



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

2001 Playing Rules Changes

A total of 102 rule change proposals were submitted to the 2001 ISF Congress Playing Rules Commission for consideration.

Of these, 21 were withdrawn, 25 were rejected, 37 were approved and 19 were approved with an amendment.

The Athletes Commission also submitted 3 cases as a matter of special urgency, and all were approved. Two of these apply only to World Championships and Olympic Games, while the third relating to players blocking bases was approved as a rule change.

One of the proposals related entirely to Co-ed Slow Pitch, and all the necessary changes to relevant sections will be made in the new rulebook. Several of the changes were cosmetic, while some were simply a re-location without affecting the intent of the rule.

The most significant changes relate to:

Pitching Distance for Women;

Charged Defensive Conferences;

An increase in the time of the required "stop" by the pitcher, after taking the signal;

Batting Out-of-Order;

Distance of Home Run Fences;

Obstruction; Runners being Assisted;

Replacing the Designated Hitter with a Designated Player.

It should be noted that the new rules apply at the 2002 Australian Championships, with the exception of the new pitching distance for women.

The rule changes are listed below, with appropriate comments. NB. Rule references are as they will appear in the new rulebook.

Rule 1, Sec 2: APPEAL PLAY. (Add to end of definition)

These are the types of appeals:

- 1. Missing a base**
- 2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched**
- 3. Batting out-of-order**
- 4. Attempting to advance to second base after making a turn at first base**
- 5. Illegal substitutions**
- 6. Illegal Re-entry.**

COMMENTS: *Types of appeals were added to the definition, in order to help clarify what is, and what is not, an appeal. If not listed in 1-6, then it should not be considered an appeal play.*

Rule 1, Sec 4: BASE PATH. A base path is a direct line between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag a runner.

COMMENTS: *In the 2000-01 Rule Book the base path was described as an imaginary line 0.91m (3 ft) to either side of a direct line between the bases. If a runner is rounding a base, this is more than 0.91m of a direct line between bases, and this could change again, if the runner changes direction, and returns to a base. Therefore, the new definition indicates the base path is determined by the position of the runner and his direct line towards the base he is running to.*

Rule 1, Sec 13: CHARGED CONFERENCE.

A charged conference takes place when

- a. (Offensive Conference) The offensive team requests a suspension of play to allow the manager, or other team representative, to confer with any member of their team.
- b. (Defensive Conference) The defensive team request a suspension of play for any reason, and a representative (not in the field) of the defensive team enters the playing field, and communicates with any defensive player.

COMMENTS: *The two types of conferences ("defensive" and "offensive") previously had effects included in the definition and "effects" or "penalties" should be found only under the rules. See Rule 5, Sec 8a and b in these comments for that wording.*

Rule 1, Sec 26: FIELDER. A fielder is any defensive player of the team on the field.

COMMENTS: *The previous wording stated a fielder was any player of a team on the field and this was confusing, as offensive players could be on the field as runners. This change clarifies this by stating a "fielder" is a member of the defensive team.*

Rule 1, Sec 39: ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL. (Add new sub-section "d" to read)

An illegally batted ball occurs when

- d. The batter steps with his entire foot out of the batter's box, and returns to contact the ball while inside the batter's box.

COMMENTS: *This prevents a batter (FP) from stepping back out of the batter's box to gain a running start and then swinging and contacting the ball, or (SP) stepping back out of the box and then back in, prior to hitting the ball. If no contact were made with the ball on the swing, there would be no penalty, only a strike on the batter.*

Rule 1, Sec 48: LEAPING. Leaping is the act of a pitcher that causes him to be airborne on his initial push from the pitcher's plate. The momentum built by the forward movement of the pitcher causes the entire body, including both the pivot and stepping (non-pivot) foot to be in the air at the same time and moving towards home plate as the delivery is completed. Leaping is an illegal act.

