



USSSA Fast Pitch Clarifications & Interpretations

The following topics have been developed by the USSSA Fast Pitch National Umpire Committee. The intent is to provide further explanation in conjunction with the Official USSSA Fast Pitch Playing Rules (Rule Book). The goal is to help participants understanding the rules. In some instances, they represent official interpretations. However, the Rule Book remains the authority should there be a conflict between this document and the Rule Book.

This latest document was updated by John Dye, john.dye@ussa.com.

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Additional Player

In a traditional lineup, a team may play with up to two (2) Additional Players (AP).

The decision to use or not use Addition Player(s) is optional but it must be made before the start of the game.

The AP(s) may be placed anywhere in the batting order.

An AP can be substituted for and re-entered just like any other player.

A team that uses Additional Players bats 10 (or 11) players for the entire game.

In Roster Batting, a team must bat all players present by using as many AP(s) as needed.

There are no substitutes. The DP/Flex Option is not allowed in Roster Batting.

SEE Roster Batting

Any of the nine (9) players in the batting order may play defense.

Players can change defensive positions at any time.

Just as a player can change from shortstop to left fielder, the additional player can play defense at any position and the replaced player sits out for all or part of the game.

As long as a player is in batting order, she is in the game.

Appeals

An appeal play is a play where the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player.

Types & Live Ball/Dead Ball Appeal

- ❖ Missing a base, advancing or returning – live ball or dead ball
- ❖ Leaving a base before caught fly ball is touched - live ball or dead ball
- ❖ Batting out of order – dead ball only
- ❖ Attempting to advance to second after overrunning first – live ball only

A Live Ball appeal can be made by any fielder in possession of the ball. She can touch the runner if the runner is still in field of play even if she is on another base. She can also touch the base missed or left too soon.

A Dead Ball appeal is made while the ball is not live.

Once all runners have finished running and time is called or if the ball goes out of play and runners had chance to finish running, the defense may make a verbal appeal. Any coach, manager or player with or without the ball may make a dead ball appeal.

It must be clear what is being appealed.

With multiple runners, the defense must indicate which runner is being appealed.

There does not have to be a verbal declaration if it is clear what the defense is appealing. For example, with a runner leaving 1B on the pitch; the batter hits a line drive directly to the second baseman who catches the ball and immediately throws to the first baseman standing on 1B. This is a valid appeal of the runner leaving the base before a caught ball is first touched. The runner should be called out.

Appeals must be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal) or all infielders have left fair territory, or all umpires have left the field of play.

A runner may not return to touch a base

- ❖ If she has reached the base beyond and the ball becomes dead.
- ❖ If she left field of play.
- ❖ If a succeeding runner has scored.

More than one appeal play may be made but guessing games should not be allowed.

EXAMPLE: If a runner misses (or nearly misses) two bases, the defense has the right to appeal both bases if the umpires rule safe on the first appeal.

If two runners tag and leave early, the defense could appeal both runners for leaving early.

SITUATION: B1 hits a slow roller to F5 and arrives safely but misses first base. F3 catches the ball while standing on the first base after F3 has beaten the throw.

RULING: If the runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made. F3 must tell the umpire she's appealing B1 missing first base before B1 returns to the base.

Fourth Out Appeals

Because a run does not score if the third out of an inning is a force play and a runner does not score if a preceding runner is the third out, the defense may make an appeal after it has recorded three outs as long as it is made properly.

EXAMPLE: Bases loaded, two (2) outs. The batter hits a long ball between the outfielders and attempts to run all the way home. She is thrown out at home for the third out of the inning. The defensive team then appeals that the batter-runner missed first base. If the appeal is upheld, no runs would score.

Note it is not a force when a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag. If this appeal play is the third out, it is considered a time play.

EXAMPLE: with one out and R1 on third and R2 on first, a long fly ball is hit to the outfield. R2 leaves with the hit; R1 stays on third. The ball is caught. R1 leaves legally from third. F7 throws to F3. R1 touches home plate. F3 catches the ball while touching 1B before R2 returns to 1B.

R2 is out for the third out and R1's run counts because she scored before R2 was out.

No appeal can be made on the last play of the game once the umpires leave the field. If there is a possible appeal by the defense, the umpires should wait until all defensive infielders have crossed the foul line on their way to the team dugout, before leaving the infield. If teams line up for high fives, there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line and umpires can leave the game at this point.

Ball Rotation

The philosophy is to get all new balls used in the First Inning. This is to prevent putting a new ball in play late in the game.

The pitcher has a choice of which ball to use at the start of each half inning. If both balls do not get into play in the first half of the first inning, the pitcher in the bottom half of the first inning **MUST** throw the unused ball. No choice is offered.

After an inning is completed, the ball should be returned to the vicinity of the pitching plate by the team leaving the field or the umpire. The pitcher taking the field now has a ball with which to start the next half inning. The pitcher may request another ball from the plate umpire. The Umpire should get the current ball and then give the pitcher a ball from their ball bag. The pitcher cannot switch back.

The current game ball should be used until such time as it goes out of play or becomes unplayable.

Batter Hit by Ball

Any time a pitched ball or batted ball hits the batter, it is a **DEAD BALL**.

It does not matter that the pitched ball hits the ground first.

If the batter is swinging, Dead Ball, Strike

If the ball is in strike zone or is prevented from going through strike zone, Dead Ball, Strike.

If ball is out of the strike zone and hits the batter, Dead Ball; Batter is awarded first base.

The batter does not have to make an effort to avoid the ball.

However, the batter cannot move to get hit by a ball. In this situation, Dead Ball and a ball or strike depending on pitch location.

The hand(s) is part of the batter. The hand(s) is **not** part of the bat.

- ❖ If ball hits hand and bat simultaneously, Dead Ball, Foul.
- ❖ If ball hits bat and then hand, Dead Ball, Foul.
- ❖ If ball hits hand and then bat, Dead Ball as soon as it hit the hand.

Batted Ball hits Batter – Dead Ball

If a batted ball hits the Batter while she is still in the batter's box, Dead Ball, Foul Ball even if the Batter is in fair territory.

If the Batter/Runner has moved out of the batter's box and unintentionally contacts the batted ball, Dead Ball. If the ball is in fair territory, she is out. If the ball is in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

EXCEPTION: If the foul ball is contacted by the batter/runner and, in the umpire's judgement, it had a chance to become fair, then the batter/runner is out.

Bat hits Ball/Ball hits Bat

If the bat is in the hands of the batter when the ball comes in contact with it a second time, it is a foul ball. Note by definition, the batter remains a batter while still in the batter's box.

If the bat is in the hands of the batter-runner when the ball comes in contact with it a second time, she is out, and the ball is dead. Note by definition, the batter has become a batter-runner when both feet are completely outside the batter's box.

