams must have a minimum of 8 players to be eligible to begin a game. However, teams have the FREEDOM to submit a lineup with only 8 or 9 players, and without penalty. Late arriving players are only eligible to fill in the 9th and/or 10th positions without penalty if they were not listed on the lineup card and the 9th and 10th spot were blank spots on the card. A team can prelist up to 12 players, but outs will be declared in the vacant spots until the player arrives for game. If missing players were listed, then the vacant spots in the lineup shall be declared outs until such time as the late arriving players can take their turn in the lineup. A pitcher has the FREEDOM to intentionally walk a batter to get to outs. Teams may bat up to 12 players in the lineup with 10 players on defense. All teams that are playing in Freedom Sports events have the right to see the official lineup card before the game after each team has filled it out.

OBSTRUCTION – When a defensive team member hinders or impedes a batter’s attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is fielding a batted ball, executing a play or catching a thrown ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

NOTE: *Catcher obstruction is called when the catcher obstructs the batter who is attempting to hit or swing at a pitch. Prior to the pitch, catcher obstruction does not apply, a dead ball shall be called and allow the batter to reset themselves. Effect: If obstruction occurs, the base runner will be awarded the next base, and deemed safe if he is tagged out in the process of an obstruction. The player must be in the process of advancing and must occupy the next bag to be awarded that base.*

ONE UP HR - A team will be allowed to go Up one home run once the opposing team has reach their homerun limit with No maximum on the Hr limits. If a team hits a homerun before the opposing team hits the limit the penalty will be based on Division rules. The Home team may not go up in the bottom of the last timed inning or 7th inning to win the game or any extra innings. **Example:** 3-1 up – team hits 3 hr and other team only has 2 the team with 3hrs cannot hit another hr till the team with two get to 3 at that point either team can go one up on the hrs

OVERTHROW – 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 or is blocked.

PROTEST - When a team disputes an umpire’s interpretation of a playing rule, a player’s eligibility or equipment. Protests must be declared to the Plate Umpire before the next pitch following the dispute. No protest will be allowed following the game. Tournament Officials and UIC will rule on all protests and their decision will be final

RETOUCH - The act of a runner in returning to touch a base as legally required.

STEALING - The act of a runner attempting to advance during the pitch or after the pitch has reached the plate is considered to be the act of stealing. **NOTE:** *Baserunners may attempt to advance upon the ball hitting the ground anywhere before or beyond the plate, once it crosses home plate or makes contact with plate, whichever occurs first. It is a Dead ball, if batter swings, makes a false swing attempt or fouls off the ball. The ball is live, and stealing can occur if it hits home plate.*

STRIKE ZONE - The strike zone is only that part, or any part of the area, over home plate that is lower than the top of the batter’s back shoulder, or higher than the bottom of his front knee of a batter in a normal batting stance, adjacent to home plate. This position is assumed whether the batter is standing in such stance or not. The ball must cross in this zone and the pitch must be from 4 feet minimum to 10 feet maximum from the ground.

TIME – The term used by the umpire to order suspension of play. **NOTE:** *Most divisions in Freedom Sports allow stealing. the ball will be deemed live until the umpire/official signals time and or calls the play dead and stopped. Time is to never be assumed.*

THREE FOOT LINE - Is a line parallel to, and three feet from the base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and 1st base. The batter-baserunner is declared out when he/she runs outside the three-foot line, and in the judgment of the umpire interferes, intentionally or unintentionally, with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or interfering with a thrown ball.

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

RULE 1. CLASSIFICATIONS AND ROSTER GUIDELINES

Sec. 1. TEAM CLASSIFICATION: Teams shall be classified at the highest level that the majority of their players have played with Freedom Sports Association. With the exception of the REC Divisions, teams are allowed three players from a class higher but **NO** players from two or more classes higher. The REC Divisions are **NOT** allowed any players from any level higher than the REC Division. Freedom reserves the right to bump or drop a team at any time at their sole discretion. All rosters must be submitted online and approved for Freedom Sports play. All players must be added to the online roster to be eligible to play with that team and cannot be on two rosters of the same division.

Sec. 2. PLAYER CLASSIFICATION: Player classification is based upon a player's **highest** playing history within the past two years in any association relevant to that player. Example: Playing year of 2022 FSA will use the current year (2022) and history from 2021 and 2020 to determine class. Freedom Sports Association will determine a Player's Classification for Freedom Sport's Association play. The classification will be the player's current status. Player classification will be searchable at www.freedomsoftball.com and visible on the Freedom Sports Association Player's Card page. Player classification in other associations will not necessitate the player's classification in Freedom Sports Association. The online system will not allow a player that is two or more classes higher than the team's classification to be added to their online roster. The online system will also not allow a player that is one class higher than the team's classification to be added to the online roster that currently has their allotted three drop down players and will not allow any player that is **NOT** a REC classification to be added to a REC roster. Players **MUST** purchase their Freedom Sports Association Player's Card to be able to be classified by the State and/or National Offices. Players **MUST** be Classified before they will be allowed to be added to an online roster. **NOTE:** *All Players are responsible for their own classification and knowing what class they are ranked within the Freedom Sports Association "player classification" system.*

Sec. 3. PLAYER ELIGILITY: Players must be at least 18 years of age to play FREEDOM sanctioned adult softball tournaments and leagues. All players **MUST** register, purchase their own Freedom Sports Slow Pitch Players Card and agree to the liability waiver online to be allowed to participate in any FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION league or event. Players may purchase a full season card and/or optional special event cards at a discounted rate. Proof of current Freedom Sports Association Player's cards may be requested, required to be presented and/or randomly requested by the Tournament Director at any time. **Player cards and photo IDs** will be required to be shown to the Director upon request. Players are **REQUIRED** to have both their photo ID and Freedom Sports Slow Pitch Player's Card on them at all times during play. If a player is caught playing without having purchased a Freedom Sports Slow Pitch Players Card the game will be an immediate forfeit. **NOTE:** *Teams playing without updating their online roster means the roster is not completed and shall be cause for immediate forfeit of the team. Players are not eligible for play in FREEDOM until they purchase their Freedom Sports Association Player's Card and have been classified by a Freedom State Director, Regional Director, National Office or the Freedom Classification Board.*

- a. Player Classification will be designated by the State or National Office and will be kept updated in the system at the National website www.freedomsoftball.com.
- b. Player Classification will be initially decided at your State Director Level. If the player is from a State that does not have FSA or a State Director, player classification will be decided at the National Level. Once the initial player classification level is assigned, the player must submit for Re-Classification at the National Level by the Re-Classification Committee.
- c. Upon Registration and Payment, players must digitally sign the online waiver to compete in Freedom Sports Slow pitch events.
- d. Proof of Current Freedom Sports Association Player Card may be requested to validate a player's participation in the events they are attending.
- e. Upon successful completion of the online registration and payment the players will receive a QR Code and their specific Freedom Sports Association Players Card Page and Players Card Number. Players Cards may be searched at www.freedomsoftball.com. The Player's Card number will be necessary to be added to an online roster and to be classified in the system.
- f. Players will need to enter their specific email address when registering. Coaches may not use their own for Player Registration. The player's email address will be the Player's "key" to access their online Player Card Page, make changes (i.e. address, etc.), request re-classification and have access to any future online features.
- g. Players **MUST** be released from any other team of the same Division to be added to an online roster. Players and coaches may be removed or added to any roster throughout the year as long as the player is the correct classification for the roster they are being added, have an valid Freedom Sports Association Player's Card and be in good standing with Freedom Sports Association (i.e. not suspended).
- h. All Players **MUST** have one of the following items listed below, no exceptions will be allowed. If you are unable to obtain a driver's license and do NOT have another form of acceptable ID listed below, you **MUST** apply for a State Photo ID to be able to provide upon request.
 - a. Valid State Driver's License that is Legible and with Driver Photo
 - b. Valid State Photo ID if you aren't able to legally Drive
 - c. Valid Passport with Photo
 - d. Valid Government ID (Civilian CAC Card Allowed) with Photo

Sec. 4. REQUIRED TEAM/PLAYER MOVE UP POLICY: All Divisions (except Coed) teams, which finish in 1st World Series will be required to move up to the next higher classification. If a team is bumped in other associations and accepts the bump that said team will also be bumped in Freedom Sports. If a team is bumped and does not accept the Bump by not playing said division the team will not be bumped in FSA unless they were already being bumped with FSA. Teams required to move up will not be allowed to re-class as a team or individual players the following calendar year. **NOTE:** *The roster that you play with in other associations will also be used to determine bumped players. If a team does not have an online roster with the association that they are bumped in the last roster on file with FSA or Other associations will be used to determine the players bumped. This does not apply to co-ed divisions as those are determined by the current year player classification.*

Sec. 5. TEAM ROSTER GUIDELINES - FREEDOM rosters will be limited to 20 players per sanctioning year of which every player must be included on an online roster at www.FreedomSoftball.com. If a team changes its name during said calendar year, they are required to pay a new sanction fee. All players being added must be approved by the State Director or Regional Director and cannot have played with a team of more than one level higher class per the “Drop Down Rule”. In addition:

A. With the exception of the REC Divisions teams can have (3) Drop downs from one division higher than they currently play. **Example:** An E division team can have (3) drop downs from the D. Division. **The REC Division** of Men, Women and Coed **MAY NOT have any Drop Players.** Any Player that was previously considered a “Drop Player” on a REC Roster will be classified by the State and National Offices accordingly and will NOT be “Grandfathered” in. Player Classification will be searchable at www.freedomsoftball.com and on individual FSA Players Cards at the same location.

B. Players may not drop down more than one level. **Example:** Players from C division can **NOT** play down in the E division.

C. If the coach/manager releases a player from the roster he/she is free to be added back to that roster at any time at the coach’s discretion.

D. If a player plays up a level from his/her original class in a National event (Winter Worlds, Winter Nationals, States, NIT or Worlds) that player will be locked into the higher class. **EXCEPTION:** *A team can have a player play up with prior approval from the National Office or State Director with NO penalty as long as player will not be a permanent player*

E. All teams that were not moved up during the previous year and had drop down players, those players who were drop downs will still count as drop downs once again. Those players have a right to appeal to be dropped a class through the Freedom Sports Association National Website www.freedomsoftball.com.

