



Blue's News On-Line Update



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Date: 31 May 2014 **Subject: 2014-2017 Playing Rule Changes from the 2013 ISF Rules Congress. SAL TB 2013-01.**

A total of 106 rule change proposals were submitted to the 2013 ISF Congress Playing Rules Commission for consideration. Of these, 18 were withdrawn, 14 were rejected and 74 were approved. Of the approved proposals, several were rule changes or additions, some were to relocate the rule to a different section of the rule book, while others were simply rewording without affecting the intent of the rule. The approved changes of note are in the table below, changes are in bold italic. Detail relating to the 2009 to 2013 SAL Rule Book are on following pages

Following a review of the changes, Softball Australia has directed that all the new rules are to apply to National Championships from this Bulletin

Remove "ejected player" from list of ineligible replacement players as ejected player would not be on the bench.
Ineligible Replacement Player, Add C " <i>not in current line up but eligible to re-enter the game</i> "
Temporary runner for catcher with 2 out. This rule is and will be covered under the Australian Championship Rules
Runner out if <i>standing on foul portion of double base and pitcher has ball in the circle</i>
Remove "angular bat" from legal bats
Allow <i>all players other than the pitcher</i> to wear a glove with the colour of the ball
All <i>team members</i> (includes coaches) must wear fully enclosed shoes
<i>Protective leg/arm guards may be worn by the On Deck Batter, Batter or Batter Runner only, they must be removed once on base.</i>
A <i>warming sleeve is allowed, however both arms must be covered</i> as per the uniform/undershirt rules
Removed the word solid-colour undershirt and use team coloured
<i>Distracting adornments</i> judged distracting must be removed, jewellery illegal wording removed
Add – Putting Flex in Batting Line Up other than for DP is an " <i>illegal re-entry</i> "
Add exception if a flex player is in as an illegal re-entry treat as an illegal re-entry
Illegal re-entry not an illegal runner.
<i>Optional Temporary Runner for catcher to speed up the game. Also see Australian Championship Rules mandatory</i>
Add exception for forfeit – pitcher only removed from pitching position for repeated violations not a forfeit
Delete pitching wording the foot must ' remain motionless ' to ' <i>Must maintain contact with pitchers plate</i> '
Add pitching – 'arm movement must be continuous after push off from pitchers plate' to be consistent with Points of Emphasis and current practice
<i>Offensive team on deck batters can use either on deck circle</i>
Clarify - BR Intentionally interferes with an out at the plate to prevent an out, the runner is also out
Add - if a non playing defensive team member interferes with obvious attempt to prevent a double play on foul ball, the runner closest to home is <i>also</i> called out
Order of outs on runners switching bases is <i>closest switched runner to home is called out first</i>
Makes <i>body protector and shin guards with knee protection mandatory for umpires</i>
Delete option to "remove" players for unsportsmanlike conduct, remove <i>option to coach</i>
Colour of stitching can be red or white on a white ball in FP
<i>Umpire may report a player for abuse or conduct any time after a game.</i>

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Rule 1 Section 51 INELIGIBLE REPLACEMENT PLAYER

An Ineligible Replacement Player is a player who may NOT enter the game to replace a player who must leave the game to attend to an injury that has caused bleeding.

An Ineligible Replacement Player is one who

- a. Has been **either** removed **or ejected** from the game by the umpire for a violation of the rules;
- b. Is in the current line-up;**
- c. *Not in current line-up but eligible to re-enter the game*

Reasoning: Added "c" To be consistent with Rule 1 Sec 87a 3

Rule 1 Section 97 New definition – TEMPORARY RUNNER FOR THE CATCHER.

Note: This is a new rule. The Temporary Runner is the term used for the player who takes position as runner for the catcher with two out and the catcher is on base, this rule is designed to speed the game up. Under Softball Australian Championships a variance to this rule is covered under the Australian Championship Rules.

Rule 2 Section 4h Bases THE FOLLOWING RULES APPLY TO THE DOUBLE BASE:

(h) Once a runner returns to the fair portion, should he stand on the foul portion only, it is considered not in contact with the base and the runner shall be called out, if

1. He is tagged with the ball, or
- 2. He stands on the foul portion of the base, while the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle**

Reasoning: The rules relating to any runner holding his base, or returning directly to a base while the pitcher has the ball in circle is relative to all bases. We should be aware the runner needs to be able to come back to the base and then stand on the base within normal time frame, this rule change is not designed to have more runners called out, it merely means the runner must stand on the base when the pitcher has the ball in the circle.

Rule 3 Section. 1 THE OFFICIAL BAT

Remove "angular bat" from the list of legal bats

Reasoning: These angular bats had a bent handle that altered the barrel end of the bat to be forward or rearward of the hands during swinging. Under SAL TB 2011-06 and ISF bat certification, these bats are no longer legal for use.