If the bat is in the hands of the batter when the ball comes in contact with it a second time, and

- ❖ The batter is still in the batter's box, it is a foul ball.
- ❖ The batter has become a batter-runner (both feet completely outside the batter's box), she is out. The ball is Dead.

If the bat is out of the batter's hand (dropped or thrown) and in motion and the bat hits the ball in fair territory, the ball is dead, and the batter-runner is out. This is a form of interference.

If the bat is out of the batter's hand and stationary and the ball hits the bat on the ground, the batter is not out. It is a fair or foul ball as follows:

- ❖ If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, it remains live.
- ❖ If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball.
- ❖ If it touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball.
- ❖ If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

NOTE: Regardless of the fair/foul position of the bat, it is fair/foul position of the ball at the time of contact which governs in the above situations.

Batter in Batter's Box

Prior to the pitch, the batter is considered to be in the batter's box waiting for a pitch when no part of either foot is touching the ground outside the boundary lines forming the batter's box.

The lines of the batter's box are part of the box. When taking a stance in the box, both batter's feet shall be in the batter's box. If any part of the batter's feet is touching the lines but not over the line, she is considered within the batter's box.

The batter must take this position within 10 seconds after the pitcher has the ball in the pitching circle.

When the ball is hit, the batter shall be called out for being out of the batter's box when at least one foot is on the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box when the ball is hit. The batter is also called out when any part of a foot is touching home plate when she hits the ball. The ball is dead. The batter is out whether the ball is fair or foul.

If no contact is made with the ball, there is no penalty.

If there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.

Batting out of Order

Batting out of order is an appeal play.

- Until the improper at bat is completed, either team may appeal to correct the batting order.
- After the at bat is completed only the defensive team may appeal.

A batter is in proper order if she follows the preceding player in the lineup, A player is considered to be at bat as soon as she enters the batter's box, and one pitch has been thrown.

The defense may appeal that the previous batter was not the correct batter until there has been one pitch to the next batter.

After a pitch, either team may appeal that the current batter is not the correct batter.

If the current batter in the batter's box with one pitch is not the correct batter, the correct batter is brought to bat and assumes the ball – strike count
No one is called out for batting out of order when there is a count on the batter.
All advances made shall stand.

If the batter who just completed her time at bat is not the correct batter, on appeal:

The correct batter is declared out.

The improper batter is removed from base.

All outs made on other runners on the play stand.

Any advance by runners on the play is nullified.

No runs can score on the play.

If the improper batter was out, the out will be rescinded because of the correct batter's out.

The next batter is the player who follows the correct batter (who was declared out) in the batting order.

All advances made before the batter became a batter-runner shall stand.

Charged Conference

It is a charged conference when time is requested by a coach or someone from the dugout to communicate with team members on the field.

Defense

The defense is charged with a conference when they request time, and a coach (someone from the dugout) enters the playing field and communicates with any defensive player. However, if the pitcher is removed from the pitching position, they should not be charged with a conference.

The defense is allowed three (3) charged conferences in a seven-inning game. They are allowed one (1) and only one charged conference in each extra inning. Time granted to change pitchers does not count as a charged conference. If there are any conferences exceeding the limit, the pitcher cannot pitch any more in that game. The pitcher may remain in game at any defensive position other than pitcher. If the pitcher returns to the pitching position after being removed and one pitch has been thrown, the pitcher is an illegal player, and both the pitcher and head coach are ejected.

Offense

The offensive is allowed one (1) charged conference per inning. The umpires should refuse to grant the second conference.

Time granted for injury does not count as a charged conference. During the other team's conference or official's time out, a team may confer without being charged. They must end when charged team's conference ends.

The plate umpire shall keep a record of defensive team charged conferences for each team.

Non-Charged Conference (Defense Meeting – Players Only)

It is not a charged defensive conference when players on the field call time to confer (i.e. the catcher calling time and going out to talk to the pitcher). Base runners must stay in the vicinity of their base (4.8.B).

Check Swing/Bunt Strike

B1 starts to swing at a pitch but attempts to hold back, or it appears as though it is an attempt to bunt the ball. In either case, B1 misses the ball. How does the umpire determine what to call the pitch?

A call of this nature is based entirely upon the umpire's judgment. Therefore, the umpire shall, in order to be consistent, have guidelines to follow. The rule that most umpires follow is: If a batter swings halfway or more across the plate, it is a strike. In other words, if the bat is swung so it is in front of the batter's body or ahead of it, it is a strike. The "breaking of the wrists" has sometimes been used as a guide. However, it is believed using the first criterion will be more definite. In bunting, any movement of the bat toward

the ball, when the ball is over or near the plate area, is a strike. It is an attempted bunt if the bat is over the plate and the bat is not pulled back from being over the plate. A strike should be called.

First, was the pitch in the strike zone? If so, it is simply a strike.

Second, did the batter swing at the pitched ball or in the case of a bunt attempt, did she move the bat toward the pitched ball or hold the bat in the strike zone?

If in doubt or if blocked out, the pitch should be called a ball. Umpires will not call the pitch a strike unless it was in the strike zone, or the batter swung at the ball. If the umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help, the umpire should ask for help.

Courtesy Runner

The coach may use any player who has not been in the lineup as a courtesy runner. If and only if there are no eligible unused substitutes, the coach may use the Last Completed At Bat (LCAB) as a courtesy runner (This does not apply to Elite Select). In roster batting, the courtesy runner is the LCAB.

See LCAB for additional information.

The Pitcher and the Catcher are the last players to throw and catch a pitch.

In the top of the first inning, the pitcher/catcher is the person listed on the lineup card.

A substitute or re-entered starter cannot be considered a pitcher or catcher before playing defense.

A courtesy runner may be entered for a pitcher or catcher on base at any time. A courtesy runner does not have to enter immediately after the pitcher or catcher gets on base.

A player who has been taken out of the game cannot be used as a courtesy runner.

In general, a player can only be used as a courtesy runner once an inning. However, if the team bats around and the pitcher or catcher gets on base twice in the inning, the same player can be used as a courtesy runner twice in the same inning.

A player cannot be a courtesy runner for both the pitcher and catcher in the same inning.

A player can be a courtesy runner for both the pitcher and catcher in the same game.

An unreported courtesy runner is treated the same as an unreported substitute. The team is warned, and further violations result in the ejection of the coach.

If the courtesy runner is injured, she must be replaced by another courtesy runner or the pitcher or catcher for whom she is running.

If the pitcher or catcher is placed on second base under the Tiebreaker Procedure, a courtesy runner can be used for her.

If a pinch hitter reaches base and the pitcher or catcher re-enters, a courtesy runner may not be used for her.