F. Once a team has completed its first game during a FREEDOM tournament, that team will not be permitted to add additional players to its roster without special permission and for good cause. The Tournament Director must grant this permission.

G. Teams may always play up a division but can never play lower than their current approved division of play.

H. Any team with more drop-down players than allowed by current classification rules will constitute that team to be considered the level above. **Example:** An E team with (4) **D Players** will be a **D** team. An **D** with (4) or more **C Players** will be a **C team**.

I. There will be no rotating of drop-down players. This means a team cannot bring more than 3 drop downs per team. All players playing must be on the roster, and when more than allowed drop downs are on the roster, the team will be considered a classification level higher or applicable to who they carry on their roster. The team will also be forfeited out of the game or tournament with illegal rosters.

Sec. 6. LOCKED ROSTERS – Rosters will only be locked if a team owes money or is suspended for Freedom Sports game play.

Sec. 7. FREEDOM ROSTER (PLAYER CARD REGISTRATION/WAIVER FORM) Any team caught playing in a FREEDOM Tournament or league without entering their roster online at www.freedomsoftball.com, with any players that have not registered for their individual Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Cards and getting classified by the State or National Offices, playing with players that are not on their online roster will forfeit any game that began without roster being completed online. Also:

- A. Any player caught playing using an invalid Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card or another person's Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card, will receive a (1) year suspension from the date of said occurrence for the first offense, second offense would result in a 5-year suspension and third offense will result in a lifetime ban from Freedom Sports. A Valid Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card is defined as Purchased, maintained yearly and in good standing (i.e., Not Suspended)
- B. Any player caught playing **without** a Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card will be ejected from the game as an illegal player and follow the ejection rules. Player's will have 5 minutes to present their Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card **and** photo ID once requested. If a player is ejected from a game for playing without their Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card, they can present their Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card and have it scanned by the Tournament Director to play future games in the tournament/league. Player's that cannot produce their Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card will not be allowed play in any Freedom Sports event.
- C. The registration form for the Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player's Card includes a Waiver and Release of Liability. The voluntary player's signature on the Waiver and Release of Liability Form constitutes their acceptance of the waiver and releases Freedom Sports Association and its affiliates of any liability.
- D. Players **MUST** purchase a Freedom Sports Association Player's Card at www.fsaslowpitch.com to be added to any online roster. Player's may purchase a full season or special event card when available and sign the Waiver/Release of Liability. Players cannot be **OFFICIALLY** added to roster until they are approved for their proposed classification by the State or National Office and are deemed Non-Eligible until **officially** approved. Players Cards and status of classification may be searched at www.freedomsoftball.com.
- E. **Special Event** Freedom Sports Association Players Cards "**may**" be available for specific events. These cards are good for that event **only** and will "**expire**" once the event has passed regardless if player participates in the event or not.

Sec 8. PENALTY FOR TEAM REMOVAL FROM AN EVENT – If a team pulls out of a said tournament once game times are announced; the team will be required to pay full entry for that tournament. All tournament game times for regular events are posted no later than the Thursday before the event, on all larger events, game times may be released as early as Monday before the event. Please be aware of the penalty of pulling out of a tournament after schedule announcement. The team and all players will be suspended until the full amount has been paid for this penalty.

RULE 2. FIELD OF PLAY

Every effort will be made by each Freedom Director to obtain Softball Complexes with the official field dimensions. Each director will compensate any varied distances when possible.

Sec. 1. BASE PATHS. The primary distances for FREEDOM are 70' Base Paths.

Sec. 2. PITCHING PLATE. The pitching plate shall be 24 inches in length, white and made of rubber.

<u>DIVISIONS</u>	<u>PITCHING DISTANCE</u>
Adult Men's Slow Pitch	53ft
Adult Women's Slow Pitch	53ft
Adult Coed Slow Pitch	53ft
Adult Military Slow Pitch	53ft

Sec. 3. FENCE DISTANCES. The suggested fence distance for all divisions is 300ft. Distances may vary depending on park or complex.

Sec. 4. DOUBLE BASE. The double first base may be used. One portion of the base is white [which will be in fair territory and the other is orange or colored [which will be in foul territory].

A. Any batted ball hitting the white portion of a double first base bag will be called a fair ball. Any batted ball hitting the orange or colored portion of a double first base bag will be called a foul ball.

B. Whenever a play is being made by the defensive player at first base, the defensive player must use the white portion of a double first base bag and the batter-runner must use the orange or colored portion of a double first base bag. When a throw pulls the defensive player over the orange or colored part of the double base, the runner may use the white portion to avoid a collision. When this occurs, no penalty will be enforced on the runner. A base runner may be in contact with only the white bag when occupying/standing on base.

1. If a batter-runner touches the white portion of a double first base bag when a defensive player is making a play, the umpire will call the runner out, and a dead ball will be declared.

2. Interference and an out will be called on the batter- runner if that said batter- runner touches the white portion of a double first base bag and collides with the defensive player who is about to catch a thrown ball. This will also result in a dead ball being called and all other runners must return to their last occupied base.

This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base. This does not include:

- A.** Returning to the base after over running,
- B.** Running on a base hit to the outfield (runner may touch the orange or white part)
- C.** Re-tag to advance on a fly ball.

NOTE: *If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after safely securing first base and is not in contact with the white portion before the pitcher throws the next legal pitch. **EFFECT:** He/she is considered off the base and Umpire shall call a Dead Ball Out.*

Sec. 5. BATTER'S BOX. The batter's box shall be seven (7) feet in length and three (3) feet wide. The batter's box shall be six (6) inches from the plate and the front of the batter's box shall be four (4) feet from the center of the plate.

Sec.6. COACHES BOX. The coach's box is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to, and eight feet from, the foul lines extended from the bases toward home plate.

NOTE: If during the playing of any game the base distance, pitching distance or any other marked distance is found to be in error, the error should be corrected immediately (if possible), and the game should be continued. This is not a point to be protested.

RULE 3. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must conform to industry standards and must not be altered in any way or form.

Sec. 1. OFFICIAL BAT - The approved bat shall be not be more than 34 inches in length and at least 25 ounces but no more than 38 ounces in weight. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF testing procedure. The bat shall be made of aluminum, composite, fiberglass, or other such materials and shall meet FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION bat standards. The following will also apply:

Freedom shall reciprocate the approval of all bats on the current USSSA approved bat list new and old stamp. Senior bats are not allowed in Freedom in any division, even if they are on the USSSA approved bat list. No ASA only bats or the DeMarini Aftermath (Flipper) are allowed in the play of Freedom Sports or **ANY bat** that does not allow testing in the FSA method. Any bat not identifiable by the markings on the bat as an approved bat or with any visible cracks, shall be considered illegal. In addition:

A. KNOB CUFF: Players are free to use knob cuffs. Cuffs are not required to be taped over.

B. BARRELL: Any bat with a foreign substance such as spray glue, stick'em, pine tar or any other substance that may help the bat grip the ball will be removed from the game at the umpire's discretion and may not be used for the remainder of the tournament.

C. INSPECTION: During all FREEDOM play, any Umpire, UIC, or Director has the right to request the inspection of any bat or ball that is brought into the sports complex. If a bat is suspicious of being altered or player is unsure of bat's status, the player will have (3) three options:

1. Admit that the bat has been altered, give the bat up to be destroyed, and take an immediate 1-year suspension. Player must make that decision before leaving event.

2. Allow FSA to test the bat. If the bat fails compression testing, the bat will be sent to the manufacturer for a formal determination on why the bat failed the compression test. Should the bat be found to be altered, the player will receive a 5-year suspension. If the bat passes compression testing, the bat shall be returned immediately. Any refusal to allow FSA to test a bat shall result in an immediate 5-year suspension. Suspensions shall be binding on the person swinging the bat as well as the bat owner, if different.

3. If player chooses not to agree to inspection, the player will receive an immediate five-year suspension with no eligible appeal.

D. PUBLIC NOTICE: The user and/or owner's name of any bat found to be altered shall be posted on the FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION national website for the public to view.

E. BAT PROTEST FEE: For a protest fee of \$50.00, a team may protest an opposing team player's bat (or ball). If the bat is tested and fails compression testing, the fee shall be returned to person who protested. If bat or ball passes test, FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION shall retain the fee. The protest must be made before the umpire leaves the field of play at the completion of the game. Any team caught with an altered bat shall be forfeited from the tournament, placed last in the standings, and shall forfeit all points and prizes.

F. ALTERED BAT - A bat is considered to be altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or a non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat. Using any process that exerts more pressure on a bat than is experienced during normal play, such as rolling or shaving a bat, is considered altering a bat. In the event a bat is suspected of being altered:

1. Freedom Sports Association Directors may at any time ask to inspect any bat that has been brought into the sanctioned Freedom event.

2. Any player can withhold the bat from inspection and accept a five-year suspension and must leave the sanctioned event. Second time offenders will accept a lifetime suspension from all Freedom sanctioned events.

3. If after a bat has been inspected by a director and deemed potentially altered, the owner may allow Freedom to send the bat for further testing to determine whether the bat has actually been altered. When a bat is sent for further testing, Freedom will allow that said player/owner the right to continue to participate in any Freedom sanctioned events. However, if a bat fails all testing and is determined to be altered, that said player/owner would be subject to a minimum of a one (1) year suspension to a max of a five (5) year suspension for first time offenders. Any second time offenders will be subject to a lifetime suspension from all Freedom Sports Association sanctioned events. Freedom's National Director's will determine all suspensions. **NOTE:** *Any bat determined to be altered will be retained by Freedom Sports and destroyed. Freedom Sports will not replace any destroyed altered bats.*

4. If any bat is determined not to be altered, the bat will be returned to the owner with no suspensions given.

Sec. 2. OFFICIAL BALL - The official ball of Freedom Sports Association will be spherical in design, shall have raised seams and be smooth in surface and be 11 or 12 inches in circumference. The center or core of the ball shall be of material approved by Freedom Sports and customarily used to make softballs. The cover shall be made of horsehide, cowhide, or other material approved by Freedom Sports and shall be cemented to the core. The official ball shall be stitched with customarily used material (nylon, cotton, linen) or a material approved by Freedom Sports. The official ball cover color shall be optic yellow. The ball must be stamped with the Freedom Sports Logo or have "Freedom Sports" clearly marked on it and no other logo ball shall be used unless approved by the National office. The maximum compression/core for Freedom Sports Adult Slow Pitch balls shall be 44-425. **NOTE:** *The men's division will use the twelve (12) inch softball. The women's division will use the eleven (11) inch softball. Co-Ed Divisions will use both balls with the men hitting the (12) inch softball and the women hitting the (11) inch softball.*

ALTERED BALL *if a ball has been put in a cooler, frozen, re-stitched or stamped the team will be forfeited from the game and possibly suspended from Freedom Sports play.*

Sec 3. GLOVES/MITTS. All defensive players must wear a glove in the field. Gloves must be no more than 15 inches in length, uniform in color (no optic yellow), be made of leather or other approved material and contains no circles or writing on the outside that will give the appearance of a ball. Any glove not meeting these requirements will be considered illegal and removed from the game of play.

