



USA SOFTBALL UMPIRE EXAM

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The examination consists of a series of questions covering rules and mechanics of the 2026 USA Softball Official Rule Book. Questions are true or false and multiple choice. Answers should be put on the answer sheet and returned to the grader or test committee. THE ANSWER SHEET SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED TO THE USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL OFFICE.

The abbreviations used in the questions follow the following: B (N) = Batter; R1 = runner closest to home; R2 is the succeeding runner; R3 is the runner on first base when the bases are full; S (N) = substitutes; CR (N) = courtesy runner(s); PC (N) = physically challenged player; and F (N) = fielder by number. F1 is pitcher; F2 is catcher; F3 is first baseman; F4 is second baseman; F5 is third baseman; F6 is shortstop; F7 is left fielder; F8 is center fielder; and F9 is right fielder. If F10 is used it would be the extra fielder in the slow pitch game.

This examination may be given to all USA Softball registered umpires under one of the following methods to be determined by your local state/metro USA Softball commissioner, local umpires association, local parks and recreation department, or military sports officer:

- 1) Under supervision without the use of the USA Softball Official Rule Book.
- 2) Under supervision using the USA Softball Official Rule Book.
- 3) With no supervision and using the USA Softball Official Rule Book.

Retain the question portion of this examination for further study. Use care in marking your answer sheet. PLEASE COMPLETE THE EXAM BEFORE _____

(Date)

After completing, mail or return the ANSWER SHEET ONLY to:

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Which of the following are examples of an appeal play?
 - a. Plate umpire asking partner about a check swing.
 - b. Base umpire asking partner about a pulled foot.
 - c. Missing a base, leaving a base early on a caught fly ball or batting out of order.
 - d. All of the above are appeal plays.

- 2) Which of the following would result in an altered bat?
 - a. An approved bat that has had its physical structure changed.
 - b. A bat that has been rolled or shaved.
 - c. A bat that has been laser marked or painted with the name or number of the player.
 - d. All of the above are altered bats.
 - e. Both a. and b. are considered altered.

- 3) The act of an offensive player or team member, umpire or spectator that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Contact is not necessary. This is the definition of:
 - a. Interference.
 - b. Obstruction.
 - c. None of the above.

- 4) The act of a defensive team member who hinders or impedes a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding a batted ball. This is the definition of:
 - a. Interference.
 - b. Obstruction.
 - c. None of the above.

- 5) When obstruction occurs, the umpire signals a delayed dead ball and verbalizes "obstruction" at that point must also determine:
 - a. Which two bases the runner was between when obstructed.
 - b. The base, in the umpire's judgement, the runner would have reached had there been no obstruction.
 - c. Both of the above.

- 6) Which of the following is true about the effects when obstruction is called:
 - a. Without violating an exception, an obstructed runner cannot be put out between the two bases where they were obstructed.
 - b. If the obstructed runner does not reach the base they would have reached had there been no obstruction, the obstructed runner and all other runners shall be awarded the base(s) they would have reached, in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction.
 - c. Runners are always advanced at least one base when obstruction occurs.
 - d. All of the above are correct.
 - e. Both a. and b.

- 7) No runner may return to touch a base that has been missed or one left too soon on a caught fly ball after:
 - a. A trailing runner has scored.
 - b. If they have touched the next base.
 - c. Once they have left live ball territory.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. Both a. and c.

- 8) The batter becomes a batter-runner, when a pitched ball, not swung at nor called a strike, touches any part of the batter's person including the hands or clothing. What is the one exception to being awarded first base?
 - a. If the ball is completely within the batter's box.
 - b. If the ball is between the batter's box and the strike zone.
 - c. If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter will not be awarded first base unless it is ball four.
 - d. None of the above.

9) Which of the following is true when the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base when the throw is coming from the foul side of first base?

- The batter-runner can run in fair territory and if hit by the thrown ball it is not interference.
- If the batter-runner intentionally interferes while running in fair territory they will be ruled out.
- The batter-runner must always run in the three-foot running lane which is in foul ground.
- None of the above.
- Both a. and b.

10) When a play is being made on the batter-runner and they touch only the white portion of first base and they collide with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball from F6 while on the white portion, the correct ruling is:

- The ball is dead.
- The batter-runner is out.
- Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of interference.
- All of the above.

11) When a spectator reaches into live ball territory and interferes with a fielder's opportunity to catch a fly ball. The correct ruling is:

- The ball is dead.
- The batter-runner is out.
- Runners are awarded the bases that in the umpire's judgment would have been reached had the interference not occurred.
- All of the above.

