



Softball

Rule Book

FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION



SOFTBALL RULE BOOK

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Freedom Sports Association

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FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION

SOFTBALL RULES



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

ADULT SLOW PITCH

General Guidelines	Pg. 4
Definitions	Pg. 4
Classifications and Roster Guidelines	Pg. 9
Field of Play	Pg. 11
Equipment	Pg. 12
The Game	Pg. 14
The Players and Substitutions	Pg. 16
Base Running	Pg. 18
Pitching	Pg. 22
Batting	Pg. 22
Dead Ball-Ball In Play	Pg. 24
Appeals	Pg. 26
Protest	Pg. 26
Conduct	Pg. 27
Umpire	Pg. 27
Women's Program	Pg. 28
Coed Program	Pg. 29
Master's Program	Pg. 29
Military Program	Pg. 30
World Tournament	Pg. 30

YOUTH FAST PITCH

General Guidelines	Pg. 33
Definitions	Pg. 33
Classifications and Roster Guidelines	Pg. 34
Field of Play	Pg. 38
Equipment	Pg. 39
The Game	Pg. 41
The Players and Substitutions	Pg. 43
Base Running	Pg. 45
Pitching	Pg. 49
Batting	Pg. 49
Appeals	Pg. 51
Protest	Pg. 51
Conduct	Pg. 52
Umpire	Pg. 52
8 & Under Modified Rule	Pg. 53
10 & Under Modified Rule	Pg. 53
World Series Rules	Pg. 55
Insurance	Pg. 56
Communicable Disease Procedures	Pg. 56

FREEDOM ADULT SLOWPITCH

GENERAL GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of coaches, managers, sponsors and players to know the FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION Rules and By-Laws. Ignorance of these Rules and By-Laws is not grounds for protest or appeal. Softball is a contact sport, played with Composite, Aluminum, Wood and other approved materials in design of approved bats. The game of softball can be a dangerous sport to participate in. Playing the game of softball, the player(s) participating in the game of softball assume for themselves the risk of serious injury or possible death. By agreeing to be placed on a FREEDOM SPORTS roster, the participants understand these risks.

Freedom Sports Association has implemented a ZERO alcohol tolerance rule at all parks that don't serve alcohol. Players caught consuming alcohol at the fields will be asked to leave the facility. If player argues they will be subject to suspension. We will no longer tolerate drinking and the resulting bad behavior. Players' will never be permitted to consume alcohol in dugout areas during game play at a park that even does allow alcohol.

Freedom Sports Association: Any rule that is not outlined or has grey area in this rule book, Said director of that event will be able to make an active decision and ruling on that situation. This will cover all scenario's that aren't completely outlined and or missing from the rule book

RULE INTERPRETATIONS

General slow-pitch terms used in FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION softball play, such as batter, runner, fielder, infield fly, etc., will be generally the same as defined by all major softball associations. If an interpretation is unable to be made by the Tournament Director and the UIC of a specific event, then a team may protest to the Area Director for a decision. Should there be no Area Director binding. Any Freedom Director or Umpire whom has any interest in an appeal (whether player, coach, sponsor, etc) may have any involvement on the final ruling.

DEFINITIONS

ALTERED BAT - A bat is considered to be altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or a non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat. Using any process that exerts more pressure on a bat than is experienced during normal play, such as rolling or shaving a bat, is considered altering a bat. Bats with cracks will be considered illegal and are not deemed allowed in play and can result in a suspension if player is caught using one. **EFFECT:** *Player will be warned and if caught using the cracked bat again player will be immediately ejected and suspended for (1) year from any FSA event*

APPEAL PLAY - A play in which an umpire cannot make a ruling until requested by a team manager, coach, or player. Appeal must be made to the umpire making the call. Appeal must be made ANYTIME before any of the following:

- A. Next legal pitch
- B. The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory
- C. The Officials have left the field of play.

**Judgment calls cannot be appealed.

BALL - Official "FREEDOM SPORTS" stamped 44-400 or 44-425 core-compression softballs must be used in all Freedom play. The ball must be optic yellow and 12 inches in circumference. **NOTE:** *Use of a non-approved ball may be protested by the opposing team (once batter has taken the batter's box.) and an out will be declared. If protested before, the ball is to be replaced with the correct ball no penalty will be enforced. Opposing team may also protest a ball that has been put in play.* **EFFECT:** *All runners shall return to last base occupied, and player hitting the ball is out.* **NOTE:** *Freedom Sports optic yellow ball is the only ball legal for game play.*