Rule 3 Section 4 GLOVES & MITTS

Any player may wear a glove, but only the catcher and first baseman may use mitts.

- a. No top lacing, webbing, or other device between the thumb and body of the glove or mitt worn by a first baseman or catcher, or a glove worn by any fielder, shall be more than 12.7 cm (5 in) in length.
- b. Gloves worn by the **pitcher** ~~any player~~ may be any combination of colours, provided none of the colours (including the lacing) are the colour of the ball. **Gloves worn by any player other than the pitcher may be any combination of colours.**

Reasoning: The colours of the glove of the players other than the pitcher would not influence the performance of the batter or the situation of the game.

Also of note is, no player shall have a pattern of the ball on any part of the uniform including the glove or knee pads and the pitcher should not have optic yellow on himself that could distract the batter.

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Rule 3 Section 5 SHOES

All team members ***including players, managers, coaches and bat boys/girls must wear shoes***. A shoe shall be considered official if it is made with either canvas, or leather uppers or similar material(s) ***and is fully enclosed***.

Effect: Section 5: Failure to comply with the provisions of Section 5, after a warning from the umpire, shall result in the ejection of the ***team member*** from the game.

Reasoning: *All team members must wear fully enclosed shoes this eliminates the use of sandals by personnel on the field.*

Rule 3 Section 6h. PROTECTIVE LEG/ARM GUARDS may be worn by the batter.

Reasoning: *To add a rule to cover Protective Equipment worn by the batter which is not currently covered in the rules. Note the guard should be removed once on base.*

Rule 3 Section 8b UNDERSHIRTS

Players may wear a uniform, ***solid*** coloured undershirt (it may be white). It is not mandatory that all players wear an undershirt if one player wears one, but those that are worn must be alike. No player may wear ragged, frayed, or slit sleeves on exposed undershirts.

Add Note: A warming (compression) sleeve shall be treated in the same manner as a long sleeve undershirt. Both arms must be covered with warming sleeves of the same colour as the undershirt worn by players wearing a long sleeve undershirt.

Reasoning: *Some uniforms are anything but solid colours and warming sleeves of various colours are being worn by players. These sleeves should conform to the uniform rule in terms of length and colour. Warming sleeves are allowed however both arms must be covered*

Rule 3 Section 8g JEWELLERY.

~~No items, other than medical alert bracelets or necklaces, may be worn.~~

~~Medical alert bracelets and/or necklaces are not considered jewellery and, if worn, must be taped to the body.~~

Distracting Adornments - no exposed items, including jewellery, judged by the umpire to be distracting to opposing players may be worn or displayed. The umpire shall require the item to be removed or covered. Medical alert bracelets and/or necklaces, if deemed distracting shall be required to be taped to the body in such a manner that the medical alert information remains visible.

Reasoning: *Many players wear jewellery and other adornments. Players and Coaches should be responsible for the safety of themselves and other players when wearing jewellery and/or other adornments. However, should any jewellery or adornment be judged to be distracting by the umpire, the umpire shall order the removal or covering of the item. This does not prevent an umpire bringing to the attention of players or coaches, or ordering removal of jewellery, if noticed, that could be dangerous to others.*



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Rule 4 Section 8 EFFECT - Sec 8g 2-4: added EXCEPTION TO EFFECT FOR ILLEGAL FLEX PLAYER AS RUNNER

Any action that occurs while the Unreported Substitute/Illegal Player is in the game is governed as follows:

OFFENSIVE: If the Illegal Player / unreported substitute is discovered by the defense:

- (a) While...
- (b) After...
- (c) After...
- (d) And the player is in the game illegally as a runner, and it is brought to the attention of the umpire before the next legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or a play made, this is a correctable situation.
- (e) And the player is in the game illegally as a runner, and is discovered after a legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or a play made, the player is declared Ineligible and replaced on the base. Any advance of the runner(s) is legal.

Exception 1d & e when a flex player is in the game illegally as a runner this is an illegal re-entry and those penalties apply, unless in the game as a Temporary Runner for the catcher.

Reasoning: Clarifies the penalty for Flex player as an illegal runner

4 S12d Remove option to remove players for unsportsmanlike conduct, remove option to coach

Rule 4 Section 12 DELETE OPTION TO REMOVE PLAYERS FOR UNSPORTSMAN LIKE CONDUCT

VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

a. Players, coaches, or managers shall not make disparaging, or insulting, remarks to, or about, opposing players, official, or spectators, or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

~~b. The penalty for violations by a player is either prompt REMOVAL, or EJECTION, of the offender from the game.~~

c. The penalty for violations by a ~~manager, coach or other~~ team member *official* shall be

1. For a first offense, the offender may be warned.
2. For a second offense, or if a first offense is considered serious enough by the umpire, the offender is EJECTED.

