



SOFTBALL CANADA 2012-2013 FASTPITCH RULE CHANGES

Rule 1 Definitions

Sec. 2

Appeals

c. The appeal may not be made after any one of the following has occurred:

- 1) A legal or illegal pitch.

COMMENT: Deleted the words “has been thrown”. An illegal pitch can be called without a pitch being thrown. Confirms an appeal cannot occur except for illegal substitution and players switching bases once a legal or illegal pitch is called.

Sec.12

Blocked Ball

Is a batted, thrown or pitched ball:

- a) That is touched, stopped, or handled by a person not engaged in the game or
- b) Touches any object that is not part of the official equipment or official playing field or
- c) Becomes lodged in the fencing or
- d) Is touched by a defensive player who is in contact with the ground that is not part of the playing area.

Comments: New additions are considered Blocked balls.

Sec. 37 HOME TEAM

Is the team who starts the game on defense.

COMMENT: Simplifies the definition as previous wording defined how a home team was selected. Various methods are used to determine Home team so previous wording deleted. New definition defines who starts the game on defense first.

Sec. 41 ILLEGAL PLAYER

- a) Is a starting player who may legally return to the game after being substituted for and who has done so without reporting to the umpire.
- b) A substitute entering the game without reporting to the umpire.

Note Deleted

Comment: The previous Rule contained a Note: The note has been deleted because it is already stated in Rule 4.

Sec. 62 OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is the act of:

- a) A defensive player or team member who hinder or prevent a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- b) A fielder who impedes the progress of a runner or batter runner who is legally running the bases while:
 1. Not in possession of the ball or
 2. Not in the act of fielding the ball or
 3. **Making a fake tag without the ball**
 4. In possession of the ball and who pushes a runner off a base or
 5. In possession of the ball but not in the act of making a play on the runner, impedes the progress of that runner, while he is legally running the bases.

COMMENT: Definition is cleaner than previous rule and adds a clarification that a fake tag is obstruction. There can be no fake tag obstruction call if the fielder has the ball.

Sec. 63 OFFENSIVE PLAYER ONLY (OPO)

An Offensive Player Only (OPO) is a player in the batting order, other than the DP who is playing Offence but not playing defence.

COMMENT: Previous wording did not cover all substitutions for a player who was playing offense only.

Sec. (65) OFFICIAL EQUIPMENT

This is a new Definition.

Official Equipment is considered to be any equipment (bats, gloves, helmets, etc) in current use by the defensive or offensive team in the course of play. Defensive equipment (gloves for example) left on the field by the offensive team would not be considered Official Equipment.

COMMENT: Defines equipment which is in use and equipment which would not be in use. This rule allows us to implement penalties when equipment not considered official causes interference.

Play 1. The offensive team leaves a glove outside the playing area. An overthrown ball strikes the glove.

Rule: The umpire calls "Dead Ball", rules a blocked ball and returns runners to the base they held prior to the "Dead Ball" call. If a fielder had a play on the ball interference could be called. The runner being played on would be out.

Requires re numbering from Rule Sec. 1-65

Sec. 72 Pitch (will change to Sec. 73 with re numbering)

Is the act performed by the pitcher in delivering the ball to the batter.

Deleted penalty in definition.

COMMENT: Deleted penalty because it already is stated in Rule 8-7c and EFFECT

Sec (103) VISITOR TEAM

Is the team who starts the game on offence.

COMMENT: New definition. We have a definition for HOME TEAM so adding VISITOR team allows us to change wording in Rule 5 regarding first at bat or last at bat. Now we can refer to the first team at bat as the VISITOR TEAM and the last at bat as the HOME TEAM.

Rule 2 THE PLAYING FIELD

Sec. 4

On any live ball play made from first base foul territory, the batter-runner and the defensive player may use either base. When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory and if hit by a throw from the foul side of first base, it would not be interference.

COMMENT: Allowing the first baseman to use the orange bag when a ball comes from firstbase side of foul territory may avoid collisions. It should be clear the runner or the fielder can use either base on a ball fielded on the foul side of first base. Both the runner and fielder could be touching the same base. If the fielder uses the orange base in this situation and the runner makes contact with the fielder it is interference on the runner. If both players use the white portion and the fielder causes the runner to hold up or change direction it is obstruction on the fielder.

The runner may run inside the running lane (in fair territory when the ball is fielded from first base side in foul territory. If he is hit by the ball he is not out unless he does an intentional act to cause interference like throwing up the arms or moving a hip into the thrown ball.