BATS - **The official bat** shall be round in cross section, straight in length and measure 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat, and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. Its weight shall be at least 25 ounces but not more than 38 ounces. The bat must be stamped USSSA approved with either of old or new USSSA stamps. **The manufacturer must be on the approved bat manufacturer list (Located in RULE 3 Equipment Section of the Rule Book, in addition to NOT being on the unapproved list, for it to be legal for play.** The bat shall have a safety grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter's swing. The safety grip shall be not less than 6 inches long, nor extend more than 15 inches from the small end, or handle end, of the bat. The bat must be smooth, round and free from deep dents, cracks, flat spots, rivets or other such hazardous defects. We do not allow ASA only stamped bats in the field of play of any FSA events. **NOTE:** *Any bat with such defects will be deemed unsafe and removed from game play. Graphics, including BPF markings, must be permanent and cannot be decals or any other method that can be easily removed or added to the bat. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF testing procedure. The bat shall be made of aluminum, composite, fiberglass, wood, or other such materials approved by FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION.*

BASE PATH - The imaginary direct line, as well as (3) feet to either side of the direct line, between a base and a runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to apply a tag.

BLOCKED BALL - Any ball hitting a player or offensive equipment other than the on deck batter or batter's equipment, shall be declared an out. Baserunner closest to home plate shall be the out and all other runners must return to their base held last. A Blocked Ball is **NOT** declared when the ball strikes a base coach or an Official as an Official is deemed part of the playing field.

BUNT - A bunt is a fair ball in which the batter does not take a full swing at the ball but holds the bat in such a manner in the path of the ball to tap the ball slowly to the infield. A chopped ball is not a bunt. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead, the batter is out, and baserunners may not advance.*

CATCH - A catch is a legally caught ball that occurs when a fielder secures a batted or thrown ball with his/her hand or glove. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arms, or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body or clothing, the catch is not complete until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, immediately after he/she contacts the ball, collides with another player, or fence, or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall have complete control of the ball, and his/her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. Exclusion applies only when fielder drops the ball during the transfer in an attempt to make another play.

CHOPPED BALL - When the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion so that the ball bounces high into the air, this is considered a chopped hit ball. **EFFECT:** *A chopped ball is a legal swing in FSA.*

COACH - A member of the team at bat who takes his/her place in the coach's box to direct his/her players in running the bases. Two coaches are allowed, one positioned at first base and one positioned at third base. One coach can have in his possession a scorebook and an indicator, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only. The defensive coaches/manager must remain in the dugout, as their normal position, when their team is playing defense. Failure to obey this rule, after a warning is issued, will result in the coach/manager being ejected.

COUNT BALLS/STRIKES - Batters start with a 1 and 1 count and no courtesy foul. Any Qualifier, State & National Tournaments shall be 1 and 1 count and no courtesy foul as well.

DISLODGED EQUIPMENT – When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with his or her cap, glove or any part of his or her uniform while detached from its proper place.

EFFECT: *The ball is dead and the runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. If the illegal act was made on a fair ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded, and a four (4) base error will be scored on the play with the home run not counting against the team's home run total.*

DEAD BALL - The ball is not in play and not considered in play again, until the pitcher has the ball in his possession and the umpire has called "play ball".

DELAYED DEAD BALL - An infraction, signaled by the umpire, in which the ball remains alive until all play has been completed and the umpire calls time.

DIVISION OF PLAY –The different divisions of play offered are: Major (12hr), Elite (8hr), Upper Competitive (6hr), Competitive (4hr), Medial Competitive (3hr), Lower Competitive (1hr). Coed divisions as followed Stars (8hr), Blue Division (5hr), White division (3hr), Red division (1hr). Women's Divisions: Stars division (Unlimited Homeruns) and Stripes division (3hr). Women may participate in every division of play with no minimums or maximums per team. Meaning, they can play in the Men's division, Coed divisions or Women's division, they like any other player must be 18 yrs. of age and have signed the roster.

DROPPED BALL – Any ball touched by a fielder not ruled to be a "catch" **EFFECT:** *Any ball ruled to be dropped intentionally should be declared a dead ball. This includes a ball that's natural path has been altered by a fielder. A fielder may allow a ball to drop intentionally without penalty as long as the fielder does not make contact with the ball. If the fielder does make contact with the ball all runners return to their last held base and batter should be declared out. A warning shall be given to defensive player, a second infraction deeming said player ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.*

Equalizer: When combining divisions the lower of the teams will be given a equalizer when playing against a team above their said division. Equalizer will be 5 runs or 11 fielders unless the Director feel its necessary to award the teams both 5 runs & 11 fielders

EXTRA INNINGS - When a regulation game ends in a tie, OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired and the score is tied. **EFFECT:** *The Tie Breaker rule will be used. At the beginning of each team's at-bat the last batted out from the previous inning or the FREEDOM RUNNER is placed on 2nd base. Extra innings shall be 1-Pitch, no courtesy foul. It is not sudden death. Each team has an opportunity to bat each inning. The game ends when one team is ahead at the end of an inning.*

