

2018 UMPIRE AND SOFTBALL RULES

IMPORTANT RULE CHANGES FOR 2018

TOURNAMENT AGE BRACKETS: The Tournament team brackets are the **8- to 10-Year-Old Division** to include eligible players league age 8, 9, or 10; the **9- to 11-Year-Old Division** to include eligible players league age 9, 10, or 11; the **Little League (11 & 12 Major Division)** Tournament team to include eligible players league age 10, 11, or 12, the **Junior League Division** to include eligible players league age 12, 13, or 14, and the **Senior League Division** to include eligible players league age 13, 14, 15, or 16 (Tournament Rules, page 120, 2018 Rule Book).

STEALING OR RELAYING OPPOSING TEAM PITCH SIGNS: the stealing or relaying of signs to alert the batter of pitch selection and/or location is unsportsmanlike behavior. If, in the judgment of the umpire, this behavior is occurring, those responsible, including any player(s), coach(es), and/or manager **shall** be ejected from the game (Rule 9.01(d), **NOTE**, page 111, and Tournament Rule 3.f, page 128, 2018 Rule Book).

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: The actions, **on or off the field**, of players, managers, coaches, umpires, and league officials must be above reproach. Any player, manager, coach, umpire, or league representative who is involved in a verbal or physical altercation, or an incident of unsportsmanlike conduct, at the game site or any other Little League activity **including through online or social media**, is subject to disciplinary action by the local league Board of Directors (Regulation XIV(a), page 55, 2018 Rule Book).

The pitcher's glove shall be of one solid color or multi-colored **as long as the color(s) are not the color of the ball being used in the game** (Rule 1.15(a), page 65, 2018 Rule Book).

The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, or arm, including sweatbands, wristbands, or other similar items. The pitcher **may wear** items on the **glove hand, wrist, or arm** (non-pitching arm) of a solid single color of black, white, gray, or uniform color or any item, in the judgment of the umpire, would be distracting. **EXCEPTION: A pitcher may wear a compression sleeve on the pitching arm of a solid, single color of black, white, gray, or uniform color** (Rule 1.15(c), page 65 and Rule 8.02(a)(2), page 108, 2018 Rule Book).

The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and pass the straight, **vertical** line of the body (Rule 8.01(q), page 107, 2018 Rule Book).

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LOCAL RULES:

- **Courtesy Runner for Catcher** If there are two outs and a catcher who will catch at the beginning of the next inning has reached base safely, a courtesy runner may be used for that catcher in order for the catcher to dress and be ready to warm up the pitcher immediately following the team's at bat. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last out for the team at bat.
- **Courtesy Runner for Injured Player** If an offensive player is injured while at bat or running bases, a courtesy runner may be used to replace the injured runner. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last out for the team at bat, whether in the current inning or in the previous inning. The injured player may re-enter the game once provided the player's manager and the umpire-in-chief deem that player recovered and able to play. However, if that player becomes injured again during that game, that injured player will be removed from the line-up and will be considered permanently out of the game. The re-entry rule is to accommodate a player who, for example, may only have the wind knocked out of him but is physically able to re-enter the game in the following inning when he has recovered his breath.
- **Late Arrival of Players** If a player arrives late to a game and the manager chooses to allow that player to enter the game, she would be added to the end of the current lineup (Rule 4.01(d), NOTE 2, page 79, 2018 Rule Book).

LITTLE LEAGUE RULES

- **Bats for major league and below:** cannot be more than 33 inches in length nor more than 2 ¼ inches in diameter with a 1.20 BPF (Rule 1.10, page 63, 2018 Rule Book)
- **Bats for JR/SR League:** cannot be more than 34 inches in length nor more than 2 ¼ inches in diameter with a 1.20 BPF (Rule 1.10, page 63, 2018 Rule Book)
- **JR/SR League ONLY:** shoes with metal spikes or cleats are permitted (Rule 1.11(h), page 64, 2018 Rule Book)
- **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE (Major league and above):** the batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs. A batter forfeits her opportunity to advance to first base when she enters the dugout or any other dead ball area (Rule 6.09(b), page 95, 2018 Rule Book)
- **LEAVING BASE EARLY (MAJOR league and above):** any runner is out when the runner fails to keep contact with the base until the ball has been released by the pitcher on delivery (Rule 7.08(a)(5)(a), page 99, 2018 Rule Book)