Sec 4. FOOTWEAR. All individuals in the field of play must wear shoes. No sandals will be allowed. Shoes must be made of leather, canvas, nylon, plastic or other similar material. Cleats must have either modeled plastic (soft or hard cleats) or have a smooth surface. Metal cleats or spikes are prohibited.

NOTE: *If an offensive player is found to be wearing metal cleats or spikes during the game, an out will be declared for that player. And runners must return to their previously occupied base. The umpire will request the player to change into proper footwear. If a player is unable to or unwilling to change, said player will be ejected from game.*

Sec. 5. UNIFORMS. All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color with same team name/logo at National/State tournaments including individual numbers. The team must start the game with the uniforms on and finish the game with uniforms on. **Effect:** *Penalty shall be that the team with matching Jerseys shall be awarded the option of home/visitor.* Players must also play the entire game with the same jersey when receiving the award for the uniform rule. Players may NOT share jerseys to achieve uniform rule compliance. **NOTE:** *If both teams are in compliance, or if both teams are not in compliance, then a flip of a coin will determine the home and visiting team. A player shall not play the game shirtless or shoe less. EXCEPTION: The undefeated team will automatically be the home team in the Championship game, the IF game will revert back to a coin flip or uniform rule.*

NON-COMFORMING PENALTY: *If a team is awarded Home Team as a result of the Uniform Rule and later a player removes their required jersey, a player without a matching jersey officially enters the game either by substitution or as allotted if the team started with less than 10 defenders or by any other legal means and the team is no longer in compliance, the team will lose their right as the Home Team and the award will be given to their opponent, making their opponent the Home Team for the remainder of the game.*

Sec 6. OTHER MATERIALS. A Cast (hard or soft), worn by any player and judged dangerous by the umpire may not be worn during the game, by any coach coaching the bases or by any player. Any braces, splints or prosthesis (knee braces, elbow pads, sliding pads) can be worn as long as all metal areas are well protected or padded so that no hazardous material is visible or can come into contact with any other player. At any time, the umpire can deem any material unsafe or hazardous and must be removed from the game.

Sec 7. REMOVAL OF EQUIPMENT. All Freedom Sports Directors and Umpires have the right at any given time to inspect or remove equipment from a said game or complex. Any refusals of this will result in suspensions for teams and players. **NOTE:** *If a batted ball strikes a player in the Infield (grounder, line-drive, etc.), the umpire has the right to remove the bat and ball from the game for inspection, that said player does not need to leave the game for this action to take place.*

Sec 8. RADIOS. Radios are allowed in the dugout and at the park as long as the Umpire, Director, Park Staff or Opposing Team(s) do not feel the music is offensive or too loud. **NOTE:** *If it is a park rule that NO Radios can be brought in the park then that rule over rules the Freedom Sports Rule and Radios must not be brought in the park.* **ADDITIONALLY:** The lyrics of the music CANNOT contain language that is not allowed on the field by the participants for the same reasons. Therefore, no abusive, vulgar, offensive, indecent or distasteful language will be allowed in the music. Participants are required to maintain their own music, devices, etc. whether on the field of play or spectating.

RULE 4. THE GAME

Sec 1. HOME/AWAY. The choice of the first or last bat in the inning shall be decided by the toss of a coin unless otherwise stated in the rules of the organization under which the schedule of games is being played. If a team is not in compliance with the uniform rule, the opposing team has the choice of being the home or visiting team if they are in total uniform compliance. **EXCEPTION:** The undefeated team in the Championship game only will automatically get choice of home/away, the IF game will revert back a coin toss or uniform rule.

Sec 2. REGULATION GAME. A regulation game shall consist of seven (7) innings or when the time limit is reached. A regulation game officially begins when the defensive team has taken the field and the umpire indicates (verbally or physically) to "play ball". Any game played four and a half (4 1/2) or more innings shall be deemed **OFFICIAL**. A new inning starts if the 3rd out is recorded before the audible alarm of the timer. A Timer with both an audible alarm and a digital display are part of the Freedom Umpire's Official Uniform. **NOTE:** A game that is tied after the seven inning or when time expires and shall require additional innings shall be governed according to the rules of "Extra Innings". **NO** Time limits for all Nationals, NIT's, States, and Worlds. **NOTE:** *Under Certain Circumstances Time Limits will be used for National Events. Teams will be notified in Advance.*

Time Limits Per Division for Regular Tournaments:

Rec - 1HR - 55 Minutes per game
E - 3HR - 60 Minutes per game
D - 4HR - 65 Minutes per game
C - 5HR - 70 Minutes per game
B - 8HR - 75 Minutes per game
A - 12HR - 80 Minutes per game
Women's REC - 55 Minutes per game
Women's Lower - 60 Minutes per game
Women's Upper - 65 Minutes per game
Rec Coed - 55 Minutes per game
E Coed - 60 Minutes per game
D Coed - 60 Minutes per game
Open Coed - 65 Minutes per game
Masters (35+, 40+, 50+) - 75 Minutes per game

Sec.3. RUN RULE.

- A.** Play shall cease in each of the following divisions if the home team is winning at the completion of the following inning: Rec Division (1HR), E (3HR), D (4HR), Rec Co-Ed (1HR), E Co-Ed (3HR), D Co-Ed (5HR) and All Women's:
- 15 runs - after 3rd Inning
 - 12 runs - after 4th Inning
 - 10 runs - after 5th Inning
- B.** Play shall cease in each of the following divisions if the home team is winning at the completion of the following inning; A Division (12HR), B Division (8HR), C Division (5HR), Open Co-Ed (8HR) and All Master's Divisions:
- 20 runs - after 3rd Inning
 - 15 runs - after 4th Inning
 - 10 runs - after 5th Inning

NOTE: At the State Program level, a predetermined run rule may be adopted.

*Unless Home Team is leading by run rule during the bottom of the above innings of which game shall be declared complete upon the finish of the top half of the inning.

Sec 4. EXTRA INNINGS. Extra Innings shall be declared upon the completion of the 7th inning OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired, and the score tied. **EFFECT:** *Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat using the FREEDOM RUNNER OR LAST BATTED OUT from the previous inning (the player that last completed a turn at bat) being placed on second base. Team must let official know if they are using the Freedom runner at 2nd Base to start their half of the extra innings.* **NOTE:** *All Extra-inning games will be played in the one pitch format with NO extra foul.*

Sec 5. END OF GAME. The end of game shall be called when the team behind in score, records its 3rd out at the end of the seventh inning, when time has expired or in any extra inning. Also:

A. The winning team will be the team that scores the most runs when the “end of game” is called.

B. The recorded score at the end of a regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last completed inning or incomplete inning if the home team scores more runs than the away team in the incomplete inning.

C. The umpire is entitled to call a game at any time because of darkness, weather, or any other hazardous events.

Sec 6. Inclement Weather. FSA directors will do everything in their power to make sure their tournament can finish but if weather starts to be a problem the procedure will be as followed:

A. Director will try and finish with a one pitch format

B. If weather continues to be a problem and the event cannot continue, we will go to a coin flip. If the winner bracket game has been played and there is one team sitting undefeated waiting for the championship that team will be declared the winner of the event all other team will flip until all spots on the bracket have been decided. **NOTE:** *There is no set way for directors to do a coin flip*

C. Each director will exercise their best efforts to do what’s best for everyone at the event, most events a refund isn’t an option as fields are prepaid and umpires are paid for what they have done also.

Sec 7. FORFEIT GAME. Score of a forfeit game shall be deemed a 7-0 win for the non-forfeiting team in such case as the tournament director is unable to obtain an alternate team to play in the forfeiting team’s place. An umpire for one of the following reasons shall call a forfeit:

A. A team is late in appearing for a scheduled game. Director Discretion always

B. If a team refuses to play or continue play after 2 minutes once “play ball” has been announced.

C. If a team uses tactics to delay or shorten a game.

D. If a team willfully violates any of the rules after being warned by the umpire.

F. If a team can no longer field eight defensive players.

G. If a team (including fans, spectators or associated individuals to a team) or coach of a team threatens or attacks an umpire, any Freedom Sports Association personnel, or any other player/team.

H. If a player or coach refuses to leave a game after being ejected or remains in the field of play longer than 2 minutes.

Sec 8. A CALLED STRIKE. A batter shall be charged a strike when:

- A. A legally pitched ball enters the strike zone in the air and is not swung at.
- B. A batter swings at a pitched ball and misses.
- C. A ball is fouled off and not caught.
- D. A batter takes greater than fifteen (20) seconds to obtain proper position in the batter's box.

Sec 8. A CALLED BALL. A batter shall be charged a ball when:

- A. A pitched ball does not enter the strike zone and the batter does not swing.
- B. A pitcher pitches an illegal pitch not swung at or hit.