FAKE TAG - When a fielder not receiving a throw fakes the catching motion. **EFFECT:** *Fake tags are prohibited. Fake tags shall result in each base runner being awarded one additional base. Player shall also be warned. A second offense shall result in player being ejected from the game.*

FAIR BALL - A batted ball that:

1. Is on or over fair territory when stopped in the infield or is bounding toward the outfield. Contact with any Base shall be a fair ball.
2. First makes contact in fair territory beyond 1B or 3B including the foul line.
3. Passes over the outfield fence while over fair territory or hits the foul poles.
4. Hits an outfield fence on or between the foul poles.

FIELDING GLOVE - all fielders must wear a Glove. Players have the FREEDOM to use ANY glove (not greater than 15 fifteen inches) at any position, at anytime.

FOUL BALL - Any batted ball that stops or settles in foul territory without first being touched in fair territory, or which is first touched in foul territory, or that first touches some out-of-play object or area in foul territory, or that first touches foul ground beyond first and third base, or which does not conform to the requirements that would make it a fair ball. **EFFECT:** *Baserunners have the freedom to make an attempt to advance on any caught ball, this includes third strike caught ball.*

FOUL TIP - A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's hands or glove, and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike if not caught. The batter is out if it is the third strike. A foul tip is also a Dead Ball.

FORCE OUT - A force out is an out which can be made only when a base-runner loses the right to the base he/she is occupying because the batter becomes a runner, and before the batter or a succeeding baserunner has been put out.

FORFEIT - Score of a forfeit game shall be deemed a 7-0 win for the non-forfeiting team in such case as the tournament director is unable to obtain an alternate team to play in the forfeiting team's place.

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL - Batters have the freedom to hit the ball when at least one portion of his/her foot is making contact with the batter's box and the other foot is not touching the ground completely outside of the batter's box or is making any contact with home plate. Penalty shall be a dead ball out.

ILLEGAL PLAYER - Illegal use of re-entry rule, or an unreported substitute or base runner shall be deemed an Illegal Player. This illegal player will be deemed an out. This also constitutes a player playing under a false name, playing in a class he/she doesn't belong and playing with too many drop downs on the team. Those circumstances will lead to ejection, and forfeit from a played event and cannot be substituted for once deemed illegal.

INELIGIBLE PLAYER - Player under an assumed name or a player not on the team's roster. **EFFECT:** Penalty shall result in immediate Forfeit of game if protested properly. The Tournament Director or UIC may declare a player ineligible immediately without having a team protest, regardless of their roster status.

INFIELD FLY - An infield fly is a fair ball, not including a line drive, which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases are occupied before two are out. Any fielder can catch an infield fly. **NOTE:** *When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately signal and declare "INFIELD FLY - BATTER IS OUT" to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare "INFIELD FLY - BATTER IS OUT, IF FAIR". The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after a fielder touches the ball.*

INTERFERENCE - The act of an offensive player, which impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play. Vocal interference may be deemed interference. An example would be a baserunner attempting to intentionally block a thrown ball. That said player would automatically be out.

INNING - An inning is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate between offense/defense and there are three outs for each team. A new inning begins when the third out of the bottom of an inning is recorded.

LEGALLY CAUGHT BALL - A legally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball, provided the ball is not caught in the fielder's cap, hat, pocket, protector or any other part of his/her uniform. It must be caught and firmly held with the hand, hands or glove.

LINEUP - Teams must have a minimum of 8 players to be eligible to begin a game. However, teams have the FREEDOM to submit a lineup with only 8 or 9 players, and without penalty. Late arriving players are only eligible to fill in the 9th and/or 10th positions without penalty if they were not listed on the lineup card and the 9 and 10 spot were blank spots on the card. A team can prelist up to 12 players, but outs will be declared in the vacant spots until the player arrives for game. If missing players were listed, then the vacant spots in the lineup shall be declared outs until such time as the late arriving players can take their turn in the lineup. A pitcher has the FREEDOM to intentionally walk a batter to get to outs. Teams may bat up to 12

players in the lineup. All teams that are playing in Freedom Sports events have the right to see the official lineup card before the game after each team has filled it out.

