



Blue's News On-Line Update



May 2012

It's that time in our softball calendar again....Rules...one week to go...

This year, like all years, the National Rules Exam will be sat across the country at 7.30 pm on the last Monday in May, so this year it is Monday, 28th May, 2012.

The rules examination is the theory component for all umpires wanting to either gain or retain their accreditation.

The exam is also sat by statisticians, coaches, players and anyone wanting to test their rules knowledge.

There are two rules exams available on the night:

1. The National Rules Exam; and
2. The Basic Rules Exam.

The Basic Exam is an easier exam to test rule book definitions and every day rules, while the National Rules Exam has some more challenging rules questions.

The pass marks required vary, dependent on the level of accreditation in both exams.

New or Level 1 Umpires are encouraged to try the National Rules Exam with the chance to sit the Basic Exam at a later date if required. [Technical Bulletin SAL TB 2011-5](#), released in August, 2011, explains this procedure and is available on the SAL website, either by clicking the above link, or by clicking Umpiring → Technical Bulletins.

National Umpiring Program

Website: www.softball.org.au and go to umpiring

BEFORE THE EXAM – STUDY

Study is an active process, not a passive one.

Here are some suggestions for the next week leading up to the big night.

Get to Know Your Rule Book

Your rule book has three very helpful sections:

1. Rules;
2. Case Studies;
3. and Index.

The *Rules* section provides the “raw” data. The *Case Studies* provide game scenarios to demonstrate how the rule is applied. The *Index* provides a quick-reference linking rules and case studies.

Using the Rule Book

Trying to read the Rule Book from start to finish will, for most people, cure insomnia! Instead, use a more structured approach to using our Rule Book.

- Read a rule and use a highlighter to emphasise important points; then
- Once you have completed a rule, summarise points from the highlighted items; then
- Try reading the case plays, covering the answer with a card or paper and try to answer it yourself without referring back to the rule, then look up the rule if you are not sure or if your answer is incorrect.
 - Hint: Drawing the situation on a diamond as you review the play will help you to visualise the play, assisting in remembering the play, the rule and how it is applied; and finally
- Take special note of any rule that has an EXCEPTION or NOTE, as the questions associated with these exceptions or notes are the most common incorrect answers.

Review Exams from Previous Years

A great way to get your mind into exam mode is to re-do the exams from previous years. Don't have copies of the exams, or the answers? No worries! Past exams, and the answers, can be found on the SAL website, by clicking Umpires → Umpiring Resources → Past Australian Rules Exam or by clicking [HERE](#). The answer sheets have the rule references included, so you can review the correct rules and interpretations for any questions you get wrong.





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Get the Easy Marks – Know Your Definitions and Important Rules.

Familiarity with Rule 1 (Definitions) and Rule 7 (Batting) and Rule 8 (Batter-Runner and Runner) will help you with the exam – these rules are the basis for many common questions.

Softball Australia Rules Exam Tips to Achieve a Top Result on the Night

In what seems like the blink of an eye, time passes - and just when we thought we have weeks to study the rules... It's exam day! Let's look at some suggestions on how to perform best on the night.

Arrive Early

Plan to arrive 10 – 15 minutes early. Also plan to bring everything you need, including a black pen with which to answer the questions and correction tape in case you make a mistake. Make sure you dress comfortably and stay warm. This helps you focus on the task at hand. Try not to talk to others about the exam beforehand... If you're nervous, it's contagious!

Be Comfortable and Alert

Choose a good spot and make sure you have enough room to work. Maintain a comfortable posture.

Stay Relaxed and Confident

Remind yourself that you are well-prepared and are going to do well. If you find yourself anxious, take several slow, deep breaths to relax.

EXAM TIME!

Sitting down, ready to go, and we look at the paper... What's the best way to proceed from here?

Read the Instructions on the Front Page

Yes, you may have done the test before. Still, take a few moments to review the instructions. Looking at something familiar will help relax you and focus your mind on the task at hand. Remember, there is no time limit, so don't skip the preliminaries!

Read Each Question Twice

After the first read, slowly read the question a second time. Highlight or underline words that are important. If the question describes a play take advantage of the diamonds printed on the bottom of each exam page and draw the situation.

If you're not sure of the answer, highlight the question and move on. Don't forget to come back to it later.

Try to breakdown the question into elements. Each step in each scenario gives you clues.

Use the spaces provided on the question sheet to put your answers initially, and then transfer your checked answers to the answer sheet later.

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Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Every Part of a True Question Must be "true"

If any one part of the question is false, the answer is "false."

Absolute Words Restrict Possibilities

Keep an eye out for these words:

No, never, none, must, always, every, entirely, this is, only

These absolutes mean that the statement must be true 100% of the time and the use of these absolutes can often indicate "false" answers. If there is a single time that you can think of where the statement is not correct then the answer is "false."

Questions with Multiple Sentences or Long Sentences

Pay attention to the "truth" of each of the parts of a long sentence, or the separate sentences in the question. If one is false, it usually indicates the answer is "false."

FINALLY...

Resist the urge to leave as soon as you have completed all 100 questions. Review your test to make sure that you have answered all questions, that you haven't mis-marked the answer sheet, or made some other simple mistake.

Change answers to questions if you originally misread them or if you have encountered information elsewhere in the test that indicates that your first choice is incorrect.

Transfer your answers onto the answer sheet, and cross check the answer with each question.

In summary...

- Eat before you attend
- Arrive ready for the exam
- Do you have a black pen (or two) and correction tape?
- Do you need a coat?
- Do you have a drink?
- Try not to arrive after the exam has started, but do not rush, as this places unnecessary pressure on you
- Take your time – there is no time limit
- Attend any rules sessions run by the state or your local association
- Read through your rule book and the case book
- If unsure of the answer, leave it until later as another question may jog your memory. If not, answer what you would do in a game situation, as this is usually correct
- Rules are written with fairness in mind

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Questions & Exam Hints

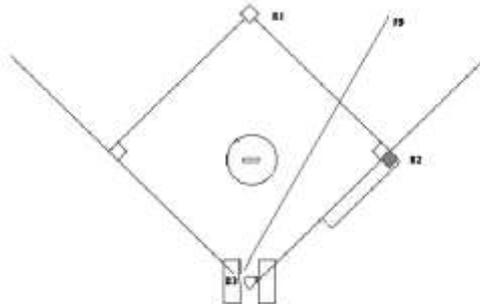
Exams always include:

- Definitions and Exceptions/Notes
- Rule 4 (Players and Substitutes), Rule 7 (Batting) and Rule 8 (Batter-Runner and Runner), with a focus on obstruction or interference, Batting Out of Order, and substitutes.

Many of the questions are scenario based (R1 on 1st etc.), therefore use the diagrams at the bottom of the page indicating each player and play as the scenario unfolds.

Draw the Question

R1 is on 2nd Base. R2 on 1st when B3 hits a fly ball to F9....



In score and innings type questions, use a box score to help you. For example:

At the end of the 5th innings, Blue leads 2 runs to Red 1 run. Red score 2 runs in the sixth innings with 2 out when the game is called. SCORE REVERTS and Blue wins 2 runs to 1.

	4	5	6	7	score
RED	0	1	2		1
BLUE	1	1			2

All the answer may not be given in a ruling, as long as what is given in the ruling is true, it is true.

GOOD LUCK!!!

References:

Studying a Topic (edited) - Terry O'Brien, Principal of Georges River College, Oatley, Senior Campus

Tips for Better Test Taking – Source: Study Guides and Strategies

SAL web site, VUC, SNSWUA

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