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- **LEAVING BASE EARLY MINOR league only**: any runner is out when the runner fails to keep contact with the base until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter (Rule 7.08(a)(5)(b), page 99, 2018 Rule Book)
- **Casts** may not be worn during the game, including umpires. NOTE: Persons wearing casts, including managers and coaches, must remain in the dugout during the game (Rule 1.11(k), page 65, 2018 Rule Book)
- **Bunts**: holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball (Rule 2.00, BUNT, page 68, 2018 Rule Book)
- **Electronic Equipment in Dugouts**: the use of electronic devices in the dugout is allowed for players, coaches, or managers as long as the devices are not used for communication; the penalty for violation of this rule is ejection from the game (Rule 3.17, page 78, 2018 Rule Book)
- **For minor league**: if the Board of Directors approve and elect this option, the five-run rule may be suspended in the last half inning for either team (Rule 5.07, page 87, 2018 Rule Book).
- **Penalties for use of illegal bats**: an illegal bat must be removed from the game. Additionally, if the batter enters the batter's box with one or both feet entirely on the ground with an illegal bat or is discovered having used an illegal bat during her turn at bat and prior to the next player entering the batter's box and the infraction is discovered before the next player enters the batter's box, the batter is out and: (Rule 1.10, page 63, and Rule 6.06(d), pages 92 and 93, 2018 Rule Book).
 - 1.1. the manager of the defense may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline the penalty and accept the play (as long as this election is made at the end of the play),
 - 1.2. for the first violation, the offensive team will lose one eligible adult base coach for the duration of the game,
 - 1.3. for the second violation, the manager of the team will be ejected from the game, and
 - 1.4. any subsequent violations will result in the newly designated manager being ejected.

An illegal bat must be removed from the game once discovered (Rule 1.10, page 63, and Rule 6.06(d), pages 92 and 93, 2018 Rule Book).

- **NOTE: PENALTIES FOR EJECTIONS** – a manager, coach, or player ejected from a game must leave the game site and are not allowed to participate or be present at the team's next physically played game (Rule 4.07, pages 80 and 81, 2018 Rule Book).
- ❖ **Doubleheaders by Major and Minor League Teams**: a team may play two (2) doubleheaders in a seven (7) day period. No team shall play three games in a day. **JR/SR League only**: a team may play three (3) games in a day (Regulation VII(d), page 47 and Rule 3.11, page 78, 2018 Rule Book)

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- ❖ **Pitching limits in Major and Minor Leagues:** a player may pitch in a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a day, but if seven (7) or more, that player requires one day of rest prior to pitching in the next game (Regulation VI(b), page 45, 2018 Rule Book)
- ❖ **Pitching limits in JR/SR Leagues:** no pitching restrictions apply (Regulation VI(b), page 45, 2018 Rule Book)
- ❖ **JR/SR League Additional Penalty for Illegal Pitches:** If a Junior League or Senior League pitcher pitches an illegal pitch, in addition to the pitch being declared a ball to the batter, all base runners, if any, will advance one base without liability to be put out. This is similar to the “balk” call in baseball (Rules 8.01 and 8.05, PENALTY, pages 106, 107, 108, and 109, 2018 Rule Book)

GAME RULES:

1. A “new inning” is defined as one that **starts the moment that the third out is made**, completing the preceding inning (Section 2.00 – DEFINITIONS, Inning, page 71, and Section X – NIGHT GAMES (a), page 51, 2018 Rule Book).
2. **Continuous Batting Order:** A continuous batting order policy may be followed that will include all players on the team roster present for the. Players arriving after a game begins (ie, the home plate umpire puts the first pitch in play) may be added to the bottom of the batting order lineup if the manager so. Otherwise, that player will be considered absent from that game. Pinch runner rule does not apply if leagues use a continuous batting order chooses. **The continuous batting order is mandatory for all minor league divisions** (Rule 4.04, pages 79 and 80, 2018 Rule Book).
3. Only one offensive time-out is permitted **each** inning (Rule 5.10(d) (**NOTE**), page 88, 2018 Rule Book)
4. **The following pre-game schedule should be adhered to by both teams:**

<u>Weekdays</u>	<u>Saturdays</u>	
:05	:35 or :05	Visitor’s infield warm-up
:15	:45 or :15	Home infield warm-up
:25	:55 or :25	Meeting at home plate with umpires
:30	:00 or :30	Game begins

If the visiting team has not taken their infield warm-up within their designated time allotment, the home field may take their infield warm-up instead and the visiting team will then forfeit infield warm-up in order that the game starts on time.