In general, a player cannot enter as a substitute in the same half inning that they are used as a courtesy runner. However, there is an exception for injury for a team that has no other available substitute.

If an incorrect courtesy runner is used and is detected while still on base, she is declared out and a team warning is issued. Further violations result in the ejection of the coach.

Double First Base

The Double Base or Safety Base may be used at first base. It consists of the normal white base and a colored base the same size which extends into foul territory.

The entire purpose of the Double Base is to avoid collisions at first base on close plays. On normal infield plays, the fielder is to use the white portion as she usually would. The batter-runner is to use the colored portion to keep away from the fielder.

On any out attempt from the foul side of first base, the defense can use either portion. As the purpose of the double base is prevent a collision, this exception is made so the fielder is not obligated to reach across the path of the batter-runner to tag the white base nor is the catcher compelled to throw across the path of the batter runner. In such an instance, the batter-runner is allowed to go to the white portion of the double base.

If there is no play at first base, as on a hit to the outfield, the batter-runner may use either portion of the base.

Once the batter-runner reaches first base, she can return or tag-up on either part of the base. Likewise, the fielders can tag any part of the base.

In essence, once the batter-runner reaches first base, it is one big bag that can be used by either offense or defense.

DP / FLEX

In order to utilize the DP/Flex rule, the team must list both positions in the starting lineup.

The primary role of the DESIGNATED PLAYER (DP) is to play offense

The primary role of the FLEX is to play defense

The optional DP/FLEX (and/or APs) must be listed on the lineup card that is approved by the Plate Umpire.

In a traditional lineup, a team may have nine, ten, eleven or twelve starting players.

A team may elect to include a **DP/FLEX** and/or up to two Additional Players (AP).

The maximum number of **players** in the lineup is **12**.

The maximum number of **batters** in the lineup is **11**.

The DP/FLEX must be declared before the game. In order to have a DP, a team **MUST** have a FLEX listed. Otherwise, they may never be in the game.

The DP's name is listed where they are batting in the batting order. They can be in any position in the batting order.

The FLEX is listed last in the lineup in a non-batting position.

The DP must remain in the same position in the lineup for the entire game.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		 DP listed where batting
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		 FLEX listed Last

Any 9 players in the lineup can play defense.

In general, the AP & DP are players who only bat.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		NOT on Defense
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		NOT on Defense
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		

Any of the players in the line-up may play defense. with no lineup effect.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		Now playing RF
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		Now playing 2B
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		NOT on Defense
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		NOT on Defense
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		

If the FLEX player stays in the last lineup (FLEX) position, she must play defense. Since she is not on offense, if the FLEX player is not on defense, she is out of game.

This eliminates the non-batting position.

It reduces the number players in lineup.

It must be reported.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		Now Pitching
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		NOT on Defense
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		NOT on Defense; Out of Game Non Batting Position Eliminated

In a 10-player lineup (No APs), the FLEX player may not play offense only. To play offense, the FLEX player must go into the DP's batting position and the DP must leave the game. This reduces the lineup to 9 players. Thus, every player must play defense.

If a team is using APs, it is possible for the FLEX Player to play offense only.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		Pitching
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		Flex (Krouse) replaces Evans; Evans Out of Game Krouse playing offensive only
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		Flex to DP slot; Non Batting Position Eliminated

The DP may be substituted for at any time.

The DP may re-enter.

The DP can never just play defense. If the DP is not on offense, the DP is out of game.

The FLEX batting for the DP eliminates the non-batting position.

The number in lineup is reduced.

It must be reported.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		NOT on Defense
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP	#18	Evans NOT on Offense; Evans Out of Game; Krouse now batting 5th
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		Batting for DP Non Batting Position Eliminated

The FLEX may be substituted for at any time.

The FLEX may re-enter.

The DP or an AP may play defense for the FLEX.

In either case, the FLEX will leave the game.

The Non-Batting Position can be Re-established,
if the FLEX re-enters into the non-batting position, or
if the DP re-enters and FLEX moves back into non batting position.

The FLEX can only bat/run for the DP.

The FLEX is ejected for batting/running for someone other than the DP.

She may enter the batting order only for the DP.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP	#18	Flex can only go here
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		Batting for DP in DP slot <u>Non Batting Position</u> Eliminated

The DP may play any defensive position, any time and any number of times. This does not count as a substitution for anyone except the FLEX which must be reported.
The FLEX may play offense in the DP's position any time and any number of times.
Since the DP has left the game, this is treated as a substitution for the DP which must be reported.

The DP & FLEX can both be on defense at the same time.
The DP & FLEX may **NEVER** be on offense at the same.

No courtesy runner for DP. Unless DP is the pitcher or catcher of record.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		NOT on Defense
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		Now catching; Entitled to a Courtesy Runner
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Good	3B		
8	3	Heather High	2B		
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		Now longer catching; NOT entitled to a Courtesy Runner
10	22	Jane Jump	RF		
FLEX	18	Kris Krouse	P		

Ejection / Restrict to Bench

An umpire should always work hard to keep coaches and players in the game. However, when it is necessary, the umpire must invoke the proper penalty.

When a coach is ejected, they must leave the area. Out of sight / out of sound.

When a coach or player is restricted to the bench, they are not allowed to enter the field of play. However, a coach, with umpire's approval, may enter the field to tend to an injured player. Restricting a coach to the bench does not constrain the coach from continuing to coach.

It is often advisable to work with coach to control the spectators in the crowd.

Ground Rules

The field should be clearly marked. Markings should include screens on foul poles along the foul lines past first and third and vertical foul-line markings on any barrier that limits the outfield.

Softball parks, as well as crowd and weather conditions, differ. Hence, it is sometimes necessary to have special ground rules. The plate umpire must confer with the coaches prior to the game and then announce any ground rules on which the two coaches and the plate umpire agree. Ground rules may not supersede a rule in the USSSA Fast Pitch Softball Rule Book. If agreement cannot be reached, the plate umpire must establish needed ground rules and announce them to both coaches.

Here is a list of ground rules that are often adopted in cases where the field does not meet the specifications as provided by Rule 2.

If there is a screen behind the catcher or other permanent obstruction in front of the stand, a batted ball that goes behind these becomes dead. It is recommended that no such obstruction be less than 25 feet from the diamond.

Wild pitches, overthrows and batted balls that go over or through a fence or into a dugout are governed by dead ball rules.

For special field conditions, such as an incline that makes a spot where it is impossible or very difficult for a fielder to safely retrieve the ball, the ball should become dead if it goes to that spot and each runner's advance should be limited to two bases.

For an unfenced field, a chalk or imaginary out-of-bounds line should be established to define live-ball area. If spectators are permitted in dead ball areas, umpires should consider these the same as bleachers and the ball becomes dead if it bounces into the fans. The umpires must anticipate such a situation and announce the ground rule in advance.