12) When the catcher obstructs a batter's attempt to hit a pitched ball. The effect is a delayed dead ball. However, If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely or has passed that base and is considered to have reached it, and all other runners have advanced at least one base. What is the Effect?

- Obstruction is cancelled.
- All action as a result of the batted ball stands.
- No option is given.
- All of the above.

13) With R1 on 3B and R2 on 2B and one out, B4 hits a fly ball in foul territory down the first base line. F9 catches the ball with both feet in the field of play. After catching the ball F9 sees R1 at 3B tagging up to score easily, F9 intentionally carries the ball out of play. What is the proper ruling?

- The ball is dead, B4 is out, R1 is awarded home and R2 is awarded 3B.
- The ball is dead, B4 is out, both R1 and R2 are awarded home.
- The ball remains live, B4 is out, R1 and R2 may advance at their own risk.
- The ball is dead, B4 is out, R1 is returned to 3B and R2 is returned to 2B.

14) With R1 on 1B and a 2-1 count on B2, R1 proceeds to steal 2B on the pitch. F2 misplays the ball and does not throw to 2B. As R1 approaches 2B, F6 acts as if they caught the ball and applies a tag to R1 as they are coming into 2B. What is the proper ruling?

- No violation has occurred.
- Obstruction, a fake tag is always obstruction.
- Interference, R1 sliding into F6 without the ball would be considered interference.

15) On a pickoff attempt at 1B, a runner may return to either the white or contrasting color portion of the base.

- True.
- False.

16) With R1 on 1B with 1 out, B3 hits a line drive between F5 and F6. F6 throws their glove contacting the ball. The correct ruling is:

- Dead ball, R1 is awarded 3B and the batter-runner is awarded 1B.
- Dead ball, R1 stays at 2B and the batter-runner is awarded 1B.
- Delayed dead ball, R1 is entitled to home, and the batter-runner is entitled to 3B.
- None of the above are correct.

17) If a player being disqualified results in a team having one less than the required number of players remaining, the game can continue under the short-handed rule.

- True.
- False

18) When a runner intentionally interferes with any defensive player having the opportunity to make an out on a deflected batted ball, which of the following occurs:

- The ball is dead.
- The runner is out.
- The batter-runner is awarded 1B.
- Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of interference.
- All of the above.

19) With R1 on 1B, 1 out, B3 hits a ball to right field that lands in front of F9. The ball deflects off F9's glove and enters dead ball territory. R1 crosses home plate prior to the ball entering dead ball territory and B3 is between 2B and 3B. What is the proper ruling?

- The ball is dead.
- All runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch, R1 is awarded 3B and B3 is awarded 2B.
- Since R1 had touched home plate prior to the ball going into dead ball territory their run counts, B2 is returned to 2B.
- Both a. and b.
- Both a. and c.

20) In the 3rd inning the manager of Team A requests "time" and approaches the plate umpire to ask if a player who was not listed on the official line-up card at the pre-game meeting can be added to the line-up and play in the game. What is the proper ruling?

- A player listed on the team's official roster but not listed on the line-up card at the start of the game cannot be added to the line-up.
- If the player is listed on the team's official roster, the player can be added to the line-up at the bottom of the batting order if the team is playing shorthanded or added to the available substitutes and used to replace a player in the line-up.
- If the team is playing shorthanded and the player is listed on the team's official roster, the player can be added to the line-up in any spot in the batting order.
- If the player is listed on the team's official roster, the player can be added to the line-up, but only as a substitute and they are only eligible to participate as a courtesy runner in the game.

21) Which of the following actions concerning the shorthanded rule is NOT legal?

- A team begins a game with the minimum number of required players and no substitutes, but one player leaves the game in the second inning for a previous commitment. The game can continue with one less than the required number of players.
- A team begins their game with one less than the required number of players, but a substitute arrives after the game has started. The substitute must immediately be put into the vacant spot or that player becomes ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- A JO team is playing in a pool play game and batting their entire roster. One of their players is injured and cannot continue. When the injured player is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat.
- A Coed Slow Pitch team that is playing shorthanded with either three players in the infield or the outfield, at least one must be male, and at least one must be female.

22) If a team is in a tiebreaker situation and is playing shorthanded, do not declare an out when the absent player is the one who should begin the half-inning at 2B. Instead, place on 2B the player whose name precedes the absent player's name in the line-up.