COMMENTS: *This new definition was needed so umpires will know and understand what the wording of Rule 6, Sec 3i, means. Dragging the pivot foot from the pitcher's plate is legal; however, having both feet in the air at the same time is considered "leaping" and is an illegal act.*

Rule 1, Sec 51: LINE DRIVE. A line drive is a ball in flight that is batted sharply and directly into the playing field.

COMMENTS: *The previous wording described a line drive as a fly ball, and a fly ball is defined as "any ball batted into the air," which normally means an arc. Therefore, the wording for a line drive was changed to read a ball "in flight." batted sharply and directly into the playing field.*

Rule 1, Sec 53: OBSTRUCTION. Obstruction is the act of
b. A defensive player or team member which hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball, or
c. A fielder while
1. Not in possession of the ball, or
2. Not in the act of fielding the ball,
which impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner that is legally running bases.

COMMENTS: *A third part of this sub-section has been deleted from the previous wording, which read, “(3) not about to receive a thrown ball.” This now eliminates a defensive player from blocking a base (or home plate) without the ball. If the fielder has the ball, the base can be blocked; however, if the fielder does not have the ball, they cannot block the base. If they do, obstruction should be ruled and the base awarded the runner. This was also changed under Rule 8, Sec 7b(3).*

Rule 1, Sec 60: PASSED BALL. (FP ONLY) A passed ball is a pitch that should have been held or controlled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

COMMENTS: *The previous wording stated the pitch had to be a legally delivered ball and it does not have to be. A passed ball could also occur on an illegal pitch. Runners can advance one or more bases on a passed ball.*

Rule 1, Sec 70: SLAP HIT. A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a controlled short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. The two most common types of slap hits are (a) where the batter takes his stance as if to bunt, but then either drives the ball into the ground with a quick, short swing or punches the ball over the infield, or (b) where the batter takes running steps (within the batter’s box) toward the pitcher before making contact with the pitch. **NOTE:** A slap hit is not considered a bunt.

COMMENTS: *This new definition is a common batting style that is described in the rulebook so umpires and scorers know the difference between a bunt and a slap hit, and how to deal with it.*

Rule 1, Sec 71: SQUEEZE PLAY. A squeeze play is a play in which the offensive team, with a runner on third base, attempts to score that runner by means of the batter contacting the ball.

COMMENTS: *This is another new definition. “Squeeze Play” is a term used in the rules (Rule 6, Sec 5) and it needed to be defined.*

Rule 1, Sec 83: WILD PITCH. (FP ONLY) A wild pitch is a pitch so high, so low, or so wide of the plate that the catcher cannot or does not stop and control it with ordinary effort.

COMMENTS: *Similar to Section 60 (Passed Ball). A wild pitch can be a legal or illegal pitch that cannot be stopped or controlled by the catcher. Previously it stated it had to be a legally delivered pitch.*

Rule 1, Sec 84: WILD THROW: A wild throw is a play in which a ball is thrown from one fielder to another, and cannot be caught or controlled, is not blocked, and remains in play.

COMMENTS: *This new definition was added to describe that a ball can be overthrown, and still remain in play. It is mainly used as a scoring term.*

Rule 2, Sec 1a: A new ‘NOTE’ has been added.

THE PLAYING FIELD.

a. Is the area in which the ball may be legally played and fielded.

NOTE: A ball is considered “outside the playing field” when it touches the ground, a person on the ground, or any object outside the playing area.”