Illegal Pitch / Leaving Base Early

The question comes what to do if you have an illegal pitch and a runner leaving base early on the same play.

If the illegal pitch violation occurs first: Since the illegal pitch is a delayed dead ball, play continues. However, the runner leaving early is a dead ball. This ends the play and both penalties should be enforced. The runner who left base early is out. The batter is awarded a ball for the illegal pitch. Any runners on base are returned unless forced.

If leaving early occurs first: Dead Ball shuts down everything.

Situation: Bases loaded, one out and a 3-2 count on the batter. The pitcher went to the glove two times and the plate umpire has an illegal pitch (delayed dead ball) as the pitcher starts her pitch the runner comes off second base. At that time, the base umpire calls Dead Ball. Penalty: Ball is dead; no pitch; The runner on second base is out for leaving the base too soon.

The batter is awarded a ball which is ball 4 and is awarded first base. **The runner at first base is forced to second base. The runner at third base stays at third base.**

Interference

Interference is an act that hampers the defense.

Interference is the act by an offensive player or team member that inhibits a defensive player making a play. It may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction that would deny the fielder a reasonable opportunity to execute a play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered.

Interference by an offensive player results in a Dead Ball and an Out.

When interference by an offensive player or coach occurs 3 things happen:

1. The ball is dead,
2. Someone must be called out, and
3. All other runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference unless forced to advance.

Batter Interference

Batter Interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before she hits the ball. It takes place when the batter:

- ❖ Interferes with the catcher's throw on an attempted steal
The batter is entitled to maintain her position in the batter's box in an attempted pickoff/steal of a runner. However, once the pitch reaches the catcher, she may not reposition and interfere with the catcher's throw.
EFFECT: Dead ball; Batter is out; all runners must return to last base touched.
EXCEPTION: If the batter is already out, the runner closest to her is also out.
- ❖ Interferes with the catcher on a play at the plate. The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at the plate.
SAME AS ABOVE
- ❖ Releases her bat in such a manner that it hits the catcher and prevents her from making a play. If the batter merely drops her bat and the catcher trips over it, there is no interference.
EFFECT: Dead ball; Batter is out; all runners must return to last base touched.

If the catcher is not making a play on a base runner but the batter interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher, the umpire should call time and return the runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.

Batter-Runner Interference

Batter-runner Interference occurs when the batter runner:

- ❖ Runs to First outside the three foot lane and interferes with receipt of a thrown ball
EFFECT: Dead ball; Batter/runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.

- ❖ Steps back to avoid a tag
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Batter/runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*
- ❖ Interferes with a fielder executing a play.
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Batter/runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*
- ❖ Drops or throws the bat and the bat hits the ball in fair territory
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Batter/runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*
- ❖ Interferes with a play at the plate to prevent an obvious double play
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; both the Batter/runner and the runner are out; all other runners must return to last base touched.*

Runner Interference

Runner Interference includes:

- ❖ A runner who interferes with a fielder executing a play.
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*
- ❖ A runner or batter-runner who is hit by a fair untouched batted ball which is playable.
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*
- ❖ Intentionally interfering with a thrown ball.
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Runner is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*
- ❖ A runner, who has been put out, interferes with a fielder executing a play.
***EFFECT:** Dead ball; Runner closest to home is out; all runners must return to last base touched.*

When a runner interferes with a fielder, the umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the proper rule.

If the interference by an unretired runner prevents a double play, both the runner and the immediate trailing runner are out.

If a defensive player fails to make a catch on a catchable ball due to the actions of a runner not in contact with base, the umpire shall determine if interference occurred and rule accordingly. Any runner not in contact with a base must move to allow a fielder to make a play on a batted ball,

A runner proceeding to the next base may run in front of a fielder or jump over the ball without committing interference even though it may be distracting to the fielder.

When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball, it is interference if it occurred before it passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher) provided the runner was not in contact with the base. It is not interference if the batted ball touched a player (excluding the pitcher) before it hit the runner, or if the runner was standing in foul territory.

If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball not caught, the runner is out, a foul ball strike is called, the ball is dead, and the batter remains at bat. EXCEPTION: Third strike bunt

General Comment on non-batter, non-runner interference: When interference occurs by anyone other than a batter or runner, the ball is dead, but an out is not assessed if no play is apparent.

On-deck Batter Inference

On-deck batters may be charged with interference if they

- ❖ Interfere with a throw and a possible tag on a runner,
EFFECT: Dead ball; runner closest to home out; all others return to last base touched
- ❖ Interfere a fielder's opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.
EFFECT: Dead ball; batter-runner out; all others return to last base touched

Coach's interference

Coach's interference occurs when a base coach

- ❖ Interferes with a fielder who is playing a foul ball in flight or making an initial play on a fair ball
EFFECT: Dead ball; batter-runner out; all others return to last base touched
- ❖ Runs toward home and draws a throw
EFFECT: Dead ball; runner closest to home out; all others return to last base touched
- ❖ Interferes with a fielder attempting to catch or throw a ball or make a play on a runner.
EFFECT: Dead ball; runner closest to home out; all others return to last base touched

The coach's box is not a sanctuary. While in the coach's box, the base coach must make a reasonable effort to avoid a fielder's attempted play.

Offensive team interference

Offensive team interference could occur

- ❖ On a thrown ball striking loose equipment left on the playing field should there actually be a play interfered with.
EFFECT: Dead ball; runner closest to home out; all others return to last base touched
- ❖ When any dugout personnel enter the field of play and interferes.
EFFECT: Dead ball; runner closest to home out; all others return to last base touched.

Spectator interference

Spectator interference occurs when a spectator:

- ❖ Enters the field and interferes with a play.
EFFECT: The batter and runner(s) shall be placed where in the umpire's

judgment they would have made, had the interference not occurred. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectators.

- ❖ Reaches onto the field from the stands and prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play.

EFFECT: *A dead ball is ruled, and the batter is called out. All runners shall be placed where in the umpire's judgment they would have made had the interference not occurred. It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands.*

Umpire inference

Umpire inference occurs when an umpire:

- ❖ Interferes with a catcher's attempt to put out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick-off from the catcher to any base.

EFFECT: *Delayed dead ball; It is interference only if the runner is not put out, in which case she is returned to her base.*

- ❖ Is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball before it passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher).

EFFECT: *Dead ball; The batter-runner is awarded first base. No other runners advance unless forced.*

In no other case is umpire interference ruled.

Jewelry

Players in a youth game are prohibited from wearing exposed jewelry that is deemed dangerous.

Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, it must be taped to the body, to remain visible.