Rule 3 EQUIPMENT

Sec. 3 THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALLS

- g. A 12" ball with a COR not exceeding **.52 or less** shall be used in all adult Softball Canada Fast pitch play.
- h. An 11" or 12" with a COR not exceeding **.52 or less** shall be used in all Softball Canada Minor divisions. (Refer to Age Categories & Distance Table)

COMMENT: The ASA has introduced new bat standards (2013) that in effect could decrease the safety of the defensive player. The bats in ASA will be the liveliest bats on the market and are approved for SP in ASA Softball. FP still will be limited to the 2004 and 2008 bat standard and stamps. The new 2013 stamp will not be legal at this point in SC. To help offset the newer standards we need to be able to facilitate the testing & use of more restricted flight balls. Increasing the Maximum COR would allow Softball Canada to examine a safe solution to offset the hotter bat standards

Sec. 3 CAPS

8b 1

Ball caps must be alike and are mandatory for all male players and must be worn properly.

EXCEPTION: Should a defensive player elect to wear a defensive fielding mask, that player may turn their cap backwards to accommodate wearing both cap and mask.

COMMENT: Hats are worn in part for protection from the sun. Being unable to wear the hat in reverse to maintain that protection forces players to choose between the hat or the mask. For safety reasons, players should be able to wear both. The intent of the wording “must be worn properly”, which is interpreted as being peak forward, is intended to ensure players look uniform and respectful. Wearing the hat backwards for the sole purpose of allowing the player to wear a defensive mask should not be interpreted as being disrespectful and is an exception for safety reasons only.

Sec. 5 SHOES

- a) All players and on field managers/coaches must wear shoes.
- b) A shoe shall be considered official if it is **fully enclosed** and is made with canvas or leather uppers or similar materials.
- c) The soles may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber cleats.
- d) Ordinary metal sole and heel plates may be used if the spikes on the plates do not extend more than 2.0 cm (3/4 in.) from the sole or heel of the shoe.
- e) Shoes with rounded metal spikes are illegal.
- f) Shoes with rubber detachable cleats that screw onto the shoe are not allowed; however, shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the shoe are allowed
- g) **YOUTH/MINOR DIVISION PLAYERS AND COACHES**
 - 1) No metal cleats are allowed in any division at any level of play.
 - 2) Hard plastic, nylon or polyurethane spikes similar to a metal sole and heel plate are not allowed in any division at any level of play.
 - 3) Shoes with rubber detachable cleats that screw onto the shoe are not allowed; however shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the shoe are allowed.

EFFECT – Sec. 5: Failure to remove illegal shoes when asked by the umpire will result in the removal of the player **or coach in violation**.

COMMENT: Adds that shoes must be fully enclosed so eliminates the use of sandals which are used by many coaches in the youth game. Penalty for failure to remove the illegal shoes is removal of the player or coach in violation.

Sec. 3-5 g. Adds coaches to clarify that a coach in youth divisions of play cannot wear metal cleats. Effect adds that players or coaches who refuse to remove the illegal shoes are removed from the game.

RULE 4 COACHES, PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Sec. 10 REPLACEMENT PLAYER

Added new f and renumbered f to g and g to h

- a. In the event of any player bleeding during the game, that player must be withdrawn from the game if the bleeding cannot be stopped within a reasonable time, or if his uniform becomes covered in blood.
- b. The withdrawn player shall not return to the game until all bleeding ceases, the area cleaned and covered and, if necessary, his uniform replaced.
- c. If a change of number is required due to the new uniform shirt, there is no penalty.
- d. The withdrawn player shall be replaced by a replacement player, who may act for the withdrawn player for the remainder of the inning in progress (i.e. until the end of the inning of the team batting second), and for the following complete inning.
- e. The replacement player cannot be a player currently playing in the game.
- f. **The replacement player cannot be a player who has been ejected or removed from the game for a violation of the rules.**
- g. The replacement player must be reported to the umpire.
- h. The umpire must be advised that the withdrawn player is returning to the game.

COMMENT: Previously interpretation was that a removed or ejected player could not act as the Replacement Player. Now states it in the rule

Sec. 5 DESIGNATED PLAYER

g.) The DP may play defence at any position.

- 1) Should the DP play defence for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat, but should not play defence, and is not considered to have left the game. This **player is called the OPO.**
- 2) This defensive change does not have to be announced.

h.) The DP **or OPO** may play defence for the FLEX and that person is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players to nine.

- 1) If this change is not announced this would be an illegal substitute.

COMMENT: Gives a name to the offensive only player (OPO) when the DP goes into the game on defense for a player other than the FLEX.

Sec. 5-h term OPO was omitted in last rule change year. Any nine players can play defense. Once the OPO goes into the game for the Flex the OPO position does not exist and the team is playing with only nine players. All nine currently in the game at this point are playing both defense and offense.

Sec. 6 RE-ENTRY

e. If the manager/coach re-enters a substitute later in the game it is considered an illegal re-entry.