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5. **During games**, there shall be only one (1) manager and two (2) coaches allowed in the dugout with team players provided they have passed their background checks **and are approved by the Board of Directors**. If any manager, coach, or assistant coach is **has not** had a background check performed, that individual is **not allowed to be on the field at any time. (Rule 1.01, page 59 and Rule 3.17, page 78, 2018 Rule Book and page 3 of 2018 Make The Right Call Manual)**.
6. The offensive team shall station two base coaches on the field during its time at bat. These base coaches should not leave their respective dugouts until the pitcher has completed his/her preparatory pitches to the catcher. The base coaches are required to remain within the coaches boxes during their offensive time at bat. The base coaches may be both manager and coach (provided an adult coach is in the dugout with the players), manager/coach and player, or both players. Once the game has started, **all coaches** should remain in the dugout as well as players except for bathroom breaks or other “emergencies” (NOTE: going to the concession stand for snacks is not an “emergency”). An adult manager/coach **must be** in the dugout with the players at all times during the game (Rule 3.09, page 77, Rule 3.17, page 78, and Rule 4.05, page 80, 2018 Rule Book).
7. **Ten-Run Rule:** There will be a 10-run rule in force for all games pursuant to Rule 4.10(e), page 82, of the 2018 Rule Book. Games will be called according to this rule and **the team books will be closed** but play may be continued if time permits and both managers as well as the umpire-in-chief agree to continue play.
8. A pitcher shall be permitted to pitch no more than eight (8) preparatory pitches to the catcher **but no more** than one minute of preparatory pitches between half-innings (Rule 8.03(a), page 108, 2018 Rule Book).
9. **Intentional Walk:** If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, all pitches must be legally delivered to the batter (Rule 8.03(c), page 108, 2018 Rule Book).
10. The pitcher shall not apply a foreign substance **of any kind** to the ball (this includes **dirt or clay**) or deface the ball in any manner. A pitcher may use a rosin bag for **hands only**. When a pitcher violates this rule, an umpire shall call the pitch a ball and warn the pitcher. (Rule 8.02 (a)(1) and (3), page 108, 2018 Rule Book). If the violation is repeated during the game, the umpire shall remove the pitcher from the game. No **player** shall intentionally discolor or damage the ball by rubbing it with soil, rosin, etc. or any other foreign substance. The umpire shall demand the ball and remove the offender/player from the game. If the umpire cannot locate the offender/player and the pitcher delivers such discolored or damaged ball to the batter, the pitcher shall be removed from the game at once (Rule 3.02, page 75, 2018 Rule Book).

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11. Pitching Rules: Pitching rules are as follows pursuant to Regulation VI – Pitchers, sections (b) and (c), pages 45 and 46 in the 2018 Rule Book.

A pitcher who has attained a league age of twelve (12) is not eligible to pitch in the Minor League.

Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched in an inning.

Minor and Major League: If a player pitches in more than seven (7) innings in a day, one calendar day of rest is mandatory prior to pitching in the next game and that player may pitch a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a game.

If a player pitched in seven (7) or more innings on (Column A) and is still eligible, that player can pitch again on (Column B):

<u>COLUMN A</u>	<u>COLUMN B</u>
Sunday	Tuesday
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday
Thursday	Saturday
Friday	Sunday
Saturday	Monday

Junior/Senior Leagues: No pitching restrictions apply.

A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game **but only once in the same inning as she was removed.**

Major and JR/SR Leagues ONLY: No more than five (5) pitchers per team shall be used in one game except in the case of illness or injury to a fifth pitcher.

12. A manager or coach may come out twice in one inning to visit a pitcher (the third time in one inning and the pitcher must be removed) and may visit a pitcher three times per game (the fourth visit within a game, the pitcher must be removed). A manager or coach is prohibited from making a third visit to the pitcher while the same batter is at bat. Injury time-outs **are not** considered visits to pitchers. (Section 8.06, pages 109 and 110, 2018 Rule Book).
13. A player removed from the pitcher's plate and returning as the pitcher of record shall retain the number of visits from their previous appearance as pitcher. To calculate the number of visits for a pitcher, all visits, regardless of the pitcher being removed and returned to the pitcher's position, shall be applied (Rule 8.06(b) **NOTE**, page 110, 2018 Rule Book).

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14. Pitchers must pitch in an underhand motion with both feet on the ground within the 24-inch length from the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. The pitcher shall take a position with her **pivot foot** in contact with the pitcher's plate by having the foot entirely or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the **non-pivot foot** either on or behind the pitcher's plate. A pitching motion that is a rocking motion by raising the pivot foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate is an illegal act. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without having the ball in her possession. The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter. The pitcher must not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands. The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm in the windmill motion. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal, including a crow hop (defined as the act of a pitcher who steps, drags, or hops off the front of the pitcher's plate, replants the pivot foot, establishing a second starting point, pushes off from the newly established starting point and completes the delivery of the pitch). The pivot foot must remain in contact with or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. When the pivot foot leaves the ground, it is considered a "leap" (an act by the pitcher when both feet become airborne on the initial move and push from the pitcher's plate) and is an illegal pitch. The pitcher must not make another revolution after releasing the ball. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from hitting it. The pitcher shall hold the ball in one or both hands in front of the body for not less than 1 second and not more than 10 seconds before starting the delivery. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball". (Rule 8.01(a) through (d), (f), (h), (j), (l), (n), (o), and (r) through (v) pages 106 and 107, 2018 Rule Book; also, see Rule 8.01 in its entirety, pages 106 and 107, 2018 Rule Book). The penalty for violation of these pitching rules shall be an illegal pitch and the pitch will be called a ball. See #17 below for descriptions of illegal pitches.
15. **DROPPED BALL:** If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand before, during, or up to the delivery of a pitch, a "ball" is declared on the batter, the ball remains live and in play, and any runner(s) may advance at their own risk (Rules 7.08(a)(5) **NOTE 1**, pages 99 and 100 and Rule 8.07, page 110, 2018 Rule Book).

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16. **LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION:** After entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot throughout the at bat. **Exceptions:**

1. On a swing, slap, or check swing.
2. When forced out of the box by a pitch.
3. When the batter attempts a "slap" or "slap bunt".
4. When the catcher does not catch the pitched ball.
5. When a play has been attempted.
6. When time has been called.
7. When the pitcher leaves the eight-foot circle or the catcher leaves the catcher box.
8. On a three ball count pitch that is a strike that the batter thinks is a ball.