The Penalty of wearing jewelry deemed dangerous is:

- ❖ First offense is a team warning.
- ❖ Second offense and any subsequent violation the player is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game. The coach shall be ejected

At the pre-game conference, the umpires should ask the coaches if their players are legally and properly equipped.

NOTE: Play indicator wristbands are legal but must be worn as designed.

NOTE: The jewelry rule does not apply to adult players.

Last Completed At Bat (LCAB)

Last Completed At Bat (LCAB) Courtesy Runner (CR) option
(Not applicable to the Elite Select Program)

Teams may elect to use the LCAB player as a Courtesy Runner but
Only if no unused substitute is available.

Because of the LCAB option, a team will always have a courtesy runner (CR) possibility.

In the following example lineup

#9 leads off and singles.

#3 strikes out.

#7 walks.

Coach requests a courtesy runner for #7 the catcher.

Since both substitutes #1 and #25 have not been in the game, both are eligible to be used as a courtesy runner.

If the coach uses a courtesy runner, it must be either #1 or #25

Traditional Lineup

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Goode	AP		<i>Single</i>
8	3	Heather High	P		<i>Strike Out</i>
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		<i>Walk</i>
10	13	Jane Jump	RF		
11	2	Kris Krouse	3B		
Flex	18	Nell Nimble	2B		

Substitutes

#	Player	#	Player
25	Sally Sub		<i>Must use Eligible Substitute</i>
1	Tracey Turner		<i>as Courtesy Runner</i>

The LCAB courtesy runner is determined at the time the courtesy runner is requested. Certain players in the lineup are not to be used as the LCAB CR. The team must go back the lineup skipping the following players:

1. any player currently on base
2. the pitcher or catcher of record (Neither the pitcher nor the catcher may ever be a CR)
3. any player who has already courtesy run for the other position in the same inning

In the first inning, if there is no one eligible to be a CR (i.e. there are no eligible substitutes nor any eligible player who has completed her time at bat), the CR shall be the eligible player furthest away in the batting order. i.e. The LCAB CR for the leadoff batter is the batter who is not a pitcher nor catcher listed last in the lineup.

In the following lineup

#9 leads off and is hit by the pitch. #9 is awarded 1B; #1 substitutes for #9.

#3 walks. #1 is forced to 2B; #3 goes to 1B

Coach requests a courtesy runner for #3 the pitcher.

- #1 is not eligible because #1 went in the game as a substitute for #9.
- #25 is the only eligible substitute and is used as the courtesy runner.

#7 hits into a fielder's choice. #1 advances to 3B; #25 the CR for #3 is out at 2B; #7 goes to 1B.

Coach requests a courtesy runner for #7 the catcher.

There are no available substitutes.

- #1 is not eligible because #1 went in the game as a substitute for #9.
- #25 who is on the bench is not eligible because #25 was a courtesy runner for the pitcher in this inning.

The coach may use the LCAB courtesy runner option.

- The player who last completed a time at bat is #7, the catcher, so go up the batting order.
- #3 is the pitcher and by rule may not be used as a LCAB courtesy runner so go up the batting order.
- #1 who is in the game for #9 is on base so go up the batting order.
- #15 satisfies the requirements

#15 becomes the LCAB courtesy runner.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Goode	AP	1	Hit by Pitch
8	3	Heather High	P		Walk Out at 2 nd on FC
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		Fielder's Choice
10	13	Jane Jump	RF		
11	2	Kris Krouse	3B		
Flex	18	Nell Nimble	2B		

Yes - LCAB
No - On base
No - Pitcher
No - On base

Substitutes

#	Player	#	Player
25	Sally Sub		Courtesy Runner for Pitcher
1	Tracey Turner		Substituted for #9
		No	Eligible Substitute

The same scenario except this time the coach does not immediately request a courtesy runner when #7 reaches 1B.

#13 comes up to bat and strikes out.

Coach requests a courtesy runner for #7 the catcher.

As before, there are no available substitutes.

- #1 is not eligible because #1 went in the game as a substitute for #9.
- #25 who is on the bench is not eligible because #25 was a courtesy runner for the pitcher in this inning.

The coach may use the LCAB courtesy runner option.

- The player who last completed a time at bat is #13 who just struck out.

#13 becomes the LCAB courtesy runner.

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitute	
1	4	Amy Adams	SS		
2	5	Bev Beach	AP		
3	16	Cat Carr	LF		
4	39	Debbie Dow	1B		
5	6	Eva Evans	DP		
6	15	Fran Foote	CF		
7	9	Grace Goode	AP	1	<i>Hit by Pitch</i>
8	3	Heather High	P		<i>Walk Out at 2nd on FC</i>
9	7	Izzy Itch	C		<i>Fielder's Choice</i>
10	13	Jane Jump	RF		<i>Strike Out</i>
11	2	Kris Krouse	3B		
Flex	18	Nell Nimble	2B		

LCAB

Substitutes

#	Player	#	Player
25	Sally Sub		<i>Courtesy Runner for Pitcher</i>
1	Tracey Turner		<i>Substituted for #9</i>
			<i>No Eligible Substitute</i>

Look Back Rule

The purpose of the look back rule is to get runners to a base so the next pitch can start. The look-back rule establishes a set of rules for when the runner must return to a base.

The look-back rule is not designed to generate cheap outs. Umpires should not call a runner out who loses contact with the base but had no intention of leaving the base.

The look-back rule is in effect when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle during a live ball and the batter-runner has reached first base or has been put out. When the look back rule is in effect, any runner, who is stopped off base, must immediately advance to the next base or return to the base left and any runner, who is:

- 1) Stationary on a base – must remain on that base.
- 2) Stationary off a base – must immediately advance or return.
- 3) In motion off a base – may continue in motion until she becomes #1 or #2 above, then comply as above.

The responsibility is completely on the runner. There is no obligation on the pitcher to look, fake, or throw.

Failure to immediately proceed will result in the runner being declared out.

Once the runner has returned or stops at any base for any reason, she will be declared out if she leaves the base.

The runner is released from the look-back rule when:

1. A play is made on her or another runner.
2. The pitcher leaves the circle or drops the ball.
3. The pitcher releases the ball to the batter.

If two runners are off base, only one can be called out. It is not possible to obtain two outs on the “look-back” rule.

When the batter-runner overruns first base and starts moving back toward first base, she is neither allowed to move toward second base nor stop. If a batter-runner commits to first base (moving towards first), the runner must return to this base. The batter-runner cannot change her mind and advance to second once it looks like she is moving directly to first following the overrun. If there is any movement, except to move back toward first base, the runner is called out.

If the batter-runner overruns first base and commits to going to second base, she must continue moving toward second base.

If she stops at first base, however, and then steps off the base after the pitcher has the ball within the circle, she is out.