RULE 5. THE PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Sec 1. A team shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of twelve (12) players. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of ten (10) players shall play defense. A player can play anywhere in the field as long as it's in fair territory at the start of every pitch except the pitcher and the catcher who shall play in legal positions. **NOTE:** *The designated positions are: Pitcher, Catcher, First Baseman, Second Baseman, Third Baseman, Short Stop, Left Fielder, Left Center Fielder, Right Center Fielder, Right Fielder and Additional Hitters or Extra Players.*

Sec 2. LINEUP AND SUBSTITUTIONS. Lineup cards must be filled out and handed over to the home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. The lineup card shall contain first initial, last name and jersey number. The following governs the substitution of players:

- A. A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in the teams batting order.
- B. The coach or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time when the substitute enters. The umpire shall then report the change to the scorer and the other team. A substitute is not officially in the game until a pitch has been thrown or a play has been made.
- C. If a substitute player enters the game without reporting, and after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown, or after a play has been made, the use of an unreported substitute must be brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team. An out will be declared and opposing team shall lose said player as substitute for remainder of the game. An out will be given to his/her spot in the lineup for rest of game.
- D. If the coach or player in violation informs the umpire prior to the team bringing this violation to the attention of the umpire, there is no violation. All action prior to the discovery is legal.
- E. If a team is left with a vacant spot in their lineup due to a player being ejected, then an out will be declared when that vacant spot occurs in the batting order. A team may walk a batter in order for the vacant spot to occur and receive an automatic out.
- F. A substitute shall be reported to the official and will be officially declared in the game when:
 - a. The substitute steps into the batter's box and a pitch is made.
 - b. The substitutes steps onto the field into a fielding/defensive position and a pitch is made.
 - c. The substitute replaces a runner on a base and a pitch is made.

Sec 3. RE-ENTRY Any of the starting players, may be substituted and re-entered once, provided players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the line-up. The player and the substitutes may not be in the line-up at the same time. Once a substitute leaves the game and the starter re-enters the substitute is no longer allowed to re-enter the game. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest when brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing team and may be made any time during the game. The protest need not be made prior to the next pitch. **EFFECT:** *Both the manager and illegal player are ejected. All play that occurred while the illegal re-entry was in the game will stand.* **NOTE:** *If the re-entry violation also violates the unreported substitute ruling, those penalties would also be in effect.*

NOTE: *A starting player removed from the pitching position by the umpire and substituted for, can re-enter the game at another position, but cannot return to the pitching position.* **EFFECT:** *If an illegal pitcher returns to the pitching position and has thrown one pitch, he is ejected from the game.* **NOTE:** *This is not considered a re-entry violation, so the manager is not ejected.*

Sec 4. ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION. The opposing team must make an appeal to the umpire at any time during the game. An umpire cannot declare an illegal substitution violation until a player is officially in the game. As a result, any change can be corrected. An illegal substitution must be declared prior to:

- A. The next pitched ball for an offensive illegal substitution.

B. The next pitched ball or before the defensive team and umpire have left the field for an illegal defensive substitution. **NOTE:** *If an umpire declares an offensive illegal substitution violation, the player shall be declared out, ejected from the game and all other runners must return to previous occupied base. Any outs made during the play shall stand. If an umpire declares a defensive illegal substitution violation, the offensive team shall have the option to replay the pitch or let the play stand and the illegal player shall be ejected from the game.*

Sec 5. REMOVAL OF PLAYER. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup, regardless of cause, and there is no substitute available, an out shall be declared each time the vacant spot is due to bat. If the vacant spot is due to injury and there is no substitute available, the opposing coach shall have at their sole choice, the option to request that an out be declared each time the vacant spot is due to bat OR to allow the lineup to be compressed, thus removing the injured player permanently from the game and lineup and with no out being declared. **NOTE:** *If a player is ejected his/her spot in the lineup cannot be replaced and an out will be in place of their position in the batting order. If a team is batting more than 10 batters an extra hitter may take a position in the field so the team with the ejected player will still have 10 players on defense. A team cannot finish a game with less than 8 players so the coach shall have no decision should the opposing team only have 7 players remaining.*

RULE 6. BASE RUNNING

Sec 1. A base runner shall touch the bases in the order of first (1st) base, second (2nd) base, third (3rd) base and then home plate. **EXCEPTION:** *The batter-runner and all baserunners do not have to run the bases on a homerun in "Hit and Sit" play.*

Sec 2. Base stealing is permitted. A runner shall steal a base:

- A. After a pitched ball leaves the pitchers hand and hits the ground.
- B. After a pitched ball leaves the pitchers hand and crosses the plate
- C. After a Batter is awarded a base on balls since the ball is live until the batter touches 1st base or Stops Walking to 1st Base.

NOTE: *It is a Dead ball, if batter swings and misses, makes a false swing attempt or fouls off the ball.*

NOTE: *The ball is live, and stealing can occur if it hits home plate.*

Sec 3. Two base runners shall never occupy the same base. **EFFECT:** *The first legal base runner to occupy the base shall be called safe and the other base runner shall be called out.*

Sec 4. A runner must touch all awarded bases.

Sec 5. A dead ball shall be declared and each runner including the batter-runner shall be awarded:

A. One base when:

- 1. If less than two (2) outs, a defensive player catches a ball and then comes into contact with dead ball territory with both feet.
- 2. When any defensive player obstructs a batter or touches the bat in order to reach a pitched ball.
- 3. If a defensive player on a tag causes a ball to go into dead ball territory.

B. Two bases when:

- 1. A fair-batted ball bounces or goes underneath fence or over fence and becomes dead.
- 2. A defensive player throws, holds their glove/clothing/equipment in a manner not consistent with its normal use or kicks a mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a live pitched or thrown ball.
- 3. A defensive player intentionally throws a live ball into dead ball territory. **Note:** If two runners are between the same bases, the lead runner shall be awarded the two (2) bases and the second runner shall be awarded one (1) base.

C. Three bases when:

- 1. A defensive player throws, holds their glove/clothing/equipment in a manner not consistent with its normal use or kicks a mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a fair-batted ball.

D. Four bases when:

1. A fair-batted ball goes over and above the fence line in the air between the two (2) foul poles.
2. A fair-batted ball comes into contact in the air with a foul pole.
3. A defensive player throws, holds their glove/clothing/equipment in a manner not consistent with its normal use or kicks a mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a fair-batted ball and prevents the ball from going over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.
4. A spectator prevents a fair-batted ball from going over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.

Sec 6. When a thrown or batted ball comes into contact with any player not on deck or coaching the base, the ball shall be declared dead and interference shall be called. The umpire shall base on his/her judgment award or penalize teams in order to correct the interference.

Sec 7. A RUNNER IS CALLED OUT WHEN:

- A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs out of the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of the fielder.
- B. When the ball is in play and the runner is not in contact with a base, and is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder
- C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base
- D. When the runner fails to return to touch the base previously occupied or missed and is properly appealed.
- E. When the runner physically passes the lead runner before that runner has been put out. **EFFECT:** The ball is in play and the runner is out.
- F. When a base runner leaves the base to advance to the next base before a fly ball has been touched or touches some object, provided that if the ball is caught and legally held on the base left, or a fielder touches the runner with the ball before the runner returns to touch the original base.
- G. When the runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to that base and is properly appealed.
- H. When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second and is legally touched while off the base.
- I. When running or sliding for home plate, and the runner fails to touch it, makes no attempt to return to it, and runner leaves the field of play, if fielder properly appeals to the official for a declared out before the next pitch.
- J. When the runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw a ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the judgment of the official, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the immediate succeeding runner will also be called out. **NOTE:** *Umpires may also call a Runner out for Verbal Inference if in their judgment a runner interferes will with a defensive player trying to make a play by yelling as they approach the defensive player.*

- K.** When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with the base in fair territory, and the runner is struck prior to the ball passing an infielder, excluding the pitcher: **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead, runner is out for interference and the batter is awarded 1st base. All other runners may advance one base if they are pushed. For **Example:** Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on 3rd base while not in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on 3rd base is out.*
- L.** When a batter-runner fails to touch an intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order while the ball is in play, and the ball is legally held on the missed base, or the runner is touched with the ball while off the base.
- M.** When the base-runner jumps over a defensive player to avoid a tag **NOTE:** *IF the base runner's feet go over knee high, or if the defensive player is kneeling, and the base runner's feet go above the waist. The base-runner is out, and may be ejected from the game.*
- N.** When the runner intentionally kicks a ball, which an infielder has missed.
- O.** When anyone, physically assists the runner while the ball is in play. If the assistance occurs prior to a caught, batted fly ball, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul, a delayed dead ball call will be made, after which the runner will be declared out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead if not caught. If a fair ball, award the batter- runner one (1) base, and if a foul ball the batter will bat again. This includes a home run.*
- P.** When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the third base line while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The runner closest to home will be declared out.
- Q.** When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing thereby confusing the fielder and adding to the difficult of making the play. **NOTE:** *Members of the team include a batboy or any other people authorized to sit on the team's bench.*
- R.** When a coach intentionally interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.*
- S.** When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make play on another runner. **EFFECT:** *The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.*
- T.** When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains on their feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player with intent to cause harm. **EFFECT:** *The runner is out and ejected from the game, the ball is dead and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
- U.** When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until a pitched ball touches the ground, passes home plate or is batted. **NOTE:** *Standing on the safety or double bag at first is defined as standing off the bag. EFFECT:* *The ball is dead; the runner is out.*
- V.** When the runner abandons a base and enters the teams' dugout area or leaves the field of play.
- W.** If a base runner does not return to the base and be in contact with the base at the time the pitcher releases a legally pitched ball to the batter.

- X. If a player touches 1st base with the bat in their hand when the ball is in play. **NOTE:** *if they touch 1st base with a bat in their hands when an over the fence home run has been hit, it will not be deemed an out since home runs are "hit and sit".*
- Y. If a batter swings and hits a pitched ball that bounces before the plate, the ball will be a dead ball and the batter will be declared out.

Sec 8. THE RUNNER IS SAFE WHEN:

A. When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while in contact with the base. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead and the batter is awarded 1st base.*

B. If runner is still in contact with bag when struck the runner will be deemed safe and the batter is awarded a single, all other runners may advance one base if they are pushed. i.e. Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on first base while in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on third will remain at 3rd base.

C. When a fielder without the ball obstructs a runner by faking a tag. Each runner affected by the obstruction shall be awarded the base they would have reached per umpire's judgment.