NOTE: In the event the Head Coach is ejected from a game, he shall submit to the umpire the name of the person who is to assume the Head Coach duties for the remainder of the game.

~~d. A player REMOVED from the game may sit on the bench but shall not participate further in the game except as a coach.~~

e. A team member ~~player, manager, coach, or other team official~~ EJECTED from the game, shall go directly to the dressing room for the remainder of the game, or leave the grounds.

f. Failure of a person so ~~REMOVED, or~~ EJECTED, to leave the game immediately, will warrant a forfeiture of the game.

Reasoning: Players that are removed from the game for technical reasons have to sit on the bench however they can coach, players removed for unsportsmanlike conduct should not be allowed to coach and are usually ejected not removed, the new rules now make ejection the only effect for unsportsmanlike conduct or abuse.

Rule 4 Section 12 d – UMPIRE MAY REPORT A PLAYER FOR ABUSE ANY TIME AFTER A GAME

d. An officiating umpire may report a team member for offensive conduct, language or physical abuse anytime after a game has been called, in which case the reported team member will appear before the organisation under which the game or tournament is played.

Reasoning: Umpire should be protected even after the game is called. Note: This rule is already covered under the Australian Championships rules however it is now part of the rule book.

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Rule 4 Section 13 TEMPORARY RUNNER

A Temporary Runner is legal for a catcher, of record from the previous half inning, who is on base with two (2) out. The following provisions apply:

- a) **It is optional for the offensive team manager;**
- b) **The Temporary Runner may be used any time after the 2nd out occurred;**
- c) **The Temporary Runner is the player scheduled to bat last and who is not on base at the time the option is taken.**

Note: If an incorrect player is used as a Temporary Runner, the error shall be corrected when noticed without penalty.

Reasoning: this is a rule to speed up the game, in Australian Championships this has been referred to as the Speed Up Catcher Rule, it is designed to allow the catcher to come off base with two out to enable them to be ready for the warm up pitches at the beginning of the next 1/2 innings

Rule 5 Section 4b 5 EXCEPTION FOR PITCHER VIOLATING THE RULES

Exception: if the pitcher continues to repeatedly violate the pitching regulation he shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that game.

Reasoning: To provide a provision to speed up the game by the removal of the violator from the pitching position. Also to clarify that it is not the intent of this rule to be used to declare a forfeit for the repeated violation of the pitching regulations

Rule 6 Section 9a Restrict the pitcher to one pitch warm up pitch

Note 1: When the catcher was, at bat or the on deck batter, and a warm up catcher is not used, the pitcher shall be limited to one warm up pitch.

Reasoning: Pitchers and catchers are taking too long between innings to warm up. This will help speed up the game. If a team uses a warm up catcher when the catcher was at bat or an on deck batter the pitcher will get a full warm up, if not there will be a restriction.

Rule 7 Section 1 c USE EITHER BATTING CIRCLE

Revise c to read "c. The On Deck Batter *May* take a position within either on-deck circle so that he is behind the batter and not on the batter's open side'

Reasoning: Some batters are more comfortable being on the back side of a batter so there is less chance of being hit by a foul ball

Rule 8 Section 2 h BR INTENTIONALLY INTERFERES WITH AN OUT AT THE PLATE

R8 Section 2 The Batter Runner is out.

h. When he **intentionally** interferes with a play at home plate preventing an obvious out at the plate.

NOTE: The runner is also out.

*Reasoning: The old wording said "if the BR interferes with a play in an **attempt** to prevent an obvious out at the plate" consistent wording is intentionally interferes, this has been interpreted differently in the past.*

Rule 8 Section 9 ab EFFECT NOTE ORDER OF OUTS FOR SWITCHING BASES

Add the following the note. **The order of outs shall be the determined by the location of the runners immediately after the switch. The runner who is closest to home plate after the switch shall be called out first and the runner who occupied the base furthest from home plate shall be the second runner called out.**

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Appendix 4 Section 4 & 5 COLOUR OF STICHING

The White cover, white-stitch or red-stitch or yellow cover, red stitch".....

Reasoning: If the FP ball can be white covered with white stitch or yellow with red stitch, it stands to reason that FP could have a white cover red stitch.

SAL Rule Book

The next rule book is now in discussion with Softball Australia, some exciting new advances and platforms are being explored, including the current National Rules Exam delivery, Rule Book reference material, Case Book, POE, Training Manuals and On Line Portal.

These discussions are all still in its infancy and still require planning, approval and development, we expect to know more by the end of this year and will keep you posted.

Meanwhile please continue to use the 2009 - 2013 SAL rules book and this technical bulletin for reference to rules implementation and interpretation.

Kylie Bloodworth
Technical Event
Operations Coordinator
Softball Australia

Leigh Evans
Umpire in Chief - Technical
National Umpiring Program
Softball Australia

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Approved Softball Australia Technical bulletin for use in Australia and is current as of 01 June 2014
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