- True.
- False.

23) On a pitched ball that goes out of play that is ruled as "Ball 4". The batter is awarded 2B.

- True.
- False.

24) What players can legally wear a mitt?

- Only F2 and F3.
- Any defensive player as long as the mitt conforms to the size requirements.
- Any defensive player other than the pitcher.

25) In which games may the offensive and defensive teams have one-way electronic communication with the coaches in the coaching boxes or dugout?

- JO Girl's Fast Pitch.
- Men's Slow Pitch.
- Women's Fast Pitch.
- Men's Modified Pitch.
- All Games.

26) With bases loaded and 1 out, B5 hits a ground ball to F5 who overthrows F2 on a force at the plate. The ball gets away and the on-deck batter interferes with F2 trying to retrieve the ball. R1 touched the plate prior to the interference. Which of the following statements is true?

- The ball is dead, B5 must return to bat.
- The ball is dead, R1's run doesn't count, and they must return to 3B.
- The ball is dead, B5 is declared out, and R1 is allowed to score.
- The ball is dead, R1's run scores, R2 as the runner closest to home is declared out, and B5 is awarded 1B.

27) During the pre-game equipment check a bat is discovered to have a 1-inch crack in the barrel. The bat is removed from the game because it is a(n):

- Altered bat.
- Illegal bat.
- Non-Approved bat.
- Banned Bat.

28) With bases loaded and 1 out, B5 hits a deep fly ball to center field and F8 makes a diving catch. R1 tags up and scores easily from 3B, while R2 leaves 2B too soon and R3 is thrown out at 2B for the third out of the inning. After the play is complete, the defensive coach makes a verbal appeal of R2 leaving 2B too soon. What is the proper ruling?

- Since this appeal is a force out, no runs shall score.
- This is an example of an advantageous fourth out appeal. The runner is called out for leaving a base too soon and because the fourth out is the result of an appeal of a base left too soon, the run does not score.
- Since there are three outs and R2 did not score, the appeal is not honored.
- Since the appeal is for a fourth out, the defensive coach is given the option to select which out would be recorded as the third out. In this case, the logical choice would be R2 leaving 2B too soon in order to negate the apparent scored run.

29) With R1 on 1B and no outs, B2 hits a deep fly ball to F8. F8 catches the ball in the air, and their momentum carries them over or through the fence. What is the proper ruling?

- Dead ball, no catch since F8 went over the fence with the ball, 2 runs score.
- Dead ball, B2 is out and R1 is advanced to 2B.
- Dead ball, B2 is out and R1 is advanced to 3B.
- Dead ball, B2 is out and R1 is advanced to home.

30) With R1 on 1B and two outs, B4 hits a long shot in the gap. As R1 rounds 3B they are obstructed by F5 causing them to almost completely stop. B4 tries to stretch their hit into a triple and is thrown out at 3B for the third out of the inning. When B4 is tagged out R1 is one step from touching home plate. What is the proper ruling?

- This is a timing play and since the third out of the inning was recorded prior to R1 touching home plate no run scores.
- If, in the umpire's judgement, R1 would have reached home had there been no obstruction, R1 is awarded home and their run scores.
- R1 was obstructed after 3B so they are awarded 3B and B4 is returned to 2B.
- Due to the obstruction on R1, they are awarded home and B4 is awarded 3B. Play continues with two outs, B3 on 3B and R1's run scoring.

31) Which of the following would count as a charged conference for the defense?

- The defensive coach talks with F5 during an offensive conference.
- A defensive coach tends to an injured player.
- The defensive coach requests time to discuss the pitching signals with the catcher.
- The catcher requests time and all the infielders meet in the pitching circle.
- A catcher goes to the dugout to get a drink of water.

32) The runner is ruled out, and the ball is dead immediately in which of the following?

- A coach physically assists a runner.
- The batter-runner physically passes R1 who is staying close to 1B expecting the fly ball to be caught.
- When a runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with the base and before it has passed an infielder.
- All of the above.

33) Team A has no outs and B4 is due to bat. However, B5 bats and reaches first base safely. B4 then comes to bat and has a 1-2 count when Team B informs the umpire that Team A is batting out of order. What is the proper ruling?

- B4 is called out for not batting in their proper position, B5 remains on base and B6 comes to bat with a new count and 1 out.
- B5's improper at bat was legalized when a pitch was thrown to B4. B5 remains on base, and B6 is the proper batter with a 1-2 count.
- Once a pitch is thrown to B4 it legalizes their at bat so B4 is the proper batter, once they complete their at bat B6 will be the next batter as B5 is still on base.
- None of the above.