OBSTRUCTION – When a defensive team member hinders or impedes a batter’s attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is fielding a batted ball, executing a play or catching a thrown ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

NOTE: *Catcher obstruction is called when the catcher obstructs the batter who is attempting to hit or swing at a pitch. Prior to the pitch, catcher obstruction does not apply, a dead ball shall be called and allow the batter to reset themselves. Effect: If obstruction occurs, the base runner will be awarded the next base, and deemed safe if he is tagged out in the process of an obstruction. The player must be in the process of advancing and must occupy the next bag to be awarded that base.*

One Up Hr - A team will be allowed to go Up one home run once the opposing team has reach their homerun limit with No maximum on the Hr limits. If a team hits a homerun before the opposing team hits the limit the penalty will be an inning ending out. The Home team may not go up in the bottom of the last timed inning or 7th inning to win the game. ***Example:*** *3-1 up – team hits 3 hr and other team only has 2 the team with 3hrs can not hit another hr till the team with two get to 3 at that point either team can go one up on the hrs*

OVERTHROW– A play in which a ball is thrown to retire a runner who has not yet reached or is off base and goes into foul territory beyond the boundary lines of the playing field or is blocked.

PROTEST - When a team disputes an umpire’s interpretation of a playing rule, a player eligibility or equipment. Protests must be declared to the Plate Umpire before the next pitch following the dispute. No protest will be allowed following the game. Tournament Officials and UIC will rule on all protests and their decision will be final

RETOUCH - The act of a runner in returning to touch a base as legally required.

STEALING - The act of a runner attempting to advance during the pitch or after the pitch has reached the plate is considered to be the act of stealing. **NOTE:** *Baserunners may attempt to advance upon the ball hitting the ground anywhere before or beyond the plate, once it crosses home plate or makes contact with plate, whichever occurs first. It is a Dead ball, if batter swings, makes a false swing attempt or fouls off the ball. The ball is live and stealing can occur if it hits home plate.*

STRIKE ZONE - The strike zone is only that part, or any part of the area, over home plate that is lower than the top of the batter’s back shoulder, or higher than the bottom of his front knee. The ball must cross in this zone and the pitch must be from 4 feet minimum to 10 feet maximum from the ground.

TIME – The term used by the umpire to order suspension of play. **NOTE:** *Most divisions in Freedom Sports allow stealing. the ball will be deemed live until the umpire/official signals time and or calls the play dead and stopped. Time is to never be assumed.*

THREE FOOT LINE - Is a line parallel to, and three feet from the base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and 1st base. The batter-baserunner is declared out when he/she runs outside the three-foot line, and in the judgment of the umpire interferes, intentionally or unintentionally, with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball, or interfering with a thrown ball.

TURN AT BAT - A player’s turn at bat begins when he/she enters the batter’s box and continues until he/she is put out or becomes a base runner.

RULE 1. CLASSIFICATIONS AND ROSTER GUIDELINES

Sec. 1. TEAM CLASSIFICATION: Teams shall be classified at the highest level that the majority of their players have played with other softball associations recognized by and in good standing with Freedom Sports Association. Any team may submit a "Classification Appeal" in writing to Freedom Sports Association via our website and all decisions will be researched and approved/denied within 10 business days. Freedom reserves the right to bump or drop a team at any time at their own discretion. Teams being bumped or dropped shall bring their points with them in full. All rosters must be submitted and approved for Freedom Sports play.

Sec. 2. PLAYER CLASSIFICATION: Player classification is based upon a player's **highest** playing history within the past two years in any association relevant to that player. Example playing year of 2019 we will use history 2018 and 2017 to determine class. The classification will be the player's current status. Always check with the director before bringing said players to events. **NOTE:** *All Players are responsible for their own classification and knowing what class they are ranked within the Freedom Sports "player classification" system.*

Sec. 3. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY: Players must be at least 18 years of age to play FREEDOM sanctioned adult softball tournaments and leagues. A player **MUST** have signed a FREEDOM roster with liability waiver to be allowed to participate in any FREEDOM play. If a player is caught playing without signing roster but is on the printed roster he will be ejected from game and be an out in the lineup and then must come sign roster to be able to play future games in that event. **NOTE:** *Teams playing without signing a roster shall be cause for immediate forfeit of the team. Players are not eligible for play in FREEDOM until roster has been approved by a Freedom State Director, Regional Director, or the Freedom Classification Board.*

Sec. 4. REQUIRED TEAM/PLAYER MOVE UP POLICY: All Division (except Coed) teams, which finish in 1st World Series will be required to move up to the next higher classification. If a team is bumped in other associations and accepts the bump that said team will also be bumped in Freedom Sports. If a team is bumped and does not accept the Bump by not played said division the team will not be bumped in FSA unless they were already being bumped with FSA. These teams will not be allowed to re-class as a team or individual players the following calendar year. **NOTE:** *The roster that you play with in the other association will be used to determine the bumped players. If a team does not an online roster with the association that they are bumped in the last roster on file with FSA or Other association will be used to determine the players bumped. This does not apply to co-ed divisions as those are determined by the current year player classification.*

Sec. 5. TEAM ROSTER GUIDELINES - FREEDOM rosters will be limited to 20 players per sanctioning year of which every player must be included on an online roster at www.FreedomSports.com. If a team changes its name during said calendar year they are required to pay a new sanction fee. Players may be added onto team rosters until state tournament. Players being added must be approved by the State Director or Regional Director and cannot have played with a team of more than one level higher class per the "Drop Down Rule". In addition:

A. Teams can have (2) Drop downs from one division higher then they currently play in. **Example:** A Medial division team can have (2) drop downs from the Comp. Division

B. Players may not drop down more than one level as a "pickup". **Example:** No players from competitive division can play down in the lower competitive division.