Sec 9. FREEDOM RUNNER/ PINCH RUNNER. One "FREEDOM" Runner per team shall be designated before the game on the official lineup card. In Coed Divisions One "FREEDOM" Runner will be designated for male and one for female players. In Code Divisions the male Freedom Runner can only run for male players and the female Freedom Runner can only run for female players. A FREEDOM Runner can be any player on the roster, regardless if they are in the lineup or not. They are FREE to run an unlimited number of times per inning/game. **Note:** *If a team opts to designate a Freedom Runner that is in the official lineup, and the Freedom Runner is on base during their turn to bat, an out shall be declared and the Freedom Runner shall be removed from the base to take their turn at bat. A team does not have the option of substituting the Freedom Runner if he is in the lineup once he has occupied a base for a player or reached on hit of his/her own. If a team does not declare a Freedom Runner on the official lineup card, then they will forfeit their right to any courtesy runners unless an actual substitution has been made.*

Sec 10. OVERTHROWS- When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked. Awarded bases shall be determined by the position of the baserunners at the time of the infraction.

EFFECT: *For offensive equipment or an offensive player causing a blocked ball, the player closest to home plate is declared out, and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball becomes blocked.*

A. The ball is dead. In all cases where a thrown ball goes into the spectators' seats, goes over, through, or under any fence surrounding the playing field hits any person or object not engaged in the game, including bats lying near benches, goes into the player's 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 one (1) base.

B. When the first throw is made by an infielder, one (1) 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. When a ball bounces or rolls into the stands, over, under, or through a fence; bounces out of play unintentionally off a defensive player or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field.

EFFECT: *The ball is dead and all baserunners are awarded two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.*

Exception: *If ball bounds over the fence between the foul poles unintentionally off a defender or a defender's glove, a four base error is recorded and batter and all runners are awarded four bases. This will not count against a teams home run limit.*

F. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead immediately. All baserunners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all baserunners are awarded two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time he/she entered the dead ball area. **NOTE:** *A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have intentionally carried it there. A dead ball line is considered in play.*

Sec 11. If a runner coming from 3rd base to home grabs or is handed a bat that may be laying in the baseline and could cause harm to a runner No penalty will be issued if they touch home plate with it in their hand as long as there is NO play at the plate. **NOTE:** *If there is a play at the plate and the runner touched the plate with the bat in their hand the runner will automatically be declared out.*

RULE 7. PITCHING

Sec 1. Pitcher shall be given three (3) warm up pitches upon beginning of game and when a new pitcher comes into the game. One (1) shall be allowed at the beginning of each inning pitched after the first inning pitched.

Sec 2. Before the Pitcher's motion starts the pitcher shall take a position with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within six (6) feet behind the pitching plate and the ball in view of the umpire before delivering the pitch. His/her foot does not have to be in contact with the pitching plate upon release. The ball may be released up to six (6) feet behind the pitching plate. **Exception:** *When releasing the ball in front of the pitching rubber, the pitcher must have pivot foot in contact with pitching rubber.*

Sec 3. Pump fakes/juking will be permitted for a maximum time of (3) seconds. The time count starts when the pitcher makes his/her first motion. Any pump lasting longer than (3) seconds will be deemed a dead ball and a ball will be awarded to the batter.

Sec 4 The pitcher may not use the glove to pitch the ball, the ball must be pitched from a bare hand.

Sec 5. The ball must be pitched underhand at a slow rate of speed and must arc at least four (4) feet from the ground and may not rise higher than ten (10) feet from the ground. The speed of the pitch and height of the pitched ball are left entirely to the judgment of the umpire

Sec 6. The pitcher can deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball to the batter either on or off the pitching rubber
NOTE: *Ball is live and all runners have the Freedom to steal once the ball hits the ground.*

Sec 7. 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. **NOTE:** *It is not a charged conference when the coach or team representative enters the field of play and removes the pitcher from the pitching position. The player may return to the pitching position.*

Sec 8. The pitcher may NOT attempt to hit the batter with a pitched ball. In the umpire's discretion if the pitcher is attempting to hit the batter with the ball the Pitcher will first be warned and the second offense will be ejected from the game.

RULE 8. BATTING

Sec 1. Each batter shall bat in the order in which each player's name appears on the lineup card. **NOTE:** *The order shall be followed for the entire game except when substitutions have been made and have followed the substitution rules.*

Sec 2. If batter improperly bats out of order and is discovered by the offensive team prior to that batter completing a turn at bat, time may be called and the proper batter placed up to bat and assumes the improper batters pitch count. If discovered by the defensive team, an out will be declare for the batter and the next correct batter in the batting order will be up to bat.

Sec 3. When a player bats out of order and completes a turn at bat, an out shall be declared on appeal of the opposing team. All runners must return to their previously held base.

A. If a defensive team appeals to the umpire prior to the next pitch or before the defensive team leaving the field of play an improper batter, who has become a runner or has been put out, the umpire shall declare the proper batter out and all runners must return to previous occupied base prior to the pitch. Any outs made on the play stand.

B. If no appeal is made prior to the next pitch or if the defensive team has left the field at the end of the half inning, then the improper batter becomes the proper batter and that turn at bat becomes legal. The batting order shall then continue with the name of the player that follows that of the now legal improper batter.

Sec 4. A batter shall have twenty (20) seconds to step into proper position in the batter's box once the umpire states "play ball" or requests for a batter. **EFFECT:** *A strike shall be called.*

Sec 5. A batter shall have at least one portion of his/her foot making contact with the batter's box and the other foot is not touching the ground completely outside of the batter's box or is making any contact with home plate **EFFECT:** *If one foot is making contact with the ground outside the batter's box or making contact with home a dead ball shall be called and the batter shall be called out.*

Sec 6. A batter shall not interfere with a catcher who is attempting to make a play or throw. If an interference occurs due to the batter improperly not making an attempt to move out of the way of the catcher who is attempting to make a play or throw, and any runner is unsuccessfully put out then the batter is declared out and all runners shall return to the previously occupied base. If there are two outs in the inning, then the batter shall be declared out and sides will change.

Sec 7. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order. The on-deck batter may loosen up with two official softball bats, an official warm up bat, or any other product that has been approved by Freedom Sports National Headquarters. **NOTE:** *Attachments are prohibited, such as a donut, fan etc. when loosening up.*

Sec 8. A BATTER IS CALLED OUT WHEN:

- a. A third strike is called.
- b. A batter swings at a third strike and the ball hits the batter.
- c. A batter intentionally hits a batted ball for a second time and no runners shall advance.
- d. A batter attempts to Chop the ball with two strikes and the ball lands in foul territory.
- e. A batted ball is caught in the air either in fair or foul territory by a defensive player.
- f. If a batted ball is hit in the air in fair territory in the infield and the infield fly rule is in effect.
- g. If a batter steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat.
- h. A defensive player intentionally drops a fly ball or line drive with runners occupying bases. A dead ball shall be declared and the batter shall be out and the base runners shall return to previous occupied base.
- i. A batter steps out of the batter's box and hits a pitched ball.
- j. A batter swings at a pitched ball that lands way before home plate.

Sec 9. A Batter has the Freedom to swing the bat with one hand with NO Penalty

Sec 10. FREEDOM HITTER

In 2022 Freedom Sports Association will be removing 1 Up Rule and Adding a Freedom Hitter in the Men's Divisions.

Freedom Hitter (FH) rule change. The Freedom Hitter (FH): Will be added to the following Divisions: Men's E, D, C, B & A. A "Freedom Hitter" will be defined as the first batter in the lineup that hit's a batted ball over the outfield fence in fair territory that isn't a 4 base error and is defined as a legal homerun. This homerun will **NOT** be subtracted from the total number allowed in the division. This player will become your **Freedom Hitter** who will have the "FREEDOM" to hit a homerun anytime he comes to bat. If this player is walked during the game as a base on balls accidentally or intentionally this opens the Freedom Hitter back up to the next Legal Homerun during the game and that player will become the Freedom Hitter. At no time will homeruns hit by the Freedom Hitter count toward the teams allotted homerun maximum/total. If the Freedom Hitter is substituted or injured and removed from the game during the game the team will lose their Freedom Hitter's ability to "freely" hit homeruns and subsequent homeruns by that batter or any other will continue to count toward the maximum allotted homeruns for the game for that team.

Sec 11. HOME RUNS The following over the fence home runs are allowed:

CO-ED

REC Division – 1 Homerun, Additional Homerun Penalty – Inning Ending Out

E Division – 3 Homeruns, Additional Homerun Penalty – Inning Ending Out

D Division – 5 Homeruns & 1 Up, Additional Homerun Penalty Out.

Open Division – 8 Homeruns & 1 Up, Additional Homerun Penalty Out.

Note: *Women's Homeruns count against the Homerun limit in Coed*

WOMEN

Rec Women Division – 1 Homerun, Extra Homerun Penalty– Inning Ending.

Lower Women Division – 3 Homeruns, Extra Homerun Penalty– Inning Ending Out.

Upper Women Division – Unlimited Homeruns.

MEN

REC Division: 1 Homerun (All other Homeruns **Inning Ending Out**) (NO Freedom Hitter Allowed)

E Division 3 Homeruns + Freedom Hitter (All other Homeruns **Inning Ending Out**)

Men's D: 4 Homeruns + Freedom Hitter (All other Homeruns **Out**)

Men's C: 5 Homeruns + Freedom Hitter (All other Homeruns **Out**)

Men's B: 8 Homeruns + Freedom Hitter (All other Homeruns **Out**)

Men's A: 12 Homeruns + Freedom Hitter (All other Homeruns **Out**)

MILITARY

LOWER MILITARY DIVISION – 6 Homeruns, Additional Homerun Penalty – **Inning Ending Out.**

UPPER MILITARY – 12 Homeruns Additional Homerun Penalty – **Out**

MASTERS

MASTERS DIVISION – 5 Homeruns & 1 Up, Additional Homerun Penalty Out.