COMMENTS: *The “NOTE” shown under Sec. 1a, was rewritten from 9-1-h. It should be located in this section, rather than under*

Rule 2, Sec 1b: Changing fence distances to read:

- a. Shall have a clear and unobstructed area within the minimum radius of**
- 1. 67.06m (220 ft) for female fast pitch**
 - 2. 76.20m (250 ft) for male fast pitch**
 - 3. 80.77m (265 ft) for female slow pitch**
 - 4. 91.44m (300 ft) for male slow pitch**
- from home plate between the foul lines.....**

COMMENTS: *This increased fence distance should open up the game for fast pitch women, allowing for more doubles and triples in place of long singles. For the two male increases, this puts the rulebook distance similar to the Technical Code distances for World Championship play.*

**Rule 2, Sec 3: Change female fast pitch pitching distance to read:
Adult Division Female...13.11m (43 ft)**

COMMENTS: *This increase from 12.19m (40 ft) will bring more offence back to the game, making it more attractive for teams, players, spectators and television. It should also speed up the game, as batters will be swinging at more pitches from this distance. This change is for women's fast pitch only and will only be applicable at World Championships and Olympic Games. The under 19 Junior Women's Championship will remain at 12.19m (40 ft). (NB. Individual associations may opt to use the new distance by the introduction of a By-law; however, it must only apply to adult women, not under-age play).*

Rule 3, Sec 3g: Add the yellow optic cover, red stitch ball to sub-section to read:

- g. The white cover with white or red stitch, or yellow optic cover with red stitch 30.5cm (12-inch) ball with a COR of .47 or under shall be used in the following play: Men's and Women's Fast Pitch, Boy's Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch, and Girl's Fast Pitch. It shall have an ASF logo marking.**

COMMENTS: *The .47 COR was approved at the 1999 ISF Congress and has been added to wording. The yellow optic cover, red-stitch ball is popular because of the batter's visibility to see the ball, and it is now an alternate type ball that can be used in the divisions listed.*

Rule 3, Sec 5c: Change last sentence of Sec 5c "SHOES" to read:

- c. No hard plastic, nylon or polyurethane spikes similar to a metal sole and heel plate are allowed in any division at any level of play.**
- d. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw onto the shoe are not allowed; however, shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the shoe are allowed.**

COMMENTS: *This change clarifies that cleats (metal or plastic) that screw into the shoe, thereby not leaving an exposed post when the cleat is not on the shoe, are legal. Cleats that screw onto a post fastened to the shoe are illegal, as it would be dangerous if the cleat came off and a sharp post remained.*

Rule 3, Sec 5: YOUTH DIVISION, MODIFIED FAST PITCH, AND COED SLOW PITCH ONLY: No metal cleats are allowed in any division at any level of play.

COMMENTS: *The words "or shoes with detachable cleats" were deleted from this sub-section. This allows for youth age players who play in both senior and junior divisions of play, to be permitted to interchange metal and plastic cleats on shoes, as long as the cleats screw into the shoe.*

Rule 3, Sec 6a: a. Masks. (FP Only) (Add the underlined words)

All catchers must wear masks, throat protector and helmet.

NOTE: Catchers (or other members of the defensive team) are required to wear a mask, throat protector and helmet while receiving warm-up pitches at the pitching plate or in the warm-up area. If the person catching the pitch will not wear the mask he must be replaced by a person who will do so. An extended wire protection attached to the mask can be worn in lieu of the throat protector.

COMMENTS: *The underlined words have been added to this sub-section. It is now a requirement that individuals warming up a pitcher(s) in the warm-up or practice areas must wear a mask and throat protector.*

Rule 3, Sec 6c: c. Face Masks.

Any defensive or offensive player can wear an approved plastic face mask/guard. Face mask/guards that are cracked or deformed, or has padding that has deteriorated or is missing, are prohibited from use and must be removed from the game.

NOTE: Fast Pitch catchers cannot wear the plastic face mask/guard in place of the regular mask with throat protector.