PENALTY: If the batter leaves the batter box or delays play and none of the exceptions apply, the umpire shall warn the batter. After one warning on a batter, the umpire shall call a strike. Any number of strikes can be called on each batter. No pitch has to be thrown, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance.

NOTE: The batter may return to their position in the batter's box and assume the new count at any time during the at-bat, unless such enforced penalty is the third strike. (Rules 6.02(c), page 90 and T-3a, page 127 Tournament Rules, 2018 Rule Book)

17. **AN ILLEGAL PITCH** requires the umpire (plate or field) to call "ball". An illegal pitch is a delayed dead ball. If a play is made on an illegal pitch (such as, a hit, a fielding error, a base on balls, or a hit batter) and the manager of the offense advises the plate umpire of a decision to decline the illegal pitch penalty and accept the play, then the play would stand and there would be no reference to a "illegal pitch". This election must be made immediately at the end of the play (Rule 8.05, page 109, 2018 Rule Book). There are no balks in softball; however, see "PENALTY" below.

Illegal pitches are when:

- the pitcher delivers a pitch to the batter when the pitcher **does not** have her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate,
- the pitcher delivers the pitch with a foreign substance applied to the ball,
- the pitcher makes a "quick pitch" (a pitch delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter's box),
- the pitcher, while touching the plate, makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch and fails to make the delivery,
- the pitcher throws to a base while the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate
- the pitcher violates any of the pitching rules indicated in #11 on the previous page (ie, Rule 8.01, pages 106, 107, and 108 2018 Rule Book),

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- If a Junior League or Senior League pitcher throws an illegal pitch, in addition to the pitch being declared a ball to the batter, all base runners, if any, will advance one base without liability to be put out. This is similar to the “balk” call in baseball (Rules 8.01, PENALTY, and 8.05, PENALTY, pages 107 and 109, 2018 Rule Book)
18. Other than the normal plays getting a BATTER out, a batter is also out when (Rules 6.05(c) and (e) and 6.06(a) and (b), pages 91 and 92, 2018 Rule Book) :
- bunting foul on a third strike,
 - the batter attempts to hit a third strike and is touched by the ball,
 - the batter hits the ball with **one or both feet** on the ground **entirely** outside the batter’s box
 - stepping from one batter’s box to the other while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch
19. **Major/JR/SR League only:** a batter may attempt to run to first base when a third strike pitch is not caught by the catcher **and** either first base is unoccupied with less than two outs **or** first base is occupied but **with** two outs. A batter will forfeit the opportunity to advance to first base when he/she enters the dugout. Until the batter enters the dugout or other dead ball area, he/she may attempt to advance to first base under this rule (Rule 6.09(b), page 95, 2018 Rule Book).
20. If the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter (including hands on the bat when swinging at, or attempting to bunt, a strike), it shall be called a strike, whether or not the batter tries to avoid the ball. If the ball is outside the strike zone when it touches the batter, it shall be called a ball **if that batter makes no attempt to avoid** being touched (Rule 6.08(b), NOTE, page 95, 2018 Rule Book).
21. A batter becomes a runner at first base without liability to be put out when there is catcher’s interference (when a batter’s bat hits the catcher’s glove when the batter is swinging at a pitch is the most common example of catcher’s interference). If a play follows the catcher interference, the manager of the offense may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline the interference penalty and accept the play provided the election is made immediately at the end of the play. If the batter reaches first base on a hit, error, base on balls, etc. and all other runners advance at least one base, the play proceeds **without** reference to the interference (Rule 6.08(c), page 95, 2018 Rule Book).
22. A **batter** becomes a runner at first base without liability to be put out when a **fair ball touches an umpire** or a runner in fair territory **before** touching a fielder. If a fair ball touches an umpire **after** having **passed** a fielder (other than the pitcher) or having **touched** a fielder (including the pitcher), the ball is live and in play (Rule 6.08(d), page 95, 2018 Rule Book).

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23. **BATTING OUT OF TURN:** A batter (proper batter) shall be called out, on appeal by the defensive team's manager, when failing to bat in his/her proper turn and another batter (improper batter) **completes** a time at bat in place of the proper batter. The proper batter may take a position in the batter's box any time before the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and the improper batter's strike and ball count becomes the proper batter's count (Rule 6.07 and APPROVED RULINGS, pages 93, 94, and 95, 2018 Rule Book).

When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire **before the first pitch to the next batter**, or before any play or attempted play, the umpire shall (1) declare the proper batter out and (2) nullify any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and a pitch is made to the next batter before an appeal is made, the improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of such time at bat becomes legal (Rules 6.07(b) and (c), page 93, 2018 Rule Book). While the improper batter is at bat and a runner advances on a stolen base, wild pitch, or passed ball by the catcher, such advance is legal (Rule 6.07(b)(2) NOTE, page 93, 2018 Rule Book).