34) With R1 on 3B and R2 on 2B and one out, B4 hits a fly ball to center field. F8 catches the ball and R1 legally tags and touches home plate. R2 is safe on a close play at 3B. After R1 has touched home and the play on R2 is over, the defense appeals that R2 left 2B early and the umpire rules R2 out. What is the proper ruling?

- The appeal on R2 is a force out for the third out of the inning, therefore R1's run does not score.
- The appeal play on R2 is a timing play, since R1 had touched home plate prior to this out being recorded R1's run would score.

35) Which of the following is true about an EP?

- They can be listed anywhere in the batting order.
- They can play defense in any position.
- They must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
- All of the above are true.

36) No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of:

- A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.
- A runner being put out by a tag, called out for passing a runner or a live ball appeal prior to the lead runner touching home plate.
- A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.
- All of the above.

FAST PITCH QUESTIONS

37) When the runner fails to keep in contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand which of the following occurs:

- The ball is dead.
- "No Pitch" is declared.
- The runner is out.
- All of the above.

38) The catcher reaches 1B on a base hit. Time is called and the catcher is replaced with a legal courtesy runner. The next batter gets injured and cannot continue to play. The only substitute available is the courtesy runner on 1B. The courtesy runner must be removed from 1B and enter as a substitute for the injured player, and the catcher must return to run in their place.

- True.
- False.

39) With R1 on 3B, B2 receives ball 4. On the pitch R1 leads off and remains off the base as the batter-runner runs to 1B. The pitcher standing in the circle receives the ball from the catcher, the batter-runner touches 1B and immediately runs to 2B. The pitcher watches the batter-runner go to 2B but makes no play. Once the batter-runner reaches 1B, R1 remains motionless off the base watching F2 and B2 running to 2B. What is the proper ruling?

- Call "Time" and return B2 to 1B and R1 to 3B.
- Signal and verbalize "Dead ball", R1 is out for violating the look back rule. B2 is returned to 1B.
- Once B2 reaches 2B call "Time" and return R1 to 3B.
- None of the above.

40) Which of the following Fast Pitch line-ups are NOT approved?

- Nine defensive players with DP and FLEX, 10 Players with 10 batting.
- (JO Fast Pitch) Nine defensive players with one EP, 10 batting.
- (JO Fast Pitch) Nine defensive players with a DP and Flex, plus one EP, 11 players with 10 batting.
- (JO Pool Play Only) Nine defensive players batting up to the entire roster, additional players listed as EP's.

41) Which of the following actions, concerning the courtesy runner rule, is NOT legal in Fast Pitch?

- A courtesy runner cannot run for both the pitcher and the catcher at any time during the game.
- The DP bats for the FLEX, who is either the pitcher or catcher, and reaches base safely. A courtesy runner can run for the DP.
- When a courtesy runner, running for the pitcher or catcher, fails to report to the PU, they will be disqualified.
- If the DP is playing defense as the pitcher or catcher and bats reaching base safely, they are eligible to have a courtesy runner.

42) Which one of the following is NOT a true statement regarding the use of the Designated Player rule in the Fast Pitch division?

- The DP and FLEX may never play offense at the same time.
- A starting DP may re-enter the lineup one time if the DP returns to their original position in the batting order.
- The DP and FLEX positions are interchangeable. The FLEX can play offense only and the DP can play defense only and neither player has left the game.
- The DP and the FLEX can play defense at the same time.

43) After beating out an infield hit and over-running 1B and returning toward 1B the batter-runner cannot:

- Return to the white portion of the base.
- Return to the contrasting colored portion of the base.
- Advance to 2B with the ball held by the pitcher in the circle.
- Advance to 2B with the ball still held by F3.

MECHANIC QUESTIONS

44) In a two-umpire system, which of the following is true about the holding zone?

- Plate umpire should utilize the holding zone with multiple runners as they are responsible for lead runners at 3B and any play at the plate.
- It is far enough away from the foul line that the umpire is clear of runners rounding third base heading home and provides an unobstructed view of all four elements.
- When a play develops at 3B the umpire should leave the holding zone and move inside the diamond to a minimum of 10-12 feet from the base obtaining an angle 90 degrees to the path of the runner.
- When a play develops at home plate they should stay in foul ground and move to a position 90 degrees to the path of the runner behind and in line with the deepest corner of the right-hand batter's box a minimum of 10-12 feet from home plate.
- All of the above.