Since the look-back rule is not an appeal play, the runner is declared out when the infraction occurs.

Any act by the pitcher in possession of the ball in the circle that, in the umpire's judgment, causes the runner to react; is considered making a play, and The Look Back Rule is not in effect.

The pitcher has possession of the ball when the ball is in her hand, or the ball is in her glove which is on her hand. The pitcher is also considered to have possession of the ball if she has the ball or the ball in the glove which is being held securely. I.e. between her legs, pinned to body under her arm or tucked under her chin.

Being in the eight-foot circle is defined as both feet within or partially within the lines. The pitcher is not considered in the circle if either foot is completely outside the lines.

Obstruction

Obstruction is the act of a fielder:

- ❖ Not in possession of the ball or
- ❖ Not in the act of making an initial play on a batted ball

which hinders a batter or runner. The act may be intentional or unintentional.

If a defensive player is blocking the base or base path without the ball, this is impeding the progress of the runner and is obstruction. After the fielder has the ball, she can block the base and make the tag. It is obstruction if the player blocks the base, catches the ball, and makes the tag.

Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner or not, the umpire will declare obstruction and signal a delayed dead ball. The ball will remain live. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, will be awarded the base(s) they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. A preceding runner would advance to the next base if she occupied a base awarded to an obstructed runner.

An obstructed runner could be called out between the two bases she was obstructed if she was properly appealed for missing a base or leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched. If the runner committed an act of interference after the obstruction, this too would overrule the obstruction.

If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction, she is running at her own risk, if tagged, she would be called out. The ball remains live and other plays may be made.

When the runner is obstructed during a rundown, a delayed dead ball is called. If the runner is tagged out after being obstructed, a dead ball is ruled, and she is awarded the base she would have made had there been no obstruction. If the ball is overthrown after the obstruction, the runner may advance. She may not be called out between two bases where she was obstructed.

If other runners are advancing when an umpire calls time following a play on an obstructed runner, a rule of thumb for placement of the other runners is: If they have reached halfway to the next base, they are allowed to advance to the next base.

Catcher obstruction is a delayed dead ball call. The coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or awarding the batter first base; advancing any runner attempting to advance (i.e., steal or squeeze) to the base she was attempting; and advancing other runners only if they are forced because of the award.

If catcher obstruction occurs when a batter steps out of the box on a legitimate attempt to hit the ball, the obstruction will take precedence and the penalty for catcher obstruction will be enforced.

If there is catcher's obstruction followed by subsequent batter's interference, batter's interference should be ruled.

A catcher reaching over the plate could be ruled catcher's obstruction

Over Running (Over Walking) First Base

A batter-runner who has been awarded first base on a base on balls or uncaught third strike has the same rights to overrun first base as a batter-runner who hit the ball.

If the batter/runner overruns first base but never attempts to continue to second base, she cannot be tagged out.

She does not have to turn to the right.

She does not have to turn in foul territory.

Overthrows

Runners are awarded two bases on overthrows that go out of play or become blocked. Two bases are awarded from the last base touched at the time the ball left the hand.

Direction of runners has no bearing on the award. When an overthrow is made on a runner returning to a base, she is awarded two bases from that base.

If she was returning to first base to tag up on a caught fly ball, the award would be from first base. The runner would be awarded second and third base.

If two runners are between the same bases, the award is determined as follows:

If the two runners are between first and second, they will be awarded second and third (the lead runner is awarded third and the trail runner is awarded second)

If the two runners are between second and third, both will be awarded home.

When a fielder loses possession of the ball on an attempted tag and the ball then enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked.

On a pitched ball going out of play, the runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time of the pitch. If a batter receives a base on balls and the fourth ball gets away from the catcher and goes out of play, she will be awarded first base only.

Pitching

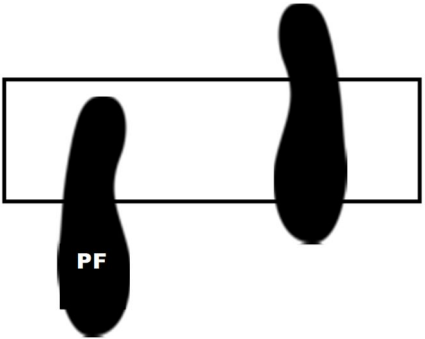
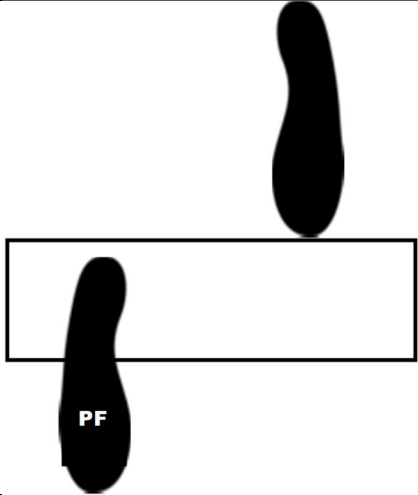
In 2020, USSSA made an effort to more closely align with other organizations. USSSA relaxed its pitching rules especially with respect to foot placement (Rules 6.1.A, 6.1.E.1, 6.1.E.2)

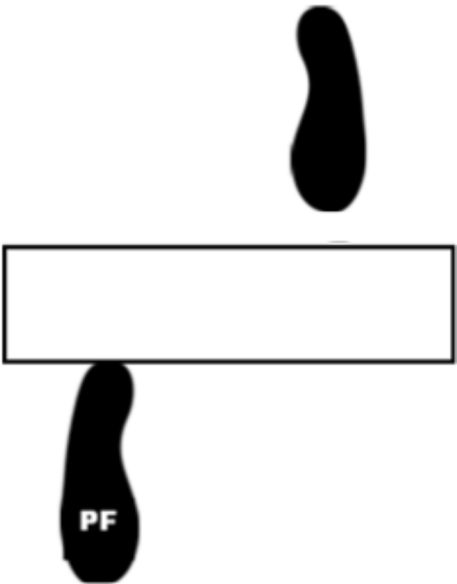
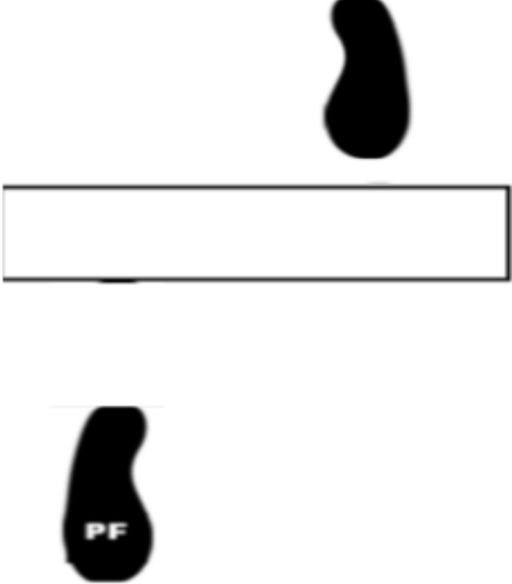
What Changed