EXCEPTION:

1. When the substitute is used as a replacement player.

2. (MINOR ONLY) When all legal substitutes have been entered or all starting players re-entered by a team in a game, the re-entry and substitution rules are waived in the event of an injury and/or illness.
 - a. The player entering the game shall assume the batting position of the injured and/or ill player.
 - b. If a DP is in use and no players are available, only the FLEX may assume the batting position of the injured/ill player (as allowed in Sec 5h).**
 - c. The injured and/or ill player may not return to the game.

COMMENT: A team may be playing with a DP/Flex and through injuries (or lack of player numbers) may sustain another injury. Suspending the FLEX makes a player available to take the place of the injured/ill player. Using the DP is incorrect as that player could bat twice in one inning.*E.G. a team with only 10 players decides to use the DP/Flex to have all players in the game. Strategy may not be a wise choice – but if an injury occurs, suspending the FLEX makes a player available to continue.

Rule 5 THE GAME

Sec. 1 CHOICE OF TEAM AT BAT

The choice of **Home team** or **Visitor team** shall be decided by the toss of a coin, unless otherwise stated in rules of the organization under which the schedule of games is being played.

COMMENT: Home team and Visitor Team are now defined in the rules so this makes this easier to read.

Sec. 3 REGULATION GAME

- a) A regulation game shall consist of seven innings.
- b) A full seven innings need not be played if the **HOME** team scores more runs in six and one half innings or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning.
- c) A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the Home team scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
- d) A game called by the plate umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the **Home team** has scored more runs than the **Visitor team** in five and one half or more innings.
- e) The plate umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic or other cause, which puts the patrons, players or umpires in peril.
- f) A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more complete innings, or if the **Home team** has equaled the score of the **Visitor team** in the incomplete inning.
- g) A game that is
 - 1) Not considered regulation; or

2) A regulation tie game; shall be replayed from the beginning. Original line-ups may be changed when the game is replayed.

EXCEPTION: When the Canadian Championship supervisor suspends a Canadian Championship **game**, it shall be resumed at the exact point where the **game** was suspended.

COMMENT: Replaced first at bat and second at bat with defined terms Home Team and Visitor team. Added word game to the Exception because only a Game is continued from the exact point it was suspended. Canadian Championships may change schedules to facilitate games and make sure teams are not put into a disadvantage due to re scheduling.

Sec. 9 CHARGED CONFERENCES

b) DEFENSIVE CONFERENCES

There shall be only three charged defensive conferences, in a seven-inning game, between the manager, or the team representative from the dugout, with the pitcher or with any other defensive player.

Exception: U14 will have 5 conferences in a 7 inning game.

1. **For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged defensive conference per inning.**
2. **Conferences are accumulative and do not start over with a new pitcher entered into the game.**
3. **If all three conferences (5 for U14) are not used in the first seven innings, they are lost and a team must then follow the one per extra inning rule.**
4. 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.
5. It is not a charged conference if the coach/manager notifies the plate umpire of a change of pitchers either before or after communicating with the pitcher.
6. 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.
7. The conference is over when the manager/coach crosses the foul line returning to the dugout.
8. It is not a charged conference for the defence if they confer during a charged offensive conference, provided they are ready to play when the offence is ready.

Effect 9b 1: The fourth, (sixth for U14) 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 for the remainder of the game.

Comment: Now only 3 defensive conferences in a game. If the game goes to extra innings they have 1 conference per inning during the extra innings. Unused conferences cannot be carried over to the next game. U14 will have 5 conferences. The penalty remains the same which is removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The pitcher could play any other position.

Rule 6 Pitching Includes all sections in FP and Orthodox

Sec. 1e Must, after taking the signal bring his body to a full and complete stop with the ball held in the hand or glove with both held together in front of the body **or held together at the side of the body**. This position must be held for a minimum of one (1) second and not more than ten (10) seconds.

COMMENT: Rule interpretation allowed the glove and hands to be at the side during the pause. Now is written that it is legal. Only illegal action is ball and glove held behind the back.

Sec. 6 Foreign Substance

b) Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin or **drying agents (cloths embedded with resin)** approved by Softball Canada can be applied to the pitcher's hand.

1. The resin or **drying agent** cannot be applied to the ball or glove directly.
2. Resin must be **left** on the ground and **the approved drying agent cloth in the pitcher's pocket**.
3. **A pitcher who licks his fingers must wipe them off before gripping the ball.**

Effect Sec 6-a-b 1-3

1. **An illegal pitch is called for each infraction in 1-3**
2. If any defensive player continues to place foreign substance on the ball, the umpire shall eject the pitcher after a warning to the coach.

COMMENT: Introduces drying agents approved by Softball Canada. Gorilla Gold is considered a drying agent and was approved in 2010. Rule interpretation regarding licking of fingers is in place already. There are more challenges to our rules so it is important we write into our book existing interpretations.