C. If the coach/manager releases a player from the roster he/she is free to be added back to that roster at any time at the coach's discretion. If a player requests to be released, then he/she are no longer eligible to return to that roster during the current calendar year.

D. If a player plays up a level from his/her original class in a National event (Winter Nationals, States, NIT or Worlds) that player will be locked into the higher class. **EXCEPTION:** *A team can have a player play up with prior approval from the national office or Area director with NO penalty as long as player will not be a permanent player*

E. All teams that were not moved up during the previous year and had drop down players, and those players who were drop downs will still count as drop downs once again. Those players have a right to appeal to be dropped a class through the Freedom Sports Association national website.

F. Once a team has completed its first game during a FREEDOM tournament, that team will not be permitted to add additional players to its roster without special permission and for good cause. The Tournament Director must grant this permission.

G. Teams may always play up a division but can never play lower than their current approved division of play.

H. Any team with more drop down players than allowed by current classification rules will constitute that team to be considered the level above. **Example:** A **Lower** team with (3) **Medial Competitive** players will be a **Medial Competitive** team. A **Lower** team with (3) or more **Competitive Players** will be a **Competitive team**.

I. There will be no rotating of drop down players. This means a team cannot bring more than 2 drop downs per team. All players playing must be on the roster, and when more than allowed drop downs are on the roster, the team will be considered a classification level higher or applicable to who they carry on their roster. The team will also be forfeited out of game or tournament with illegal rosters.

Sec. 6. LOCKED ROSTERS – Rosters will only be locked if a team owes money or is suspended for Freedom Sports game play.

Sec. 7. FREEDOM ROSTER (WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORM) Any team caught playing in a FREEDOM Tournament without turning in a completed team roster including signatures of all participating players, and drivers license number, will forfeit any game that began without roster having been turned into the Tournament Director. Also:

A. Any player who signs a fake name to a roster will receive a (1) year suspension from the date of said occurrence.

B. Any team caught with forged signatures on an official roster, will be suspended from all FREEDOM play for (6) SIX Months.

C. Any player caught playing in a FREEDOM Tournament without signing their team roster can be suspended from all FREEDOM play for (6) SIX Months.

D. A player's name on a roster unsigned does not guarantee the team that the player in question is a valid rostered player. **Example:** *Team B writes John Smiths name on the teams NIT roster and John Smith was not there to play. If they win a berth at this tournament John Smith will not be considered on the roster until the roster is cleared to insure he does not put the team over their roster limitations, until it is confirmed he is not on another locked roster, and until notice is given to the Freedom National Office by said player stating that he is indeed a part of the team.*

Sec 8. PENALTY FOR TEAM REMOVAL FROM AN EVENT – If a team pulls out of a said tournament once game times are announced; the team will be required to pay full entry for that tournament. All tournament game times for regular events are posted the Thursday before the event, on all larger events game times may be released as early as Monday before the event. Please be aware of the penalty of pulling out of a tournament after schedule announcement. Team and all players will be suspended until full amount has been paid for this penalty.

RULE 2. FIELD OF PLAY

Every effort will be made by each Freedom Director to obtain Softball Complexes with the official field dimensions. Each director will compensate any varied distances when possible.

Sec. 1. BASE PATHS. The primary distances for FREEDOM are 70' Base Paths.

Sec. 2. PITCHING PLATE. The pitching plate shall be 24 inches in length, white and made of rubber.

<u>DIVISIONS</u>	<u>PITCHING DISTANCE</u>
Adult Men's Slow Pitch	53ft
Adult Women's Slow Pitch	53ft
Adult Coed Slow Pitch	53ft
Adult Military Slow Pitch	53ft

Sec. 3. FENCE DISTANCES. The suggested fence distance for all divisions is 300ft. Distances may vary depending on park or complex.

Sec. 4. DOUBLE BASE. The double first base may be used. One portion of the base is white [which will be in fair territory and the other is orange or colored [which will be in foul territory]].

A. Any batted ball hitting the white portion of a double first base bag will be called a fair ball. Any batted ball hitting the orange or colored portion of a double first base bag will be called a foul ball.