RULE 9. DEAD BALL-BALL IN PLAY

Sec. 1. The ball is dead and not in play:

- a. When the ball is batted illegally.
- b. When a batter steps from one box to another when the pitcher is ready to pitch. **Note:** *If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the play stands.*
- c. When a ball is pitched illegally.
- d. When the umpire declares "No Pitch".
- e. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person or clothing, whether or not the ball is struck at.
- f. When a foul ball is not caught.
- g. When a baserunner 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, the ground or object outside the playing area.
- j. In case of interference with the batter or fielder.
- k. When the batter bunts a pitched ball.
- l. When the umpire calls time.
- m. When the umpire calls time and an appeal play follows, the ball remains dead throughout the appeal.
- n. When any part of the batter's person is hit by his own batted ball while he is in the batter's box.
- o. When a runner runs the bases in reverse order.
- p. When a coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while the fielder is attempting to make a play, and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- q. When a baserunner fails to keep contact with his/her base until the pitched ball has reached home plate.
- r. When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he/she reaches first base.
- s. When a blocked ball is declared.
- t. When the batter enters the batter's box with, or uses, an illegal bat or altered bat.
- u. When a caught fair ball, including a line drive, which can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped, with less than two outs, and with a runner on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or 1st, 2nd or 3rd bases.
- v. When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- w. When a batter is hit with his/her own-batted ball in fair territory outside the batter's box.
- x. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or baserunner on fair ground before passing or touching an infielder.

Sec. 2. The ball is in play:

- a. At the start of each half inning, when the pitcher has the ball in the pitching position and the umpire has called "Play Ball".
- b. When the infield fly rule is enforced.
- c. When a thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
- d. When a fair ball strikes an umpire or baserunner on fair ground after passing or touching an infielder.
- e. When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- f. When the baserunners have reached the bases, which they are entitled, when the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
- g. When a baserunner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- h. When no play is being made on an obstructed runner, the ball shall remain live until the play is over.
- i. When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- j. When a baserunner must return, in reverse order, while the ball is already in play.
- k. When a baserunner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out.
- l. When a base is dislodged while runners are running the bases.
- m. When a runner runs out of the 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 baserunner out for failure to return and touch the base when play is resumed, after a suspension of play.
- p. When a live ball strikes a groundskeeper, photographer, policeman etc. assigned to the game.
- q. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
- r. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the judgment of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out and the ball is live and in play.
- s. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- t. When a thrown ball strikes a coach.
- u. As long as there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This would include an immediate live ball appeal before the umpire has called "time". Once the umpire has called "time" however, the ball remains dead during a subsequent appeal play.
- v. When a foul ball is caught **NOTE:** All runner can advance as long as they return to the bag they occupied when the ball was hit. (See Rule 6 Sec 7-F)
- w. When, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach touches or physically helps a runner. **Note:** A delayed dead ball signal will be given and play shall continue. The touched or assisted runner shall be ruled out and all other subsequent play will be ruled upon *accordingly*.

Sec. 3. The ball remains live until the umpire calls "time", which should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area, and in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased. ***Note** - the ball is live until the batter/runner gets to first AND all other play has stopped or deemed stopped by the umpire.

RULE 10. APPEALS

Sec 1. During a dead ball appeal, the pitcher shall announce which runner and which base that is being appealed. **NOTE:** *A defensive team is only allowed one (1) appeal per runner.*

RULE 11. PROTESTS

Sec 1. TYPES OF PROTEST.

A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule – must be made before the next pitch or if on the last play of the game, before the Official(s) leave the playing field.

B. Illegal Substitute or re-entry – must be made while they are in the game, before the last play of the game and before the Official(s) leave the playing field.

C. Ineligible Player –Protested players must produce a Freedom Sports Slow-Pitch Player’s Card along with a Legal/Photo ID. Should the protested player not be able to produce both IDS’ within 5 minutes, the protest shall be upheld.

D. Protest of non approved or altered equipment. **NOTE:** Team must pay protest fee to the umpire and then show the umpire the equipment in question for him to take to the director with the protest fee. This must be done during game play, not after the game has finished or when the Official(s) leave the playing field.

NOTE: *Protests will not be considered or accepted if an Official bases them solely on a decision on the accuracy of a judgment call.*

Sec 2. PROTEST PROCEDURE.

A. The coach or manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate Official that the game is being played under protest. The Official shall then notify the opposing manager and Tournament Director.

B. Both team managers and the Official shall record the information (in official scorebook), details, and conditions surrounding the protest.

C. A \$50.00 Cash protest fee must be paid by the protesting team. Said fee will be immediately returned if protest is upheld. Failure to submit \$50.00 fee, will result in protest being null and void.

Sec 3. PROTEST DECISION. Shall result in one of the following:

A. The protest is determined to be invalid. The game stands as played.

B. When a protest is found to be valid due to a misinterpretation of a playing rule, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.

C. When a protest for ineligibility is determined to be valid, the offending team shall forfeit the game being played.

RULE 12. CONDUCT

Sec 1. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – Any verbal action by team members, spectators, fans or participants from other teams not participating in the game made towards umpires, Freedom Sports directors, members of the opposing team, or spectators as deemed as “Unsportsmanlike” by any Freedom Official, shall be grounds for an immediate ejection and possible suspension for ONE additional game. Any physical action shall result in the MINIMUM of an immediate ONE-year suspension from all Freedom sanctioned events.

Sec 2. If a player is ejected from a game said player must leave the park until the game is over. The player may return once the game they were ejected from is complete unless they were suspended for an additional game or thrown out of the event. If said player refuses to leave the park or tries to sneak back in the game or park once they are ejected, they will automatically be suspended for a period of ONE year unless National office feels the penalty should be longer.

Sec 3. In the case of physical action/contact or altercation between players, teams, fans and/or officials: the Tournament Director will gather information regarding the incident and log all of the persons involved. A Tournament Incident Report will be filled out within 72 hours of the end of the event and sent to the State and National offices. The Tournament Director will send a copy of the Incident Report to the coaches of each team and the offender and victim via their email address. The offenders and victim(s) will have 48 hours to add any comments or evidence to the Incident Report including but not limited to written comments, additional information and supporting documentation such as video, sound recording, additional personal witnesses and/or police reports. The State and National Offices will have one (1) week to respond to the coach(s), (offenders(s) and victim(s) with a formal decision. *NOTE* - The offender will be deemed suspended and illegal for any activity in any Freedom Sports events including but not limited to League(s), Tournaments, Worlds, Winter Worlds, States, NITs and any other Freedom Sports Events while the investigation is ongoing.

Sec 4. Threat With a Weapon: ANY threat that involves ANY weapon including but not limited to a bat, firearm, knife or ANY such item that can be used to induce great bodily harm will result in an immediate Lifetime Bann from ALL Freedom Sports events including but not limited to League(s), Tournaments, Worlds, Winter Worlds, States, NITs and may other Freedom Sports Events while the investigation is ongoing. ***NOTE* Verbal threats of physical violence with weapons may also be considered a Threat with a Weapon and could result in a 1 year to lifetime suspension if deemed necessary by the National Office.**

Sec 5. Spectators, fans and players/participants with teams not participating in the game at hand can also be suspended and or removed from the park. Any fan or spectator that threatens a Freedom Sports Director or Official, other participant, player, coach or fan will be removed from the park and if a player or coach, they may face suspension of one (1) year up to Lifetime depending on the seriousness of the infraction. Spectators/fans that are required to leave the facility and refuse to leave the facility can result in a forfeit of the game for the team they represent. Any unruly fan/spectator that is not involved with either team participating in the game will be required to leave the park and may not return at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

NOTE: *Freedom Sports Association reserves the right to reciprocate any suspension(s) that a player may receive from other sports associations including but not limited to ASA, ISA, NSA, GLS, WSL and USSSA.*

RULE 13. UMPIRE

Sec 1. The umpire shall be the Official(s) appointed to officiate each Freedom Sports Association game. The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization for the particular game that they have been assigned. They are authorized and required to enforce the rules contained in this book. The umpires have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or refrain from doing, any act that is necessary to enforce any of these rules; and to inflict any penalties prescribed. The plate umpire shall have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules. **NOTE:** *An umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e. player, coach, officer scorekeeper, or spectator.)*

Sec 2. All Freedom Sports Association Umpires must be register online at www.freedomsoftball.com and have a valid umpire I.D. number prior to officiating any Freedom Sports Association sanctioned game.

Sec 3. The Umpire uniform shall consist of:

- A. The official royal blue Freedom Polo style shirt.
- B. The official Freedom Umpires hat, black slacks or solid black shorts
- C. Black belt, black socks, black ball bag (optional) and black shoes.
- D. Audible timer clicker and brush.

NOTE: *Slacks do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants, or other pants or slacks that **would not** be considered a dress slack.*

NOTE: Umpiring for the National Office at Winter Worlds or End of Year Worlds may require umpires purchase a specific uniform. Umpires that intend to work these events should understand that they may be responsible to purchase certain items in accordance with the Freedom Sports Umpire Uniform Policy for World Events. The National Office will set these requirements and notify all umpires attending of those specific requirements.

FREEDOM WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Freedom Sports Association Women's teams will consist of the following player classifications:

Upper Women: Women Players from the B Division and above.

Lower Women: Women Players from the C Division. Lower Women's Teams will be allowed 3 drop players from the Upper Women's Division.

Rec Women: Women Players from the D, E, and Rec Division ONLY. Rec Women's Teams **WILL NOT** be allowed drop players.

Freedom Sports Basic Rules will govern women's play with the following exceptions:

Sec 1. The Official approved softball for Freedom women's play shall be an 11-inch ball with a COR of .44 max. The ball must be an optic yellow ball with a Freedom Stamped logo on the ball.

Sec 2. Freedom Sports Representatives, Tournament Directors, and State Directors reserve the right to equalize by run spot, any Women's tournament as deemed appropriate. Each respective State Director will set the equalization standard for tournaments with the authority over the Women's Program.

Sec 3. As per rule 8, section 10, Homeruns in the Women's program will be unlimited for the Upper Women division, 3 homeruns for the Lower Women division with an inning ending out penalty for additional homeruns and 1 homerun for the Rec Women's division with an inning ending out penalty for additional homeruns.

Sec 4. Upper Women division teams will spot all Lower Women division teams (5) runs and the lower level team will be permitted to use (11) fielders as well. Lower Women division teams will spot all Rec Women's division teams (5) runs and Rec level team will be permitted to use (11) fielders as well.