Clarifies it is an illegal pitch for each type of infraction.

Effect 1-8

Note: An illegal pitch shall be called when it becomes illegal. The umpire calling the illegal pitch shall give the delayed dead ball signal. The call should be loud enough for the nearest fielder to hear. Failure of the players to hear the call shall not nullify the illegal pitch.

Comment:

Information is the same as previous rule but eliminates duplication and just refers to the umpire calling the illegal pitch.

RULE 7 BATTING

7-3 new adds d

U14 to Masters Categories only:

After entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot between pitches and while taking signals and practice swings.

Exceptions: The batter can leave the box:

- 1) When the ball is batted foul or fair**
- 2) On a swing, slap or check swing**
- 3) When forced out of the box by a pitch**
- 4) On a wild pitch or passed ball**
- 5) When a play is attempted**
- 6) When time has been called**
- 7) When the pitcher leaves the pitcher's circle or the catcher leaves the catcher's box**
- 8) On a 3 ball count that is a strike that the batter thinks is a ball.**

EFFECT: If the batter leaves the batter's box and delays play for any other reason the umpire may warn the batter or call a strike. Any number of warnings and called strikes can be made with each batter. No pitch has to be thrown.

COMMENTS: Onus is put on umpires to control this new violation. Game management will be important in our delivery of the penalty. It will be important both teams are treated in the same consistent manner. Time limit games may be handled different than other games while the category of play should be a factor umpires need to be aware of. Younger teams' more than one warning may be appropriate while a time limit game should have limited warnings. The rule is in place to help speed up the game so it is incumbent on umpires to manage the intent of the rule.

Rule 9 DEAD BALL – BALL IN PLAY

Sec. 1 The Ball IS DEAD:

p. When an obstructed runner is called out.

Exception is deleted

COMMENT: Removed words when an obstructed runner is played on because the Rule says the ball remains alive until the all play has stopped or the obstructed runner is called out. Exception is not needed because of above ruling.

z. When the batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

COMMENT: Replaced previous word MOVED because the violation is for stepping back to avoid a tag. A runner can move his body but has not actually stepped back. New word says the runner must step back.

Softball Canada Special Operating Rules Fast pitch

The following new rules are being used at Canadian Championships.

1. U14 Jamboree Operating Rules

- i) *The Softball Canada Official Rule Book shall govern play except for the following modifications:*
 - a. *Pitchers will be limited to a maximum of 4 innings per game (one pitch is considered an inning)*
 - b. *Each player must play a minimum of 2 innings per game. In a mercy game, a team will not be penalized if not able to play all team members.*
 - c. *All teams competing in the top division must ensure that one of the registered coaches or manager is fully certified at Level 2 or the new NCCP equivalent (Competition Introduction Trained + “Make Ethical Decisions” completed) and be on the team’s bench*
 - d. *Coaching certification for the other divisions will be the same as required for Provincial Championships in the home province.*

NOTE – disciplinary actions/suspensions will be applied to Coaches who do not follow the above rule modifications at the discretion of the Softball Canada Supervisor.

2. 2.7 Dress and Equipment

- a) Uniforms
 - i) All players participating in a Canadian Championship must play in identical uniforms which will include sanitary hose. The Softball Canada representative in consultation with the tournament Umpire-in-Chief shall judge the acceptability of uniforms. Players unacceptably uniformed will be dealt with as follows:
 - (a) If possible a player will be warned before a game appearance.
 - (b) A player participating in a game will be instructed to immediately correct the uniform deficiency.
 - (c) A player failing to correct the deficiency will be ejected from the game.
 - ii) Coaches appearing on the field must wear uniforms **identical (similar) to the players or any combination of dress shorts, slacks or track pants and shirts as near to the team colours as possible in all categories. Both coaches are required to be dressed in similar fashion.**

If, in the judgement of the Softball Canada official representative, the coach or manager’s uniform is not to the representative’s satisfaction, this coach or manager shall not be permitted to coach.

COMMENT: Allows Senior coaches’ to wear shorts in any category as long as they are similar to team colours. Both coaches must be dressed identical. Coaching dress is responsibility of the SC supervisor to enforce.

ARTICLE 3 – GAME PROCEDURES

3.1 The Game

b) Game Length

In all Canadian Championship games, 7 innings will constitute a legal game, except if tied after 7 innings; it must be continued until a winner is declared.

EXCEPTION: Softball Canada Canadian Championship Supervisors can shorten games in the qualifying and championship round to 5 innings where weather threatens the completion of the Championship. The Championship game will be 7 innings except in the case where Playing Rule 5 sec. 3.d applies.

COMMENTS: At last year's Canadian Championships rain forced SC Supervisors to shorten games to complete some tournaments. No rule existed but this now gives them the authority to make those necessary changes without fear of reprisal.