If a proper appeal is made by the defensive team after the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, when the proper batter is called out by the umpire, the next batter in order **immediately after** the original proper batter who was just called out now becomes the proper batter, even if that batter was the improper batter. For example, assume Amy was supposed to bat and Brittany came out to bat instead. Brittany hit the ball between third and short-stop and was awarded first base on a hit. The defensive team appealed the batting order before the next pitch to Catherine. Amy is now called out and Brittany, because she is the batter immediately following Amy, is now at bat again, but this time as the proper batter, not the improper batter (See Approved Ruling Examples listed under Rule 6.07, pages 93, 94, and 95, 2018 Rule Book).

24. If a thrown ball **accidentally** touches a base coach, **or a pitched or thrown ball touches an umpire**, the ball is alive and in play. **However**, if the base coach interferes with a thrown ball, the runner is out and the play remains live (Rule 5.08, page 87, 2018 Rule Book).
25. The ball becomes dead when the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's act of throwing in an attempt to retire a runner. The runner(s) return to their original bases. **However**, if the catcher's throw gets the runner out, the out stands and there is no umpire interference (Rule 5.09(b), page 87, 2018 Rule Book).
26. The ball becomes dead when a pitched ball lodges in the catcher's or umpire's mask or paraphernalia. Runner(s) advance one base (Rule 5.09(g), page 88, 2018 Rule Book).

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27. **INFIELD FLY RULE:** a batter will be called out and runners, if any, may advance at their own risk if an infield fly ball is hit (**not bunted**) by the batter. An infield fly is a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder **with ordinary effort** but only when first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied **and** there are less than two outs. The fly ball does not necessarily have to be judged by the umpire to be falling within the infield. If, in the umpire's judgment, the fly ball is high enough and gives the infielder enough time to go to the short outfield area and catch the ball with ordinary effort, this shall be deemed an infield fly. The umpire shall **immediately** declare "Infield Fly-Batter's Out" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near either foul line, the umpire shall declare "Infield Fly If Fair". The ball is alive on an infield fly and runners may retouch their respective bases after the ball is touched by a defensive player in order for the runner to advance at the runner's own risk, the same as any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated as any foul ball. If an Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If an Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground in foul territory and bounces into fair territory before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly (Rule 2.00 – Definitions – INFIELD FLY, page 71, 2018 Rule Book).

A batter is out when an infielder **intentionally** drops a fair fly ball **or line drive** with first, first and second, first and third, or first, second, and third bases occupied with less than two outs. The ball is dead and any runner shall return to their original base or bases (Rule 6.05(k), page 92, 2018 Rule Book).

28. There is **no On-deck Circle** for warm-up swings by batters **for Major League Division and below** (Rule 1.08, **NOTE 1**, page 63, 2018 Rule Book). Batters and player/base coaches **must always** have a batting helmet on when outside the dugout and in a position of either the base coach's box or, in the case of JR/SR League, the on-deck circle. Batters are **never permitted** to swing bats in the fenced-in areas of the dugouts. Both of these rules are related to safety issues and must be adhered to.
29. **Major League and below Only:** When a runner is advancing or stealing a base, there is no head-first sliding. If a runner does slide head-first while advancing, that runner shall be called "Out" (Rule 7.08(a)(4), page 99, 2018 Rule Book).

JR/SR League: A runner may slide head-first on an advance to any base.

Head-first sliding **is allowed** for all runners in any league if they are **attempting to return to a base they occupied**.

Runners Leaving Early: Any runner is out when failing to keep contact with the base to which that runner is entitled (**Minor League**) until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter or (**Major/JR/SR League**) until the ball has been released by the pitcher (Rule 708(a)(5)(a) and (b), page 99, 2018 Rule Book).

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30. **FAIR VS FOUL BALLS:** If a batter hits a fair ball close to the baseline and the umpire judges the hit to be fair, **the umpire should remain silent** and point to fair territory indicating the hit is a fair ball. If a batter hits a foul ball, the umpire should hold up both hands and declare “Foul Ball”. A foul ball is a dead ball, runners do not advance, and the game does not continue until the plate umpire puts the game back into play by pointing to the pitcher. A game should not be put back into play until the pitcher has the ball in his/her possession and is on the pitcher’s plate and the batter is in the batter’s box.

A fielder who is in fair territory but reaches out into foul territory and touches the ball requires the umpire to declare “Foul Ball”. An example is when a third baseman has his feet in fair territory but reaches into foul territory to attempt to catch a ball hit on the outside of third base; the ball is foul and play is dead until the umpire puts the game back into play. Any overthrown balls after a foul ball hit (dead ball) with runners on base **does not** allow those runners to advance. If the runners do advance in error, those runners must return to the bases they originally occupied at the time of the foul ball hit prior to the plate umpire putting the game back into play.

A foul tip **is not** a foul ball. For one thing, a foul tip is a **live ball** instead of a dead ball like a foul ball. A foul tip is defined as “a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher’s hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike”. An umpire should never declare “Fair Ball” **or** “Foul Tip” as this could cause confusion to any base runner who chose to run on the foul tip ball. If the runner successfully advanced to the next base, that stolen base stands and the runner is not to be returned to the prior base. The umpire should make a “brushing” sign with his hands raised to indicate a foul tip (Rule 2.00 – DEFINITIONS, pages 69 and 70, 2018 Rule Book).

