



## SOFTBALL CANADA 2012-2013 SLO PITCH 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.

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#### 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.**

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#### Sec. 19 COMMITMENT LINE (CO-ED ONLY)

Is a line drawn 6.40m (21 ft.) from the back of home plate and perpendicular to the third base line.

- a. When a runner crosses this line (i.e. one foot completely over the line and touching the ground) but does not reach home plate, he shall be called out when the ball is legally held by a defensive player who is in contact with home plate.
- b. No tag is necessary.
- c. Runners who have not crossed the line; or
- d. Runners who cross the line, but must tag up on a caught fly ball, may return to third base with liability to be put out.
- e. **Runners who cross the commitment line, may return to touch a missed base, with liability to be put out.**

**COMMENT:** Interpretation allowed runners to return to tag up after crossing the commitment line. Now it is stated in the rule.

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#### 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.

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### **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 explaining the penalty: The note has been deleted because it is already stated in Rule 4 and should not be in the definitions.

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### **Sec. 62 OBSTRUCTION**

#### **Obstruction is the act of:**

- a) A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents 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.**

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### **Sec. (64) OFFICIAL EQUIPMENT**

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:** This new definition 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 team** 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. 1-64

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### **Sec (98) 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.

Will be placed after Turn AT BAT in Rule 1-should be numbered Sec. 98 after re-numbering.

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## **Rule 2 THE PLAYING FIELD**

### **Sec. 3 THE OFFICIAL DIAMOND**

“Shall have 9.81m (65 ft) baselines and a pitching distance between **15.2m (50 ft) and 18.29m (60 ft)**).

The front of the pitcher’s plate will be placed at 50 ft. from the back or point of home plate. A line shall be placed at the 60 foot mark from the back or point of home plate. The line shall be made 24 inches wide.

Note from AGM motion is incorporated into Rule 6

NOTE: If during the game, the base distance or the pitching distance is found to be at the wrong distance, correct the error at the start of the next full inning.

**COMMENT:** The intention of the “pitching zone” is safety. This would give the pitcher the option of pitching at an alternate distance that they feel is adequate to protect themselves. Over the past few years we have implemented many new rules and SOR’s to better the safety in our game. This rule continues that trend and aligns our organization with what other Slo-pitch organizations are already doing.

The pitcher can start his pitch from any distance inside this pitching zone. He may vary his distance with each pitch or each batter. The pitcher cannot run in and pitch the ball. The pitcher still must conform to Rule 6-1 and Rule 6-3 regardless which distance he pitches from.

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## **Rule 3 EQUIPMENT**

### **Sec. 3 THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALLS**

- g. A 12” ball with a COR of **.52 or less** shall be used in all adult and Co-ed Softball Canada Slo- pitch play.
- h. An 11” or 12” with a COR of **.52 or less** shall be used in all Female and minor Slo-pitch Softball Canada play. (Refer to Age Categories & Distance Table)

**COMMENT:** SP may not use the Cor 52 ball but there is an option to introduce it. 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.

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### **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, Coaches and Co-ed Players only.**
  - 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 shoes must be fully enclosed so eliminates the use of sandals which are used by many coaches in the youth and Co –Ed games. Penalty for failure to remove the illegal shoes is removal of the player or coach in violation.

Sec. 3-5 g. Add 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 shoe are removed from the game. Rule does not apply to coaches in the Co-Ed Slo-pitch.

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### **Sec. 6 Shin Guards**

- e) **Pitchers or catchers may wear catcher shin guards.**
  - 1) **The catcher shin guard must be worn outside the uniform.**
  - 2) **Cannot be used on offense.**

**COMMENT:** Trend is for pitcher's to use catcher shin guards while pitching. Only the catcher shin guard must be worn outside the uniform. Players using soccer style guards may wear them under the pants.