COMMENTS: *This is new. By allowing a plastic face mask/guard to be worn on offence and/or defence, it provides protection against fractured facial bones while at bat, while running, or when fielding a batted ball. This is not a mandatory item. It allows the facemask to be worn should a player choose to wear one.*

Rule 4, Sec 5: Change the Designated Hitter rule to Designated Player (FP Only) with these rules to be followed:

DESIGNATED PLAYER (FP ONLY)

- a. A “DESIGNATED PLAYER”, referred to as a “DP”, may be used as a batter for any defensive player, provided it is made known prior to the start of the game and his name is entered on the line-up sheet as one of the nine hitters in the batting order.
- b. The starting DP may be substituted and may re-enter one time, as long as he returns to the position in the batting order that he occupied when he left the game.
- c. The name of the defensive player for whom the DP is batting (known as the “DEFO”), will be placed in the tenth (10th) position on the line-up sheet.
- d. The starting player listed as the DP must remain in the same position in the batting order whenever he is in the game.
- e. The DP and his substitute, or replacement, may never play offence at the same time.
- f. The DP may be substituted for at any time, either by a batter, runner, or by the DEFO for whom he is batting.

NOTE: The DEFO replacing the DP is not a substitution.

If the starting player is replaced on offence by the DEFO, or by a substitute, the DP is considered to have left the game.

1. If replaced by the DEFO, this reduces the number of players from ten to nine. If the DP does not re-enter, the game may continue and legally end with nine players.
2. If the DP re-enters, he may play offence and defense (continue the game with nine players), or he may bat in his original place in the batting order, and the DEFO returns to the 10th position and plays defense only again.

EFFECT Sec. 5a-f:

The provisions of Rule 4 Sec 8 and penalties for violations apply. Placing the DP in a position in the batting order other than his starting position is considered an Illegal Re-Entry.

- g. The DP may play defense at any position. Should the DP play defense for a player other than the DEFO, that player will continue to bat, but not play defense, and is NOT considered to have left the game.
- h. The DP may play defense for the DEFO and that person IS considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players to nine.
- i. The DEFO may be substituted for at any time, either by a legal substitute or the DP for whom he is playing defense. The DEFO may re-enter the game one time, either in the 10th position, or in the DP’s position in the batting order.
 1. If returning to the number 10 position, he will again play defense only, but may play in any defensive position.
 2. If returning to the DP’s position in the batting order, he will play offence and defense, and the game will continue with nine players.

EFFECT Sec. 5g-i:

The provisions of Rule 4 Sec 8 and penalties for violations apply. Placing the DEFO in a position in the batting order other than that of the DP is considered an Illegal Re-Entry.

COMMENTS: *In previous rulebooks the “DH” was not allowed to play defence. By changing to the “DP” ruling it offers a greater range of options offensively and defensively, and makes for better utilization of players. Coaches and umpires alike should understand that a DP can never play defence only, a DEFO can never play offence only, and the DP and DEFO can never be one of the nine batters at the same time. If these three situations are understood, it helps in understanding and administering the rule.*

Rule 4, Sec 10: Change “balls and strikes” to “any judgment decision,” to read:
DISPUTED CALLS.

Any team member disputing any judgment decision by an umpire will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offence shall result in the ejection of that team member.

COMMENTS: *The Playing Rules Commission felt that the warning should be extended to any judgment decision and not just limited to the calling of balls and strikes. Requesting help for a possible pulled foot or missed tag is acceptable, but questioning “out” or “safe” calls will constitute a warning.*

Rule 5, Sec 5a: In fast pitch and modified pitch add, “15 runs after 4 innings” to the Mercy Rule, to read:

- a. A “Mercy Rule” must be used in all play.
 - 1. (FP and MP Only) 20 runs after three innings, 15 runs after four innings, or 10 runs after five innings.
 - 2. (SP Only) No change

COMMENTS: *The 2000-01 rule means if a team reaches 15-19 runs in the fourth inning the game would still continue until 5th inning. With this addition, a team ahead by 15 runs after four complete innings, can be called.*

Rule 5, Sec 7b 2: Add “including an appeal play” to sub-section to read:

- b. A run shall not be scored if the third out of the inning is a result of:
 - 2. A runner being forced out, including on an appeal play, due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.

COMMENTS: *This addition clarifies that runners forced out (and properly appealed), will be ruled out and no runs shall score.*

Rule 5, Sec 8: Section re-written as follows:
CHARGED CONFERENCES.