B. Whenever a play is being made by the defensive player at first base, the defensive player must use the white portion of a double first base bag and the batter-runner must use the orange or colored portion of a double first base bag. When a throw pulls the defensive player over the orange or colored part of the double base, the runner may use the white portion to avoid a collision. When this occurs, no penalty will be enforced. A base runner may be in contact with only the white bag when standing on base.

1. If a batter-runner touches the white portion of a double first base bag when a defensive player is making a play, the umpire will call out the runner, and a dead ball will be declared.

2. Interference and an out will be called on the batter- runner if that said batter- runner touches the white portion of a double first base bag and collides with the defensive player who is about to catch a thrown ball. This will also result in a dead ball being called and all other runners must return to their last occupied base.

This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base. This does not include:

- A.** Returning to the base after over running,
- B.** Running on a base hit to the outfield (runner may touch the orange or white part)
- C.** Re-tag to advance on a fly ball.

NOTE: *If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after safely securing first base and is not in contact with the white portion before the pitcher throws the next legal pitch. **EFFECT:** He/she is considered off the base and Umpire shall call a Dead Ball Out.*

Sec. 5. BATTER'S BOX. The batter's box shall be seven (7) feet in length and three (3) feet wide. The batter's box shall be six (6) inches from the plate and the front of the batter's box shall be four (4) feet from the center of the plate.

Sec.6. COACHES BOX. The coach's box is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to, and eight feet from, the foul lines extended from the bases toward home plate.

NOTE: If during the playing of any game the base distance, pitching distance or any other marked distance is found to be in error, the error should be corrected immediately and the game should be continued. This is not a point to be protested.

RULE 3. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must conform to industry standards and must not be altered in any way or form.

Sec. 1. OFFICIAL BAT - The approved bat shall not be more than 34 inches in length and no more than 38 ounces in weight the performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF testing procedure. The bat shall be made of aluminum, composite, fiberglass, or other such materials and shall meet FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION bat standards. The following will also apply:

Freedom shall reciprocate the approval of all bats on the current USSSA approved bat list new and old stamp. Senior bats are not allowed in Freedom in any division, even if they are on the USSSA approved bat list. No ASA only bats are allowed in the play of Freedom Sports or **ANY bat** that does not allow testing in the FSA method. Any bat not identifiable by the markings on the bat as an approved bat or with any visible cracks, shall be considered illegal. In addition:

Approved Bat Companies (any company not on this list please reach out to national office to get your company certified and Freedom Sports stamp requirements)

1. Miken
2. Mizuno
3. Worth
4. Louisville slugger
5. Demarini – (Aftermath & Flipper are UNAPPROVED However)
6. Easton

A. KNOB CUFF: Players are free to use knob cuffs. Cuffs are not required to be taped over.

B. BARRELL: Any bat with a foreign substance such as spray glue, stick'em, pine tar or any other substance that may help the bat grip the ball will be removed from the game at the umpire's discretion and may not be used for the remainder of the tournament.

C. INSPECTION: During all FREEDOM play, any Umpire, UIC, or Director has the right to request the inspection of any bat or ball that is brought into the sports complex. If a bat is found to be altered or player is unsure of bat's status, the player will have (3) two options:

1. Admit that the bat has been altered, give the bat up to be destroyed, and take an immediate 1-year suspension. Player must make that decision before leaving event.

2. Allow us to test the bat. If the bat fails compression testing, the bat will be sent to the manufacturer for a formal determination on why the bat failed the compression test. Should the bat be found to be altered, the player will receive an immediate 5-year suspension. If the bat passes compression testing, the bat shall be returned immediately. Any refusal to allow us to test a bat shall result in an immediate 5-year suspension. Suspensions shall be binding on the person swinging the bat as well as the bat owner.

3. If player chooses not to agree to inspection, the player will receive an immediate five-year suspension with no eligible appeal.

D. PUBLIC NOTICE: The user and/or owner's name of any bat found to be altered shall be posted on the FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION national website for the public to view.

E. BAT PROTEST FEE: For a protest fee of \$50.00, a team may protest an opposing team player's bat (or ball). If the bat is tested and fails compression testing, the fee shall be returned to person who protested. If bat or ball passes test, FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION shall retain fee. The protest must be made before the umpire leaves the field of play at the completion of the game. Any team caught with an altered bat shall be forfeited from the tournament, placed last in the standings, and shall forfeit all points and prizes.

F. ALTERED BAT - A bat is considered to be altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or a non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat. Using any process that exerts more pressure on a bat than is experienced during normal play, such as rolling or shaving a bat, is considered altering a bat. In the event a bat is suspected of being altered:

1. Freedom Sports Association Directors may at any time ask to inspect any bat that has been brought into the sanctioned Freedom event.