31. Any **fair ball** after touching the ground passes through, over, or under a fence or through or under a scoreboard or passes through or under a fence or scoreboard without necessarily touching the ground, or is deflected by a fielder over or under a fence or into foul territory entitles the batter and any runner to **advance two bases** (Rule 6.09(e), (f), and (g), page 96, 2018 Rule Book).
32. **If the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher’s 8-foot radius circle** and is not making a play (a fake throw is considered a play), **runners** not in contact with their bases **must immediately attempt to advance or return to their base**. If no such immediate attempt is made, “No Pitch” is declared, the ball is dead, and the runner is out (Rule 7.08(a)(5) **NOTE 2**, page 100, 2018 Rule Book).
33. Any runner is out when that runner passes a preceding runner before that preceding runner is put out (Rule 7.08(h), page 101, 2018 Rule Book).

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34. **OBSTRUCTION:** is the act of a fielder (defensive team) who, while not in the possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner (this includes “fake tags” and blocking of bases or home plate while not in possession of the ball). As with most calls, this is one of judgment by either the plate umpire or the field umpire(s). The ball is either called “Dead ball-Obstruction” or play is allowed to continue at which time the umpire will call “Time” and impose any obstruction penalties (Rule 2.00, DEFINITIONS, pages 72, and 73, and Rule 7.06, page 99, 2018 Rule Book).

The dead-ball call is when **a play is being made on the obstructed runner**. The ball is dead and all play ceases. The obstructed runner is then awarded to advance to the base which, in the umpire’s judgment, that runner would have advanced had no obstruction occurred. The runner shall be awarded **at least one base** and any preceding runners forced to advance because of the obstruction call shall advance without liability to be put out. If Runner 1 is on 2nd Base and advances to 3rd Base when Runner 2 hits the ball and Runner 2 is obstructed with by a play to 1st Base, the ball would be called dead for obstruction and Runner 2 is awarded 2nd Base with Runner 1 remaining on 3rd Base because there was no force of advance. If Runner 1 was on 1st Base when the ball was hit and safely advanced to 2nd Base, Runner 2 would be awarded 2nd Base because of the obstruction and Runner 1 would be awarded 3rd Base because there was a forced advance when the obstruction call was made.

If **no play is being made on the obstructed runner**, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire will then call “Time” and determine what bases, if any, should be awarded to runners due to the obstruction. Assume Jessica hits the ball to the outfield, tags 1st Base safely then immediately proceeds to go to 2nd Base. When rounding first, Jessica collides with the 1st Baseman because the 1st Baseman was standing within Jessica’s established basepath to 2nd Base. Jessica continues on to 2nd Base where the outfielder throws the ball. If Jessica is safe at 2nd Base, the umpire should not call obstruction because Jessica is where she would be had no obstruction occurred. If Jessica is thrown out at 2nd Base, the umpire should call “Time” and obstruction and award Jessica 2nd Base, if in the umpire’s judgment, Jessica would have been safe at 2nd Base had the obstruction not occurred.

Please note that **actual contact with a runner does not have to occur** in order to have obstruction. In the example above with Jessica hitting the ball and colliding with the 1st Baseman before going to 2nd Base, if Jessica had not collided but was instead forced to run around the 1st Baseman thereby running outside of her otherwise normal basepath toward 2nd Base, there is still obstruction.

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Also, please note that **if a defensive player blocks** the base, **home plate**, or baseline **clearly without possession of the ball**, a delayed “dead ball” obstruction shall be called and the runner is safe (Rule 7.06(b), page 99, 2018 Rule Book).

35. **INTERFERENCE:** There are three main types of interference, all of which are dead ball offenses and strictly judgment calls by either the plate umpire or the field umpire(s):

- offensive interference which is an act by a member of the team at bat that interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play,
- catcher’s interference which is an act by the catcher that hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch (most common occurrence is when a batter swings at a pitch and in the process hits the catcher’s glove first), and
- umpire interference that occurs when an umpire hinders, impedes, or prevents a catcher’s throw attempting to prevent a stolen base or when a fair ball touches an umpire in fair territory prior to passing a fielder.

(Rule 2.00-DEFINITIONS, page 72, 2018 Rule Book)

It is interference by a batter or runner when, with less than two outs and a runner is on 3rd Base, the batter hinders a fielder in making a play at home base. The runner will be called out. If there are two outs in this circumstance, the batter will be called out for the third out and no run scores (Rule 7.08(g) and Rule 7.09(c), page 101, 2018 Rule Book).

It is interference by a base runner when, in the judgment of the umpire, **the base runner** willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding the batted ball with the obvious intent of breaking up a double play. The ball is dead and the base runner is out for interference as well as the batter-runner because of the action of the runner and **no bases may be run and no runs scored** because of the interference (Rule 7.09(f), page 102, 2018 Rule Book). If there is no double play, only the runner who made contact with a fair ball in fair territory before the ball was touched or passed by an infielder shall be called out (Rule 7.08(f), page 101, 2018 Rule Book).