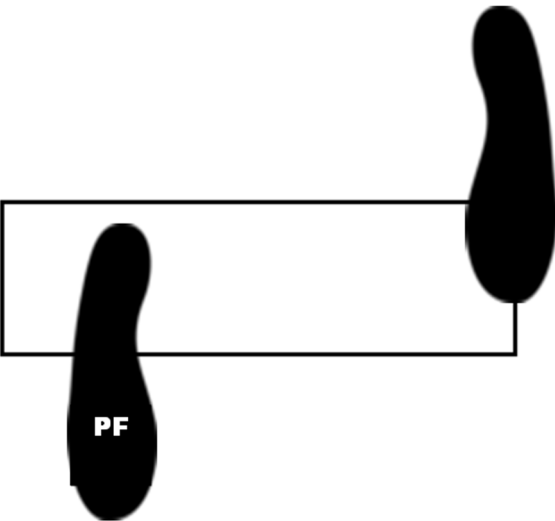
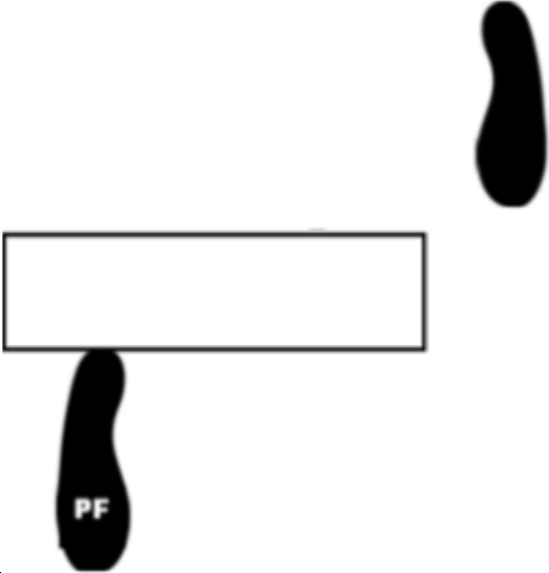
	2011 - 2019	2020
pivot foot	Part must be on top of the pitcher's plate.	Must be in contact with the pitcher's plate
non-pivot foot	in contact with the pitcher's plate	in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate.
24-inch length of the pitcher's plate	Both feet must be within.	Both feet must be within or partially within.
The pitch begins and cannot be discontinued	when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together	when the hands are separated once they have been placed together.
step backward	Not allowed.	before the start of the pitch, the non-pivot foot may
forward step	Must take exactly one toward home plate	not more than one step which must be forward toward the batter

The pitcher must comply with the basic features of the pitching rule.

The pitcher must have both feet on the ground. Neither foot can be completely outside the 24-inch length of the pitching plate. She shall take a position with her pivot foot **in contact with** the pitcher's plate and her non-pivot foot in contact **or behind the pitcher's plate**. **The pivot foot is not required to be on top of the pitching plate.**

	
Legal	Legal
Both feet touching the top of the pitcher's plate	The pivot foot is partially on the top surface; The non-pivot foot is touching

	
<p>Legal</p>	<p>ILLegal</p>
<p>Pivot foot is in contact with pitcher's plate. It does NOT need to be on top of the pitcher's plate Non pivot foot on ground behind.</p>	<p>The pivot foot may NOT start nor push off from in front of the pitcher's plate.</p>

	
<p>Legal</p>	<p>ILLegal</p>
<p>Both feet must be within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.</p>	<p>Non pivot foot is not within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.</p>

The purpose of requiring a signal is to ensure the batter is ready and prevent a quick pitch. It does not preclude the pitcher, on or off the rubber, from taking the actual signal from the dugout nor from not taking any signal at all. It does require that either a signal or the simulating of a signal must be taken by the pitcher while in contact with the pitcher's plate. The ball must be held in either the pitching hand or the glove, in front of or behind the body, while taking or simulating taking the signal. The pitcher must pause and look toward home.

The pitcher does not have to "present the ball". If the ball is in the glove or in the pitching hand behind the body, you would not see it and it would not be presented as some may be interpreting.

After taking the signal, the hands must come together in front of the body for not more than 10 seconds. There is no minimum time the hands must be together. Any touching of the hands together satisfies the requirement. The hands may be motionless or moving when they are brought together. **The pitcher may step back with the non-pivot foot before the pitch starts.** No rocking movement which pulls the pivot foot off the pitcher's plate is allowed. If the pivot foot turns or slides in order to push off the pitcher's plate, this is acceptable as long as contact is maintained. It is not considered a step if the pitcher slides her foot across the pitcher's plate.

The pitch officially begins when the pitcher separates her hands after the hands have been brought together. The pitcher may not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball. The pitcher may not separate her hands and then return the ball to both hands.

The delivery may not be more than 1 ½ revolutions. The pitcher's hand may go past the hip twice as long as there are not two complete circles. The wrist may not be further from the hip than the elbow. The delivery may not have a stop or reversal of the forward motion.

One forward step must be taken. It must be toward the batter and cannot land completely outside the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The pivot foot may remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or may push off and drag **or be airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground.** It is illegal to push off from a spot other than the pitcher's plate (crow hop). The release of the ball must be simultaneous with the step.

If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand before the hands are brought together, it is a no pitch, and the ball is live. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand after the hands have been brought together either on the back swing or while the arm is moving forward, it is a live ball and a pitch.

A player may be removed as a pitcher and returned as a pitcher only once per inning. Any pitcher returning in the same inning will receive no warm up pitches.

Crow Hop

A crow hop is the replanting of the pivot foot prior to delivery of the pitch. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal. It is not a step if the pitcher slides (her) foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.

A crow hop is not the pitcher's failure to drag the push-off foot along the ground. A crow hop is, as the name implies, a "hop" off the pitching rubber by the pivot/push-off foot (typically moving it forward a foot or more) to "replant" it and use it for a second push-off point. It is an illegal act.

Leap

A leap is when both feet are airborne.

The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from, the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground or **be airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground.**

Leaping can be caused by a failure to "drag" the pivot/push-off foot. Leaping, in fast pitch softball, is the act of having both feet off the ground at the same time. It is **Legal**.

Pitcher's Uniform

A pitcher may wear a batting glove and/or wristband on the glove hand and wrist. The batting glove may be white. Pitchers 12 and under and younger may not wear a metal toe plate on her shoe. A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, or thighs, which may, in the umpire's judgment, be distracting to the batter. Tape, preferably neutral/skin color, can be worn on the pitching hand for injury.