2. Any player can withhold the bat from inspection and accept a five-year suspension and must leave the sanctioned event. Second time offenders will accept a lifetime suspension from all Freedom sanctioned events.

3. If after a bat has been inspected by a director and deemed potentially altered, the owner may allow Freedom to send the bat for further testing to determine whether the bat has actually been altered. When a bat is sent for further testing, Freedom will allow that said player/owner the right to continue to participate in any Freedom sanctioned events. However, if a bat fails all testing and is determined to be altered, that said player/owner would be subject to a minimum of a one (1) year suspension to a max of a five (5) year suspension for first time offenders. Any second time offenders will be subject to a lifetime suspension from all Freedom Sports Association sanctioned events. Freedom's National Director's will determine all suspensions. **NOTE:** *Any bat determined to be altered will be retained by Freedom Sports and destroyed. Freedom Sports **will not** replace any destroyed altered bats.*

4. If any bat is determined not to be altered, the bat will be returned to the owner with no suspensions given.

Sec. 2. OFFICIAL BALL - The official ball of Freedom Sports Association will be spherical in design, shall have raised seams and be smooth in surface and be 11 or 12 inches in circumference. The center or core of the ball shall be of material approved by Freedom Sports and customarily used to make softballs. The cover shall be made of horsehide, cowhide, or other material approved by Freedom Sports and shall be cemented to the core. The official ball shall be stitched with customarily used material (nylon, cotton, linen) or a material approved by Freedom Sports. The official ball cover color shall be optic yellow. The ball must be stamped with the Freedom Logo or have "Freedom Sports" clearly marked on it and no other logo ball shall be used unless approved by the National office. The maximum compression/core for Freedom Sports Adult Slow Pitch balls shall be 44-425. **NOTE:** *The men's division will use the twelve (12) inch softball. The women's division will use the eleven (11) inch softball. Co-Ed Divisions will use both balls with the men hitting the (12) inch softball and the women hitting the (11) inch softball.*
Altered balls- if a ball has been put in a cooler, frozen, re-stitched or stamped the team will be forfeited from the game and possibly suspended from Freedom Sports play.

Sec 3. GLOVES/MITTS. All defensive players must wear a glove in the field. Gloves must be no more than 15 inches in height, uniform in color (no optic yellow), be made of leather or other approved material and contains no circles or writing on the outside that will give the appearance of a ball. Any glove not meeting these requirements will be considered illegal and removed from the game of play.

Sec 4. FOOTWEAR. All individuals in the field of play must wear shoes. No sandals will be allowed. Shoes must be made of leather, canvas, nylon, plastic or other similar material. Cleats must have either modeled plastic (soft or hard cleats) or have a smooth surface. Metal cleats or spikes are prohibited.

NOTE: *If an offensive player is found to be wearing metal cleats or spikes during the game, an out will be declared for that player. And runners must return to their previously occupied base. The umpire will request the player to change into proper footwear. If a player is unable to or unwilling to change, said player will be ejected from game.*

Sec. 5. UNIFORMS. All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color with same team name/logo at National/State tournaments including individual numbers. The team must start the game with the uniforms on and finish the game with uniforms on. **Effect:** *Penalty shall be that the team with matching Jerseys shall be awarded the option of home/visitor.* **NOTE:** *If both teams are in compliance, or if both teams are not in compliance, then a flip of a coin will determine the home and visiting team. A player shall not play the game shirtless or shoe less.*

Sec 6. OTHER MATERIALS. A Cast (hard or soft), worn by any player and judged dangerous by the umpire may not be worn during the game, by any coach coaching the bases or by any player. Any braces, splints or prosthesis (knee braces, elbow pads, sliding pads) can be worn as long as all metal areas are well protected or padded so that no hazardous material is visible or can come into contact with any other player. At any time, the umpire can deem any material unsafe or hazardous and must be removed from the game.

Sec 7. REMOVAL OF EQUIPMENT. All Freedom Sports Directors and Umpires have the right at any given time to inspect or remove equipment from a said game or complex. Any refusals of this will result in suspensions for teams and players. **NOTE:** *If a batted ball strikes a player in the Infield (grounder, line-drive, etc.), the umpire has the right to remove the bat and ball from the game for inspection, that said player does not need to leave the game for this action to take place.*

Sec 8. Radios. Radios are allowed in the dugout as long as the (Umpire, Director, Park Staff or Opposing Team) does not feel the music is offensive or too loud. **NOTE:** *If it is a park rule that NO Radios can be brought in the park then that rule over rules the Freedom Sports Rule and Radios must not be brought in the park.*

RULE 4. THE GAME

Sec 1. HOME/AWAY. The choice of the first or last bat in the inning shall be decided by the toss of a coin unless otherwise stated in the rules of the organization under which the schedule of games is being played. If a team is not in compliance with the uniform rule, the opposing team has the choice of being the home or visiting team if they are in total uniform compliance.