Sec 5. If a Lower Women division women's team picks up more than three (3) players from a Women's Upper Women division team they also will now be considered an Upper Women team. All Women's teams are allowed (3) drop down players from Upper Women division.

Sec 6. Lower Women Division teams may have three (3) players from the Upper Women's Division **but cannot have any Major Players.**

FREEDOM CO-ED PROGRAM

Freedom Sports basic slow pitch rules will govern play with the following exceptions:

Sec 1. NOTE. *It is not permissible to use eleven (11) players. Unless you have more Females than Males*

A. REC Division- Roster can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females, NO Drop Down Players are allowed for men or women. All players MUST be classified Rec for Men and women, whereas women would be D, E or Rec. Must have at least 3 women in the lineup at all times. There is no batting lineup requirements. If a man is walked with a woman behind him, he will take second and the woman will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup it's just one base. **NOTE:** *if a team is dominating the division or a Director thinks they are not a true Rec team they will be bumped a division*

B. E – Division- Roster can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. (3) total Drop Down players are allowed for men or women. Teams will be allowed Drop Players from the men's D Division or Women's Lower Division. Must have 3 women in the lineup at all times. There is no batting lineup requirements. If a man is walked with a woman behind him he will take second and the woman will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup it's just one base.

C. D – Division- Roster can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. (3) total Drop Down players are allowed for men. Women Players can be any classification. Teams will be allowed Drop Players from the men's C Division and No Players from any Division higher than the C Division. Must have 3 women in the lineup at all times. There is no batting lineup requirements. If a man is walked with a woman behind him he will take second and the woman will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup it's just one base.

D. Open – Coed- Rosters must consist of (5) males and (5) females or (6) males and (6) females.... Bring Your Team and play.... Any player can play There is no batting lineup requirements also. If a man is walked with a woman behind him, he will take second and the woman will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup it's just one base.

Sec 2. It will be permissible to have more females than males in the lineup, but never more males than females. **EXCEPTION:** *IF a female player(s) gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game, the team may continue to play as long as a minimum of (3) female players remain in the line-up. EFFECT:* *The team will have to take an Out for the vacated female spot(s) in the lineup when no substitute is available or allowed (ejection).*

Sec 3. No batting order guidelines with Males & Females, you may set up the lineup any way you would like.

Sec 4. A team may end the game with only (9) players. **EFFECT:** *If injury occurs, an out is called if there is no substitute for the injured player.*

Sec 5. Male batters will hit the approved 12" softball and female batters will hit the approved 11" softball with Freedom Sports logo. **Note:** *Females have option to hit the 12" ball.*

Sec 6. Base on Balls – Any male batter who receives a base on balls whether intentional or not when a female batter is following him, will be awarded second base (all other runners will advance only if forced by this walk.) and the female batter following him, will have the option of taking an award of first (1st) base or taking an actual at bat. If she elects to take the base on balls, she must do so before the first legally pitched ball is thrown to her. No pitch may be made until the next female batter confirms her choice. **Exceptions:** if a male is walked and another male follows him he will only be awarded 1st base and if a female is walked and a female follows her she will only be awarded 1st base.

Sec 7. Freedom Runners - Teams may use an unlimited "Freedom Runner" of each sex per half inning all game long. One male and one female must be declared before the game as the Freedom Runners if no Freedom runner is declared then the team will have no option to use a courtesy runner the entire game. The female Freedom Runner can run for any female player unlimited times per half inning and the male Freedom runner may run unlimited times for any male per half inning. The Freedom Runner may be anyone on the team lineup or on roster but must finish their run before their turn at bat when applicable. Freedom Runners should always be assuming the role of base coaches to keep the game flowing and moving smoothly. Male Freedom runner CANNOT run for female players and female Freedom runners CANNOT run for male players.

Sec 8. Defensive team must have the required amount of women in the lineup per division

- A. *REC - 3 women in the lineup*
- B. *E - 3 women in the lineup*
- C. *D - 3 women in the lineup*
- D. *Open - 5 women in the lineup*

Sec 9. Home Runs – ALL Hrs. including Females will count against the Hr. limit.

REC – 1 Homerun, All Additional Homerun Penalty will be Inning Ending Out.

E – 3 Homeruns, All Additional Homerun Penalty will be Inning Ending Out.

D - 5 Homeruns and One Up Rule, All Additional Homerun Penalty will be an Out.

Open - 8 Homeruns and One Up Rule, All Additional Homerun Penalty will be an Out.

Sec 10. Stealing is permitted in all the coed divisions.

Sec 11. Rosters shall be:

- a. **REC Division-** Roster Can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. NO Drop Downs are allowed from E men or above or from Women's Lower or above and rest must be comprised of Rec men and women (D, E, Rec for women).
- b. **E Division** - Roster Can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. (3) Drop Downs are allowed from D men or Women's Lower and rest must be comprised of E men and women.
- c. **D Division** - Roster Can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. (3) Drop Downs are allowed from Men's C Division rest must be comprised of D men and women classification does not matter.
- d. **Open Division-** will be allowed any ranked player you want to bring. Roster Can consist of either (5) males and (5) Females, or (6) males and (6) females

Sec 13. It is not possible to condense the roster for an injured player in Coed. If there is not replacement for an injured player, the team must take an out when that player come to bat. The opposing team may walk batters either intentionally or by physically pitching to them to get to the position in the batting lineup. If batters are walked the ball is live until the batter/runner reaches first base and all other runners may advance at their own risk until the umpire calls time. The ball will be deemed live until the umpire deems that all play has stopped or no additional play is possible.

Sec 14. Once the game has officially started the number of female players and the number of male players must stay the same throughout the game. Even if the requirement is 7 males and 3 females and the team started with 5 males and 5 females. A female player cannot be replaced with a male player once the game has officially started per Division Guidelines.

Sec 15. EXTRA INNINGS. Extra Innings shall be declared upon the completion of the 7th inning OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired, and the score tied. **EFFECT:** *Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat using the FREEDOM RUNNER OR LAST BATTED OUT (the player that last completed a turn at bat) being placed on second base.*

FREEDOM MASTER'S PROGRAM

Freedom Men's Rules will govern all Master's play with the following exceptions:

RULE 1. TEAM CLASSIFICATION (DIVISIONS)

Sec 1. Masters 35+ A player's 35th birthday must occur in the current calendar year to be eligible to play.

Sec 2. Masters 40+ A player's 40th birthday must occur in the current calendar year to be eligible to play.

Sec 3. Masters 50+ A player's 50th birthday must occur in the current calendar year to be eligible to play.

Sec 4. Masters 60+ A player's 60th birthday must occur in the current calendar year to be eligible to play.

BALL – Masters Division Teams MUST use an Official “FREEDOM SPORTS” stamped 44-400 core-compression softballs. The ball must be optic yellow and 12 inches in circumference.

BATS – All bats used for the Masters Divisions MUST include one or more of these Association Stamps: Freedom Sports Association (FSA), ISA, SSUSA, USA, WSL, NSA, USSSA, ASA OR INATION

STEALING - The act of a runner attempting to advance during the pitch or after the pitch has reached the plate is considered to be the act of stealing. **NOTE: Stealing IS NOT ALLOWED in any Masters Divisions of play in Freedom Sports Association.**

TIME LIMIT - A time limit will be in effect for all games until the championship game. **After one hour and fifteen minutes** the teams will complete the inning they are in and play one more inning (last inning unless a tie game requires continuation.) The game time limit will not apply to the championship game or "if" game if necessary in all divisions of play.

RULE 2. GAME RULES

Sec 1. PITCHING – The ball must be pitched underhand at a slow rate of speed and must arc at least **six (6)** feet from the ground and may not rise higher than ten (10) feet from the ground. The speed of the pitch and height of the pitched ball are left entirely to the judgment of the umpire.

Sec 2. PROTECTIVE NET – a Pitching Net must be used in all Masters Divisions of play. The net must cover at least one half the pitching rubber from left to right. **PENALTY:** If a batted ball strikes any part of the net or frame, it will be declared a dead ball **strike**. If it was the batter's third strike, the batter will be declared out.

A. The pitcher must pitch from behind the net and may not pitch from beside the net.

Sec 3. PROTECTIVE HELMET – Pitching Helmets are suggested and recommended BUT are not required for Masters Division play in any Division.

Sec 4. PITCH COUNT – The Pitch Count will begin with 1 Ball and 1 Strike with no good foul.

Sec 5. PITCH STYLE – The Pitcher MAY NOT pump fake or juke on the mound. The pitch must be delivered as a “straight underhanded delivery”.

Sec 6. HOME PLATE and PITCHING MAT – A Pitching Mat (19” x 34.5”) will be provided for the Masters Divisions of play. Pitches that “Hit the Mat” and/or Home Plate will be deemed a strike.

MASTERS DIVISIONS

35+ – Home Plate **IS** Live (Strike)

40+ – Home Plate **IS** Live (Strike)

50+ – Home Plate **IS** Live (Strike)

60+ – Home Plate **IS** Live (Strike)

Sec 7. HOME RUNS – ALL Masters Divisions will play with 5 Homeruns and One Up Rule. Penalty for additional Homerun is a Single Out.

Sec 8. RUNS – ALL Masters Divisions will play with a maximum of seven (7) runs per inning with NO LIMIT on runs in the Last Inning.

Sec 9. HOMEPLATE – ALL Masters Divisions will use a chalk line for Home Plate **OR a Scoring Plate**. Runners must cross the chalk line **or touch the Scoring Plate** instead of crossing the actual Home Plate to avoid any potential for collisions. The timing of the throw/catch will be the determining factor for safe or out for plays at home.

Sec 10 BASE RUNNING – A baserunner may slide at any base; i.e. 1st Base, 2nd Base, 3rd Base and/or the Scoring Plate. The baserunner is out if he/she touches the Home Plate or interferes with the catcher in the Home Plate area. **A tagged runner after crossing the commitment line is not automatically safe and awarded the base. The ball will remain live until the scoring plate is touched by the runner or home plate touched by a defensive player in possession of the softball.**

Sec 11. FREEDOM RUNNER – ALL Masters Divisions will be allowed to have Unlimited Freedom Runners. Any Player on the Roster may be allowed to run for Any Player on Base.