A batting glove may not be worn on the pitching hand.

A long-sleeved sweatshirt of any color is acceptable under the jersey. If worn, it may not extend past the wrist so a clear gap can be seen between the ball and the end of the shirt.

Roster Batting

A team may optionally bat all players physically present in lieu of a traditional line-up. Teams choosing to Roster Bat may disperse additional players (AP's) starters who aren't listed as defensive players, anywhere in their batting order to bat everyone

A team using Roster Batting will have no substitutes nor can it have a DP/FLEX.

A late arriving player must be inserted in the lineup. in the following priority:

1. for any absent player, or
2. at the end of the lineup (increasing the number in the lineup).

Please also see Additional Players (AP)

Run scoring on the third out of an inning

A run will not score if the third out of the inning is a putout at first base (batter-runner) or a force out at any other base

Missed bases could result in a force out. i.e. if the runner from first base missed second base on a base hit and that was the third out of the inning when properly appealed, any run(s) scored would not count.

An appeal play on a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball is not a force. If the appeal results in the third out, any runner(s) preceding the appealed runner would score if they crossed home plate prior to the out.

All third outs are either:

1. Force outs
2. Timing Play outs

If an out is not a force play, it is a timing play

Runner hit by fair ball

While in Contact with the Base.

The runner will never be called out unless the act is intentional. The ball remains live or dead depending on the closest defensive player. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. However, if the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If the ball is ruled dead and the batter awarded a base hit, only runners forced to advance due to the batter being placed on first base shall be advanced one base.

While Not in Contact with the Base.

The runner will be called out or ruled safe depending on the interference rule. SEE INTERFERENCE.

Shorthanded Teams

A team may start the game shorthanded if it only has eight players. The team would have a line-up of nine with an absent player in the ninth position.

If a team has no available substitutes, it may continue a game with one or more fewer in the batting order than it started the game if a player leaves the game for any reason. A team cannot bat less than eight. The game is forfeited.

If a player leaving the game is a runner, she is out.

EXCEPTION: If a baserunner is injured, the LCAB may complete her baserunning responsibilities.

A team may not play with a vacant spot (absent player) if it has a substitute available. If the only player available to substitute has been used as a courtesy runner in that half inning, they must be used for a player who is removed for injury.

As soon as an available substitute arrives, she must be inserted into the lineup. If there are multiple absent players, the substitute must enter in the lineup position that will bat soonest.

Whenever the vacant spot is due to bat, an out is declared. The defensive team may walk a preceding batter(s) to get to the automatic out. There may be up to the number of Additional Players (AP) plus one (1) Absent Players (automatic outs) in the lineup.

Whenever a team plays shorthanded because a player leaves the game, the player cannot return to the line-up. Exception: A player being treated under the blood rule can return.

If the team has only nine players, one is injured in the third inning, a substitute arrives in the fifth inning and is entered into the game, and another player becomes injured, this is legal as the team can continue to play with eight. If the same team did not have a substitute when the second player became injured, reducing the number of players to seven, the game is forfeited.

Team Warning

A team warning is to be issued to each team for each violation.

The following results in an initial Team Warning and have subsequent penalties:

- ❖ Remove helmet – team warning; for subsequent violations, the player is confined to bench area. Helmet removal is not an out in USSSA play.
- ❖ Unreported substitute – team warning; player becomes legal; for subsequent violations, the player is out, and the manager is ejected
- ❖ Unreported courtesy runner – team warning; player becomes legal; for subsequent violations, the manager is ejected
- ❖ Ineligible courtesy runner – team warning; player is out; for subsequent violations, player is out, and manager is ejected
- ❖ Fake a tag-- team warning & always obstruction. For subsequent violations, the player is restricted to the bench and the coach shall be ejected
- ❖ Carelessly throw a bat -- Team warning. For subsequent violations, the player is restricted to the bench and the coach shall be ejected
- ❖ Jewelry violation -- Team warning. For subsequent violations, the player is restricted to the bench and the coach shall be ejected
- ❖ Wear metal cleats (in age groups where prohibited) -- Team warning. For subsequent violations, the player is restricted to the bench and the coach shall be ejected
- ❖ Hit the ball to teammates on defense after the game has started. -- Team warning. For subsequent violations, the player is restricted to the bench and the coach shall be ejected
- ❖ Use electronic communication equipment -- Team warning.
- ❖ Use tobacco products in any form. -- Team warning. Subsequent violation player is restricted to the bench; coach shall be ejected

A reminder at home plate by the umpire does not constitute a warning for either team.

The plate umpire shall keep a record of team warnings for each team.

Tiebreaker Procedure

After seven innings or after the time limit has expired with the score tied at the start of each new inning, the tiebreaker procedure will be used at the start of every half inning. The player who had the last completed at bat of the previous inning will be placed on second base to the start the inning.

If the player is the pitcher or catcher, a courtesy runner may be used.

A substitution may be made for the player.

It is the responsibility of the Umpire in conjunction with the scorekeeper to determine the correct player to place on second base.

If the wrong player is placed on second base, there is no penalty. The correct player is placed on base. Any advance by the incorrect player is allowed.

If the team is playing shorthanded and the vacant spot was the last completed at bat, the player who precedes the vacant spot would be placed on second base.

Time Limits

In games that use a time limit, it is recommended that a visible timing device be used. The cheapest solution is a small kitchen timer placed on the back stop. Better and only slightly more expensive solutions are available. A count down timer with an alarm is preferred. A stopwatch would be a second choice. Using a regular watch is not considered a good solution except as a backup timing device.

If the home plate umpire is responsible for timing the game, the clock should be started when the pre-game conference ends. It is impractical for the home plate umpire to start the clock on the first pitch. This also cuts down wasted time before the first pitch of the game. The umpire should also record the time of day as a back-up.

If a visible clock is used, it is not necessary to announce time left because the clock can be seen by the coaches. However, if the time is being kept on a clock that is not visible, it is prudent to announce the time remaining near the end of the game.

When the device sounds, the inning should be completed. If the home team is ahead in the bottom of the inning, the game is over.

Once the third out is made, the next half inning begins. If the home team has made their third out and then the device sounds, the next inning has started, even if no pitch has been thrown, even if the home team is still in the dugout.

Walk (Base on Balls)

The batter is awarded a walk when they receive four pitched balls.

A team can **not** issue a verbal walk. The Umpire should not honor a verbal request to walk a batter.

The pitcher cannot deliberately drop, roll, bounce, etc. the pitch to prevent the batter from hitting the ball. The penalty for such action is a team warning; second offensives result in pitcher being restricted and coach being ejected.