- b. **Offensive Conferences.** There shall only be one charged offensive conference in an inning.

- NOTE:**
- 1. This includes the batter, runner, on-deck batter and the coaches among themselves.
 - 2. It is not a charged conference when a pitcher is putting on a warm-up jacket while on base, or if the offence confers while the defensive team is in conference, provided the offence is ready to play when the defence is ready.
 - 3. Umpires should not permit any such conferences in excess of one per inning.

EFFECT Sec. 8a: A second charged conference shall result in the ejection of the manager or coach insisting on another charged conference.

- b. **Defensive Conferences.** There shall only be three charged defensive conferences in a seven-inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning.

- NOTE:**
- 1. A conference includes players in the field leaving their position and going to the dugout for instructions, regardless of whether ‘Time’ has been requested or not.
 - 2. Should a manager/coach from the dugout report a change to the umpire, this is not considered a charged defensive conference unless the manager then crosses the foul line to talk with any defensive player after making the change.
EXCEPTION: If this change is a pitching change and the pitcher leaves the pitching position prior to the manager crossing the foul line, the manager may legally enter fair territory to talk with any defensive player, while the new pitcher is taking his warm-up pitches, without a conference being charged.
 - 3. The conference is over when the manager/coach crosses the foul line returning to the dugout.
 - 4. Conferences are consecutive and do not start over with a new player entered into the game.
 - 5. If all three conferences are not used in the first seven innings, they are lost and a team must then follow the one per extra inning rule.

6. It is not a charged conference for the defense if they confer during a charged offensive conference, provided they are ready to play when the offense is ready.

EFFECT: Sec. 8b:

The fourth, and each additional charged conference in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one per inning in an extra inning game, shall result in the pitcher, who is the listed pitcher at the time of the excess conference, being declared an Illegal Pitcher who may not pitch again for the remainder of the game.

NOTE: A declared Illegal Pitcher can play another position on defence but cannot pitch again.

- c. Conferences will not be charged if they take place at any time when the umpire has suspended play.

COMMENTS: *The defensive conference change from one per inning to three per game will speed up the game. It allows a team to take more than one conference an inning if needed, but after having had the third conference, on the fourth conference the pitcher must be removed from the pitching position. He can play another defensive position, but cannot pitch again in the game. After four conferences, any pitcher(s) would have to be removed if another conference took place.*

Rule 6, Sec 1c: Change the word “one” to “two” seconds, to read:
PRELIMINARIES.

Before commencing the delivery (pitch), the pitcher:

- e. Must, after taking the signal, bring his whole body to a full and complete stop with the ball held in both hands in front of the body. This position must be held for not less than two seconds and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball.

COMMENTS: *Increasing the time to two seconds will set a clearer parameter for the umpires to judge the stop. Enforcing these two seconds prior to starting the pitching movements should be a priority in calling the illegal pitch.*

Rule 6, Sec 5c: Change the PENALTY from “the runner will be awarded home” to “all runners shall advance one base on the illegal pitch,” to read:
DEFENSIVE POSITIONING:

- c. With a runner on third base trying to score by means of a squeeze play or steal, no defensive player may:

1. Step on, or in front of, home plate without the ball, or
2. Touch the batter or bat.

PENALTY: The ball is dead. The batter shall be awarded first base on the obstruction and all runners shall advance one base on the illegal pitch.

COMMENTS: *In this particular case, both catcher’s obstruction and the illegal pitch are ruled. Listing the penalty for the obstruction, and not clarifying the penalty for the illegal pitch in this situation is confusing. The re-written section should help in clarifying the penalty.*

Rule 7, Sec. 2: **BATTING ORDER.**

EFFECT 2(b): **EFFECT Sec. 2c-d:**

2. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter

- (b) Any advance or score made as a result of the improper batter becoming a batter-runner shall be nullified. Any out that is made prior to discovering this infraction, remains out.
- (c) The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. If the next player was the incorrect batter who was called out, go to the next person in the line-up.
- (d) No change.