It is interference by a batter-runner when, in the judgment of the umpire, **the batter-runner** willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding the batted ball with the obvious intent of breaking up a double play. The ball is dead and the batter-runner is out for interference as well as the runner who advanced closest to home plate regardless of where the double play might have been possible; **no bases may be run and no runs scored** because of the interference (Rule 7.09(g), page 102, 2018 Rule Book).

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It is interference by a runner when the runner fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball (Rule 7.09(j), page 102, 2018 Rule Book).

It is interference by a batter or runner when a fair ball touches the batter or runner in fair territory **before** touching a fielder or passing by an infielder. The umpire will declare “interference on the batter or runner” and the batter or runner is out. Additionally, if in the judgment of the umpire, the batter or runner deliberately and intentionally kicks such a batted ball on which the infielder had missed a play, then the batter or runner shall be called out for interference (Rule 7.09(k), page 102, 2018 Rule Book).

36. Any runner shall be called out on appeal if the runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return to that base and home base is tagged. The appeal **must** occur prior to the next pitch, any play, or attempted play. **NOTE:** A runner forfeits her opportunity to return to home plate when she enters the dugout. **No appeal can be made if the ball is dead.** (Rule 7.10(d), page 103, 2018 Rule Book).
37. **NO SLIDE TO AVOID RULE:** Any runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to avoid contact with a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag (in other words, the runner “trucks” the fielder as in football or rugby) (Rule 7.08(a)(3), page 99, 2018 Rule Book). **There is no “must slide rule”, only the “no slide to avoid contact” rule** (Rule 7.08(a)(3), Approved Ruling, page 99, 2018 Rule Book and Page 37, 2018 Make The Right Call Manual).
38. **RUNNING THROUGH FIRST BASE RULE:** Any runner is out when failing to return **at once** to first base and overrunning or oversliding that base. If attempting to run to second base, the runner is out when tagged (Rule 7.08(j), page 101, 2018 Rule Book). Please note that **there is no requirement for the runner to “turn out” into foul territory** in order to be declared safe without liability to be put out. The runner simply must immediately return to first base without making any move to run toward second base, regardless of whether that runner turns out into foul territory or turns into fair territory prior to immediately returning to first base.
39. All ejections of managers, coaches, players, or parents **must be** reported within 24 hours to the League Vice-president by the home plate umpire (Rule 9.05(a), page 114, 2018 Rule Book).
40. **The traditional batting donut is not permissible** (Rule 1.10 **NOTE 1**, page 63, 2018 Rule Book).

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41. Each batter-runner and/or runner may advance without being put out and **the ball remains in play** (ie, live ball) (Rule 7.05(b), (c), (d), (e), page 98, 2018 Rule Book):
- **three bases** if a **fielder touches a fair ball** with a cap, mask, or other part of the uniform detached from its proper place on the fielder, other than a glove remaining on the fielder's hand, and the batter, after being awarded 3rd Base, may advance to home plate at his own peril,
 - **three bases** if a **fielder deliberately throws a glove and touches a fair ball**, and the batter, after being awarded 3rd Base, may advance to home plate at his own peril,
 - **two bases** if a **fielder deliberately touches a thrown ball** with a cap, mask, or other part of the uniform detached from its proper place on the fielder, other than a glove remaining on the fielder's hand,
 - **two bases** if a **fielder deliberately throws a glove at and touches a thrown ball**.
42. Each batter-runner and/or runner may advance without being put out and **the ball becomes a dead ball** (ie, live ball) (Rule 7.05(g) and (h), page 98, 2018 Rule Book):
- **two bases** when a **thrown ball** goes into a dugout (even if the ball bounces back out into fair territory), over or under a fence, or becomes stuck in the fence. When such a wild throw is the **first play by an infielder**, the umpire, in awarding such bases, shall be governed by the position of the runners **at the time the ball was pitched**. In **all other cases**, the umpire shall be governed by the position of the runners **at the time the wild throw was made**. If all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one base when an infielder makes a wild throw on the first play after the pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made.

Example: Amanda is on second when Catherine hits the ball to short-stop who overthrows first and the ball goes into the dugout; Catherine is awarded 2nd Base and Amanda is awarded home and the ball is dead.

Amanda is on first when Cindy hits the ball to right field. Amanda runs to second and Cindy runs through first but the right fielder, after Cindy has run through first, attempts a throw to first but the ball goes into the dugout. Since Cindy had established occupancy of first base safely and Amanda had established occupancy of second base safely, the two-base award begins at the position of the runners when the throw was made. Therefore, Amanda will be awarded home and Cindy will be awarded third base.