45) On a force play where the fielder pulls their foot, the umpire should:

- Point with their left hand and say, "OFF THE BASE", then give a strong "safe" signal and a clear "SAFE" call.
- Give a strong "safe" signal and a clear "SAFE" call, then point with their left hand and say, "OFF THE BASE".
- Give a signal with both hands in a sweeping motion away from the base, then give a strong "safe" signal and a clear "SAFE" call.
- None of the above.

46) What are the four times after a ball has been batted that the base umpire will make a call at 3B in both Slow Pitch and Fast Pitch?

- On a batter-runner on a triple, the last runner into 3B, a lone runner on a fly ball advancement, any return throw from the plate or a throw going to the plate that is cut-off and thrown to 3B.
- A steal of 3B, a pickoff at 3B, the batter-runner on a triple, the last runner into 3B.

47) When the plate umpire is returning to home plate from a play at 3B and the ball is in foul ground they should:

- Remain in fair territory and move parallel to the base line.
- Obtain a position no closer than 10-12 feet from home plate.
- Obtain a 90-degree angle to the path of the runner.
- Move as necessary to maintain an unobstructed view of the play.
- All of the above.

48) When managing umpire to participant discussions and ejections. Which of the following are true?

- Partner(s) should ensure the discussion is "one on one".
- Partner(s) take control of removing ejected participant.
- Both a. and b. are correct.

49) The correct mechanic for a home run is to raise the right arm above the head, index finger pointed upward and rotate the hand.

- True.
- False.

50) There is a tag play at home plate, and the runner misses home plate, and the fielder misses the tag. What is the proper mechanic?

- The umpire should call the runner out immediately for missing home plate.
- Hesitate slightly to allow the defense time to appeal the runner missing the plate, if no appeal is imminent signal safe to indicate the runner was not tagged.
- Call the runner safe immediately as the fielder missed the tag and once the runner passes home plate they can no longer be appealed for missing the plate.
- Remain alert as the runner is still liable to be put out if the defense properly appeals that the runner missed home plate. If properly appealed the umpire should then rule on the appeal.
- Both b. and d.

ALTERNATIVE SLOW PITCH QUESTIONS

51) Slow Pitch with stealing: With 1 out, R1 on 1st base. B3 walks and R1 advances to 2B and continues to 3B. F1 overthrows 3B. R1 scores and the batter-runner advances to 2B on the play. What is the proper ruling?

- The ball is dead because of the walk. The run does not score, and the runners must go back to 1B and 2B respectively.
- The ball is live and all play stands, and time is called when the ball is returned to the infield and all playing action has ceased.
- The ball is live and the run counts because of the overthrow but the batter-runner must go back to 1B because they may not advance on a walk.
- The ball is dead once it is thrown to the pitcher and the runners must return to 3B and 1B.

52) The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball (quick pitch) before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance. An Illegal Pitch is not declared, but a warning is given to the pitcher and after the second violation the pitcher is removed from the pitching position.

- True.
- False.

53) Which of the following is NOT an approved Slow Pitch lineup?

- Ten players playing defense with an EP, 11 batting.
- Ten players playing defense with the entire roster batting.
- (Senior SP 50-55-60) Ten defensive players with the entire roster batting.
- (Senior SP 65-70-75) Eleven defensive players batting 12, (2 EP's).

54) Which of the following actions concerning the courtesy runner rule is NOT legal in the Adult Slow Pitch division.

- A courtesy runner is officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
- A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.
- If a courtesy runner is used, the courtesy runner cannot be replaced by a substitute.
- Any eligible player can serve as a courtesy runner for any player other than the pitcher more than once per inning.

55) When pitching in games that allow the pitcher to take a position from the pitching plate to a distance behind the pitcher's plate, both feet must be within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate at the time the pitch is released?

- True.
- False.

56) Which of the following is NOT true about Slow Pitch Pitching rules?

- The pitcher shall not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- The delivery is a continuous motion.
- The pitcher shall not use a delivery in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.
- The pitch starts when the hands are separated after they have been brought together.

57) Which of the following is true about a Slow Pitch game with stealing?

- A runner is out if they do not keep in contact with the base until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, or reaches home plate.
- A runner may advance after the ball reaches the front edge of home plate.
- The ball remains live on a walk, and the batter-runner may not advance past first base unless a play is made on another runner or an errant throw is made.
- The ball remains live on a foul tip and runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- All of the above.