COMMENTS: *The rule as presently followed, benefits the team committing the error. If a batter bats out-of-order and an out or double play occurs, it is nullified and the same batter could come to the plate and get a hit and win the game. The game should penalize those in violation, rather than reward them. If the incorrect batter makes an out, and other outs occur while the incorrect batter bats, the outs will remain under this new rule change. It is now possible to have more than one out under this rule.*

Rule 7, Sec 9e: THE BATTER IS OUT

- e. When he leaves the batter's box to gain a running start, but has returned to the box when he makes contact with the ball.

EXCEPTION: If no contact is made with the pitched ball, there is no penalty. If the batter swings and misses, the ball remains live (FP Only) or dead (SP Only).

COMMENTS: This wording is connected with Rule 1, Sec 40d (Illegally Batted Ball definition) that was also added to the 2002-05 Rule Book. It prevents a batter in fast pitch or slow pitch from stepping back out of the batter's box, to gain a running start, and then making contact with the pitch within the batter's box.

Rule 8, Sec 1g 2 THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER: (Add the underlined parts)

EFFECT Sec 1g: The batter-runner is awarded a home run and must touch all bases in regular order.

Exception

EXCEPTION: If

1. The ball passes out of the g rounds at a distance less than prescribed in Rule 2, or
2. A fair-batted fly ball goes off a fielder's glove or body and over the fence in foul territory, or
3. A fair fly ball first contacts the fence, deflects off a fielder and then goes over the fence the batter-runner shall be awarded two bases from the time of pitch.

COMMENTS: This exception (underlined words) makes the wording consistent with that approved under previous rule change, as well as the exceptions 2 and 3 under EFFECT for Rule 7-h.

Rule 8, Sec 2i: Change the word "moves" to "steps," to read:

THE BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT:

- i. When he steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

COMMENTS: The word "steps" is what the previous ruling implied and the change of words helps clarify the situation.

Rule 8, Sec. 2j: THE BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT: (Add new sub-section 'j')

- j. If, when using the double base, and there is a force play on the batter-runner, (on a ball thrown by any fielder), who touches only the fair portion and collides with the fielder on the fair portion, who is about to catch the thrown ball.

COMMENTS: The batter-runner is supposed to use the foul portion and therefore should not come in contact with the defensive player. If the batter-runner uses the fair portion and collides with a defensive player (preventing him from making a play), interference should be ruled.

Rule 8, Sec 4g: Delete the entire sub-section, which read:

- g. When a runner has advanced to, and touched, a base beyond a base left illegally, or a missed base, and the ball then becomes dead, he may not, even after the ball becomes alive, return to the missed base or base left illegally.

COMMENTS: Runners should be allowed to return to a missed base or one left illegally whether the ball is alive, or after the ball is ruled dead. When the runner returns to the missed base or one left illegally, then the overthrow award can be made. Dead ball appeals cannot be made until a runner has completed his return.

Rule 8, Sec 7b: Delete the words "about to receive a thrown ball from the "obstruction" wording, to now read: RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT:

- b. When a fielder obstructs the runner from making a base, or impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases, if the fielder is
1. Not in possession of the ball, or
 2. Not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or
 3. Making a fake tag without the ball.

COMMENTS: The Player's Commission, as an emergency ruling, recommended this change. It prevents a fielder from blocking the base when he is not in possession of the ball. If the fielder has the ball, he can block the base; however, if he does not have the ball and a runner advancing to the base or home plate is blocked, obstruction should be ruled and the base awarded to the runner.

Rule 8, Sec 8d: A RUNNER MUST RETURN TO HIS BASE: (add new sub-section ‘d’)
d. When the on-deck batter, or any other non-playing team member, creates interference.