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- **one base** if a **ball is pitched** or **thrown by the pitcher to a base** in an attempt to catch a runner and that **ball goes into the dugout or over or through a fence**. If the pitch or throw remains within the field, the ball is live and runners advance at their own peril.
43. If a player, manager, or coach is ejected from a game by an umpire, that player, manager, or coach must immediately vacate the Little League premises and must not arrive for the next game (must not be in attendance) and could face more severe penalties as issued by the Discipline Committee. For the purpose of this rule, the game is in the hands of the umpires 10 minutes prior to the first pitch and continues until 10 minutes after the final out of the game. If that player, manager, or coach is ejected again during the season, the second ejection will automatically disqualify such player, manager, or coach for the rest of the season unless waived specifically by the Board of Directors with the League Vice-president's recommendation. Ejections will not be treated lightly by St. Augustine Little League, Inc. (see Rules 9.01, 9.02, and 9.05, pages 111, 112, 113, and 114, 2018 Rule Book).
44. Judgment calls by umpires can **never** be questioned. These include fair/foul balls, strikes/balls, and safe/out calls. This rule applies to all managers, coaches, players, and spectators. Violators should be reported to the Junior/Senior League Vice-president or members of the Board of Directors. Violations of this rule will be treated strictly by St. Augustine Little League, Inc. (Rules 9.01, 9.02, and 9.05, pages 111, 112, 113, and 114, 2018 Rule Book).
45. Managers and coaches must not warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bull pen or elsewhere at any time (this includes **before or during the game**) (Rule 3.09, page 77, and Regulation XIV(f), page 55, 2018 Rule Book).
46. **Mandatory Play**: Every player on a team roster is required to play at least six (6) defensive outs and one time at bat per game. If this mandatory play is not met in a certain game, that player **must** start in the next game to make up his/her deficiency **plus** remain in that game until his/her mandatory play time for that game is met. Additional penalties: (a) first offense, the manager shall receive a written warning, (b) second offense, the manager shall receive a suspension for the next scheduled game, and (c) third offense, the manager shall receive a suspension for the remainder of the season (IV – THE PLAYERS, section (i), pages 42 and 43, 2018 Rule Book).
47. Players, managers, and coaches of the participating teams **shall not** address or mingle with spectators, nor sit in the stands during a game in which they are engaged. Once the game has started, **all coaches must remain in the dugout as well as players** except for bathroom breaks or other “emergencies” (NOTE: going to the concession stand for snacks is not an “emergency”). (Rule 3.09, page 77, 2018 Rule Book).

2018 UMPIRE AND SOFTBALL RULES

48. At no time shall a major league team have on its roster more than eight (8) players whose league age is twelve (12) (Regulation III(c), page 36, 2018 Rule Book).
49. Twice a game but not more than one time per inning, a team may utilize a player who is not in the batting order as a special pinch-runner for any offensive player. A player may only be removed for a special pinch-runner one time during a game. The player for whom the pinch-runner runs is not subject to removal from the lineup. If the pinch-runner remains in the game as a substitute defensive or offensive player, the player may not be used again as a pinch-runner while in the batting order. However, if removed for another substitute that player or any player not in the lineup, is again eligible to be used as a pinch-runner (Tournament Rule 3.e, page 128, 2018 Rule Book).

PRELIMINARY PRE-GAME DUTIES:

- Inspect field for playing conditions, including filling of any holes in outfield
- Check team equipment (bat sizes, **including 1.20 BPF on bats**, bat dents or cracks, dangling throat guards on catcher's masks, etc.)
- Discuss signs to be used during game with partner (lost count, infield fly, etc.), who will call fair/foul balls, etc.

2018 UMPIRE AND SOFTBALL RULES

OTHER UMPIRE RULES

- At plate meeting, always ask managers “are all your players properly equipped to play per Little League Rules?”
- Umpire from behind the plate, **not** behind the pitcher’s mound
- Umpires must remain on **both feet**; umpires should not kneel on one knee or two knees behind the plate or in the field
- Maintain a consistent strike zone throughout the game
- Do not “rush the call”; if needed, take a second or two in order to make sure of the call and that the fielder did not drop a throw or the runner touched the plate or base prior to the throw arriving
- Field umpires, maintain your “A”, “B”, and “C” positions
- **Never** vocalize “fair balls” or “foul tips” (these are live balls and vocalization of these balls would only serve to confuse the players); only foul balls should be vocalized because this kills any play and becomes a dead ball
- Plate umpires, try to remember to always “put the game back into play” after a dead ball incident by pointing to the pitcher and vocalize “PLAY”
- Umpires are in charge of the field 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after a game; this includes the dugouts
- Try to make sure no batters are swinging bats in dugouts
- Try to ascertain that an adult coach remains in the dugout at all times throughout the game
- No manager or coach is allowed on the field during play without receiving time-out from the umpire; violators should be warned and, if the manager or coach continues to disregard the umpire’s warning, that violator should be removed from the game
- Harassment of umpires should **never** be tolerated and if it becomes a detriment to your decision-making on calls, any violator (manager, coach, player, parent, or fan) should be removed

Thank you all for volunteering as managers, coaches, and umpires in our league. Without you, there would be no league and our children could not benefit from the opportunities our league provides. Good luck to everyone and I, as well as the entire Board of Directors, hope everyone has a successful season.

Any comments, concerns, suggestions, or questions regarding rules should be directed to:

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