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## **RULE 4 COACHES, PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

**Sec. 10 REPLACEMENT PLAYER**  
Added new g and renumbered from h-i.

- 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. (Co ED Only) When the replacement player is used, the player must be of the same sex as the injured and bleeding player.
- g. The replacement player cannot be a player who has been ejected or removed from the game for a violation of the rules.**
- h. The replacement player must be reported to the umpire.
- i. 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

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## **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 regulation game shall consist of seven innings.

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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.
- f) 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.

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### **Sec. 5 WINNER OF GAME**

The winner of the game shall be the team that scores more runs in a regulation game.

- a. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the team second at bat has scored more runs than the first team at bat in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- b. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated. A regulation tie game shall be replayed from the beginning.
- c. The score of a forfeited game shall be **15-0** in favour of the team not at fault.

**COMMENT:** The change is a 15-0 score from the previous 7-0 score for a forfeited game. The mercy rule is set at 15 runs in SP. In Canadian Championships positions for playoff can be determined by plus and minus so runs scored are important. SP has higher scores and the 15-0 forfeit rule will prevent a team from

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## **Rule 6            PITCHING**

### **Sec. 1 Preliminaries**

Before commencing the pitch the pitcher:

- a. Shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- b. Must take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in **contact with the pitcher plate or the ground any where inside the pitching "chute". The chute is the same 24 inch width as the pitching plate.**
- c. Must come to a full and complete stop with the ball held in one or both hands in front of the body.
- d. The front of the body must face the batter.
- e. This position must be held for not less than one second and not more than ten seconds before starting the delivery.

### **Sec. 3 Legal Delivery**

- a. The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. The windup must be a continuous motion.

- c. The pitcher must not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- d. The pitcher must deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm, past the hip with an underhanded motion.
- e. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate **or on the ground where the pitcher established his start in the pitching chute** until the pitched ball leaves the hand.
- f. If a step is taken, it can be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot is in contact with **the pitcher's plate or pitcher's established point on the ground inside the pitching chute** and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

**COMMENTS:** These additions in Rule 6-1 and 6-3 confirm that the pitcher must conform to previous pitching rules regardless what distance the pitcher pitches from within the 10 foot chute.

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## Sec. 5 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 5-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. SP pitchers may have tape on thier fingers and can wear a sweat band on their pitching arm or wrist. The licking the finger issue is not something umpires need to go after in the SP game. **Effect 1** Clarifies it is an illegal pitch for each type of infraction.

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## 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.

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## Rule 9 DEAD BALL – BALL IN PLAY

### Sec. 1 The Ball IS DEAD:

#### q. 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.

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### Sec. 1 THE BALL IS DEAD

aa. 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.

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## Softball Canada Special Operating Rules Slo-Pitch

**The following new rules are being used at Canadian Championships.**

### ARTICLE 3 – GAME PROCEDURES

#### 1.1 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.***

**COMMENT:** Allows SC Supervisors an avenue to finish championships when weather has eliminated several days of the tournament. This new rule provides an opportunity for all teams to finish the championship on the field rather than a decision based on an unfinished tournament policy.

(f) **Men Only – The batter begins his at bat with a count of 1 ball, 1 strike.**

**COMMENT:** Each time the batter comes to the plate he start the at bat with the one ball and one strike count. The rule still has the third strike foul out rule in place.

(g) **Any legal pitch not swung at and lands on the strike mat (2 feet (0.61 m) x 3 feet (0.91 shall be a strike.**

**Exception: A ball that hits any part of the plate while hitting the strike mat is a ball.**



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**COMMENT:** The strike mat will be used at all SC Canadian SP Championships

1. The mat is 2 feet X 3 feet and is placed in the middle of the back portion of the plate.  
(The tip of the plate would be at the middle of the 2 foot portion and the 3 feet would extend back from the tip of the plate)
2. Balls landing on any part of the plate would be a ball.
3. All other rules remain the same.

## SLO-PITCH STRIKE MAT