COMMENTS: *This new sub-section “d” was added as it compliments the EFFECT for Rule 8, Sec. 2j, requiring runners to return to the base held at the time of the pitch for such a situation.*

Rule 8, Sec 9e: THE RUNNER IS OUT: (Wording changed & re-located)
e. When anyone other than another runner physically assists the runner while the ball is in play.

EFFECT 9e: The ball remains in play.

NOTE: If a fly ball is caught on the play, the batter-runner will also be out.

COMMENTS: *To simplify and clarify a ruling that previously was a dead ball, depending on what the “assist” was. With the new wording, the ball remains alive. On a caught fly ball, the defence can make other outs after the catch. The batter is also not penalised if he hits a home run. When assisting a runner, it is treated similar to other running violations, such as (a) passing a runner, (b) gaining a running start, or (3) running out of the three-foot lane to avoid a tag. In these three situations the ball remains alive, just as this situation will remain a live ball.*

Rule 8, Sec 9k: Add the underlined words to sub-section, to read:

THE RUNNER IS OUT:

k. When he is struck with a fair-batted ball over fair territory while off base and before it passes a fielder, excluding the pitcher, unless in the umpire’s judgment, no fielder had an opportunity to make an out.

COMMENTS: *Compliments the current wording in Rule 8, Sec 10e. Sec. 10e indicates the runner is not out, if hit by a fair-batted ball while in foul territory, provided no fielder had a chance to make an out.*

Rule 9, Sec 1: Add the following new sub-section ‘h’:

h. When a fair-batted ball strikes an umpire, or runner:

- 1. Before touching a fielder, including the pitcher.**
- 2. Before passing a fielder, other than the pitcher, without being touched.**

COMMENTS: *The addition of “h” compliments the existing Effect (3) for Rule 8, Sec. 1e.*

Rule 9, Sec 2x: Add the underlined word, to read:

THE BALL IS IN PLAY:

x. When a thrown ball accidentally strikes a coach.

COMMENTS: *To help clarify that a thrown ball remains alive when accidentally striking a coach, but is dead and interference ruled when the coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.*

Rule 10, Sec 1e 1: Add the underlined words to read:

e. The plate umpire in fast pitch:

- 1. Must wear a black facemask, black or tan padding, and a black throat protector. (An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of a throat protector on the mask.)**

COMMENTS: *This change now allows a fast pitch plate umpire to wear tan padding under the black mask. A throat protector must be attached to the mask.*

Rule 11, Sec 2d: New NOTE added as follows:

PROTESTS THAT WILL BE RECEIVED:

d. Eligibility of a team roster member.

NOTE: Protests for the above are to be submitted to the appropriate authority (not the umpires) and may be made at any time, subject to the provisions of Rule 11, Section 5.

COMMENTS: *Protests can be made at any time to a league or tournament management for sub-section “d”. The penalty for “d” is forfeiture of the game by the team using the ineligible player.*

Rule 12, Sec 3d: Delete Rule 12, Sec 2b 3 (e) and add the following ‘d’ to Sec 3:

A base hit shall not be scored in the following cases:

- d. When a batter reaches first base safely as a result of a preceding runner being called out for interfering with a batted ball or a defensive player.**

EXCEPTION: If, in the judgment of the scorer, the batter would have reached first base safely had the interference not occurred, a base hit shall be credited to the batter.

COMMENTS: *When interference occurs on another runner, the batter should not receive a base hit. An offensive player (the batter) should not be rewarded for a violation by another offensive player. With this change, the batter is now credited with a fielder’s choice, rather than a base hit, unless the Exception applies.*

Rule 12, Sec 5b: Add the underlined words to sub-section 5b, to read:

A run batted in is a run scored because of one of the following reasons:

- b. A sacrifice bunt or slap hit (FP Only) or a sacrifice fly (FP and SP).**

COMMENTS: *This compliments the new wording under Rule 1, SLAP HIT, and provides guidance for scorers on how to list in the box score*

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