Sec 12. EQUALIZER – Freedom Sports Representatives, Tournament Directors, State and National Directors reserve the right to equalize any Master's tournament as deemed appropriate. The equalizer will be either 5 runs to start the game or 11 fielders. In cases with large differences in age or team classification both 11 fielders and 5 runs will begin the game. Teams that are playing against another team that receives an equalizer **DO NOT** automatically become the home team. A coin flip will determine home and visiting teams in all games with the exception of the championship games.

Sec 13. WEATHER/RAIN DELAYS – Freedom Sports Association will do our best to complete the tournament under adverse conditions. The Tournament Format may be modified as necessary to complete the games and crown tournament champions, etc. Coaches should report to the Tournament Director for rain/weather delay instructions. Should an event be totally rained out the Tournament Director will determine bracket positions based on bracket play, undefeated teams, current positions and ultimately a coin flip as necessary.

FREEDOM MILITARY PROGRAM

Freedom Men's Rules will govern all Military play with the following exceptions:

RULE 1. TEAM CLASSIFICATION

Sec 1. The Military Men's Program shall feature (2) Divisions: Military Upper & Military Lower

Sec 2. The Military Women's Program will consist of a Military Women's Division.

RULE 2. PLAYER ELIGILITY

Sec 1. Men's Military Teams may consist of: Active Duty, Reserves, ROTC, National Guard, retired military and military dependents 18 years or older and Department of Defense employees providing direct support to a military base. All Players must have a government Identification card. Retired military personnel and retired Department of Defense civilians are eligible to play with a team from the state where they retired or a team from the state of their permanent address. Contractors who have a DoD ID card or a common access card (CAC) are eligible to participate.

Sec 2. Women's Military Team may consist of: Active Duty, Reserves, ROTC, National Guard, retired military and military dependents 18 years or older and Department of Defense employees providing direct support to a military base. All Players must have a government Identification card. Retired military personnel and retired Department of Defense civilians are eligible to play with a team from the state where they retired or a team from the state of their permanent address. Contractors who have a DoD ID card or a common access card (CAC) are eligible to participate.

RULE 3. TEAM ROSTER GUIDELINES

Sec 1. ALL PLAYERS MUST CARRY DRIVERS LICENCE, PROPER MILITARY IDENTIFICATION AND FREEDOM SPORTS SLOW-PITCH PLAYER'S CARD ON THEM AT ALL TIMES.

Sec 2. Men's Military Upper Rosters must provide a valid CAC or DoD card to participate at this level.

A. Male players whose name appears on the Major Player List or Watch List are not eligible to compete in the Military Program

B. Men's Upper rosters are limited to one player whose name appears on the Men's Class A Roster

C. Upper rosters are limited to one contractor who must provide a DoD Common Access Card which contains a green color bar. And allowed 2 contractors/DD 214 players.

Sec 3. Men's Military Lower Rosters must provide the following documents:

A. Active duty reservists must provide a copy of PCS orders with Military ID at registration, which places them at current military installation or command

B. All other eligible players including retirees, DoD contractors (which must provide DoD Common Access Card with green color bar) and dependents must show proof of ID and residency from the state/local region they are playing in to prove eligibility. Also allow (1) contractor/DD 214 player in lower.

C. Men's teams that cannot provide player eligibility documents will be moved to Men's Upper Division. **EXCEPTION:** *Any player receiving PCS orders within 30 days of the Freedom Military World Tournament can request an exception from the Freedom National Director*

Sec 4. FREEDOM rosters will be limited to 20 players per sanctioning year of which every player must be on an online roster at www.FreedomSoftball.com. If a team changes its name throughout the year they must pay a new sanction fee. Players may be added onto team rosters until states. The State Director or a Regional Director must approve players after states being added to a roster.

Sec 5. Military Drop Down Rule: Men's Military Lower Division may have (2) players from the Men's Military Upper Division on their Roster.

Sec 6. Once a team has completed its first game during a FREEDOM tournament, that team will not be allowed to add additional players to its roster without special permission and for good cause, from the Tournament Director. Teams may always play up a division but can never play lower than their current approved division of play. Any team with Two drop down players then allowed by our criteria will constitute that team to be considered the level above. Example, a Military Lower team has 4 Military Upper players on that team, they will be considered illegal to play in the Military Lower division and would be considered a Military Upper Team. There will be no rotating of drop down players, meaning a team cannot bring 4-5 drop downs and only play so many at a time. All players playing must be on the roster, and when more than allowed drop downs are on the roster it will make the team be considered a classification level higher or applicable to who they bring and roster. The team will also be forfeited out of game or tournament with illegal rosters.

RULE 4. HOMERUN RULES

Men's Military Upper Division: 12 HR, extra hit – only an out
Men's Military Lower Division: 6HR, extra hit – Inning Ending.
Women's Division: Unlimited

RULE 5. MILITARY WORLDS

Sec 1. For Teams participating in the Military World Tournament, Players may participate in only one (1) division of play, Upper or Lower. TDY personnel are eligible to compete in the World Tournament if the TDY assignment is (6)" months or more in duration. A team from one state may combine with only one other team from the same state. The players from the resulting team can be from only two installations and the resulting team must compete in the Upper Division. The Women's Program may also combine with only one other team from the same state. The players from the resulting team can be from only two installations.

Sec 2. Teams must play in at least one Freedom Tournament or participate in a Freedom sanctioned league to be eligible to advance to the Freedom Military World Tournament.

** All playing rules not specifically covered in the Military Program shall be governed by the other rules as outlined in the Current Freedom Softball Rule Book as it pertains to said program **i.e.:** Men's or Women's Non-Military Divisions.

MILITARY ABBREVIATIONS:

CAC - Common Access Card
DoD - Department of Defense
PCS - Permanent Change Order
TDY - Temporary Duty

FREEDOM WORLD TOURNAMENT

FREEDOM “WORLDS” - Teams that participate in their respective divisions at each of the following events: **FREEDOM STATES**, and **FREEDOM NIT’S** shall receive an eligibility to play in **FREEDOM WORLDS**, to be held in the fall. PAID Berths will be determined based on the Prize Package for each event. Refer to the Event Promotion and/or the event Director to determine if Paid Berths are awarded. Teams winning said berths shall be required to register for the World Tournament confirm their berth by paying the tournament entry fee to Freedom National Office. Teams with Paid Berths shall have entire entry fee returned upon completion of first game at **WORLDS**.

All teams **MUST** have matching jerseys for the World Tournament, any team without matching jerseys will automatically be the visiting team. If both teams do not have matching uniforms, then a coin flip will decide home and away. Matching jerseys will be defined as identical matching shirt with numbers on the back matching to the fullest for all players on the team. **EXCEPTION:** The undefeated team in the Championship Game (Only) will automatically be the home team. The IF game will revert to the toss of a coin or uniform rule to determine home/away.

To qualify for World’s teams must play their State Tournament and an N.I.T. and if a team is coming from a state where Freedom Sports doesn’t have a state tournament, said team may have to play in another states N.I.T. and/or Regional event as well. States and N.I.T. events are limited and not offered in each area. It is the responsibility of the coach/team representative to confirm requirements to qualify for the World Tournament based on the team’s location. Check the schedule often to seek World Tournament qualifying events and enter early to ensure qualification. Teams may play in multiple States and multiple N.I.T events BUT MUST play in at least one of each.

All teams must pay a deposit to hold their spot for Freedom Worlds event. If teams no show, the deposit will NOT be refunded or go toward owed entry fee.

COVID-19

RECOMMENDED AT THE FIELD GUIDELINES

1. Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
2. All Players & Staff Must Complete the Return to Play Waiver & Liability Forms before being involved with any Freedom Sports Sanctioned Event.
3. Directors and tournaments may be required to cap the total number of teams that can enter an event, to stay within potential gathering limitations. Spectators will be encouraged to not attend events until gathering limitations are increased or removed.
4. Adjust playing formats to ensure events stay within gathering limitations.
5. Directors are asked to discuss these protocols/restrictions with all locations that host Freedom Sports events and also cover any additional items said facilities might require. This information must be distributed to all participants prior to the start of the event, to ensure the safety of all attending, including facility staff.
6. All staff, players, umpires and spectators are encouraged to continue social distancing on and off the field during an event.
7. All staff, players, umpires and spectators are encouraged to wear a mask or other face covering (during non-play) until CDC, state and local authorities declare that masks are no longer recommended. If a player chooses to wear a mask or other face covering during game play, they may do so as long as it doesn't become a safety issue.
8. It is recommended that new softballs remain in their original packaging until they need to be introduced into a game.
9. All players should stand outside the dugout and hang their bags 6 feet apart to allow for social distancing, but do not allow them onto the field of play unless it's for defensive purposes. The offensive team will have one player hitting, one on-deck batter and one batter in the hole can be inside the dugout. All other offensive players must be outside the dugout (not standing on the field). The coach may be inside the dugout along with a scorekeeper. Base coaches should maintain social distancing guidelines.
10. Recommend staff, players, umpires and spectators bring hand sanitizing products.
11. One coach per team will conduct a pregame meeting at home plate, all involved are requested to keep 6 feet social distancing during ground rules and coin toss. The lineup for each team will be dictated to the umpire at the plate to avoid passing back and forth of the lineup card.
12. Directors are encouraged to allow for adequate time in event scheduling, to ensure adherence to social distancing during the crossover of teams.
13. It is recommended that all players and umpires use their own equipment while participating. This includes gloves, bats, etc.
14. The catcher and umpire shall position themselves during a player's at-bat to allow for social distancing.
15. Collection of entry fees should be accomplished electronically before the event when at all possible. Cash should be a last resort, but if it must be used should be placed with the exact amount in a zip lock bag to the director. All check-in should be done by one coach only, prior to the event, while wearing a mask. Player cards should be collected by this same coach, scanned while holding them for the director, then re-distributed to the team. Limit or space out staffing to ensure social distancing. There should be a single point of contact for teams during events.
16. Discontinue the physical posting of brackets, rules, etc., and utilize online options instead.
17. All teams are directed to clean their dugouts and team bench areas on arrival and departure.