Sec 2. REGULATION GAME. A regulation game shall consist of seven (7) innings or when the time limit is reached. A regulation game officially begins when the defensive team has taken the field and the umpire indicates (verbally or physically) to "play ball". Any game played four and a half (4 1/2) or more innings shall be deemed OFFICIAL. A new inning starts if the 3rd out is recorded before the audible alarm of the timer. A Timer with both an audible alarm and a digital display are part of the Freedom Umpire's Official Uniform. **NOTE:** A game that is tied after the seven innings or when time expires and shall require additional innings shall be governed according to the rules of "Extra Innings". NO Time limits for all Nationals, NIT's, States, and World. **NOTE:** *Under Certain Circumstances Time Limits will be used for National Events. Teams will be notified in Advance.*

Time Limits Per Division For Regular Tournaments:

1HR-Lower - 55 Minutes per game
3HR-Medial - 60 Minutes per game
4HR-Comp - 65 Minutes per game
5HR-Upper Comp - 70 Minutes per game
8HR-Elite - 75 Minutes per game
12HR-Major - 80 Minutes per game
Women's Stars - 55 Minutes per game
Women's Stripes -60 Minutes per game
Red Coed - 55 Minutes per game
White Coed - 60 Minutes per game
Blue Coed - 60 Minutes per game
Stars Coed - 65 Minutes per game

Sec.3. RUN RULE.

- A. Play shall cease in each of the following divisions if the home team is winning at the completion of the following inning; **Lower Division (1HR), Medial Competitive (3HR), Competitive (4HR), Co-Ed Red (1HR), Co-Ed White (3HR), Co-Ed Blue (5HR)** and All Women's:

15 runs - after 3rd Inning
12 runs - after 4th Inning
10 runs - after 5th Inning

- B. Play shall cease in each of the following divisions if the home team is winning at the completion of the following inning; Major Division (12HR), Elite Division (8HR), Upper Competitive (6HR) and Co-Ed Stars (8HR):

20 runs - after 3rd Inning
15 runs - after 4th Inning
10 runs - after 5th Inning

NOTE: At the State Program level, a predetermined run rule may be adopted.

*Unless Home Team is leading by run rule during the bottom of the above innings of which game shall be declared complete upon the finish of the top half of the inning.

Sec 4. EXTRA INNINGS. Extra Innings shall be declared upon the completion of the 7th inning OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired, and the score tied. **EFFECT:** *Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat using the FREEDOM RUNNER OR LAST BATTED OUT being placed on second base. Team must let official know if they are using the Freedom runner at 2nd Base to start their half of the extra innings.* **NOTE:** *All Extra inning games will be played in the one pitch format with NO extra foul.*

Sec 5. END OF GAME. The end of game shall be called when the team behind in score, records its 3rd out at the end of the seventh inning, when time has expired or in any extra inning. Also:

- A. The winning team will be the team that scores the most runs when the "end of game" is called.
- B. The recorded score at the end of a regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last completed inning or incomplete inning if the home team scores more runs than the away team in the incomplete inning.

C. The umpire is entitled to call a game at any time because of darkness, weather, or any other hazardous events.

Sec 6. Inclement Weather. FSA directors will do everything in their power to make sure their tournament can finish but if weather starts to be a problem the procedure will be as followed:

- A. Director will try and finish with a one pitch format
- B. If weather continues to be a problem and the event cannot continue we will go to a coin flip. If the winner bracket game has been played and there is one team sitting undefeated waiting for the championship that team will be declared the winner of the event all other team will flip until all spots on the bracket have been decided. **NOTE:** *There is no set way for directors to do a coin flip*
- C. Each director will exercise their best efforts to do what's best for everyone at the event, most events a refund isn't an option as fields are prepaid and umpires are paid for what they have done also.

Sec 7. FORFEIT GAME. Score of a forfeit game shall be deemed a 7-0 win for the non-forfeiting team in such case as the tournament director is unable to obtain an alternate team to play in the forfeiting teams place. An umpire for one of the following reasons shall call a forfeit:

- A. A team is late in appearing for a scheduled game. Director Discretion always
- B. If a team refuses to play or continue play after 2 minutes once "play ball" has been announced.
- C. If a team uses tactics to delay or shorten a game.
- D. If a team willfully violates any of the rules after being warned by the umpire.
- F. If a team can no longer field eight defensive players.
- G. If a team or coach of a team threatens or attacks an umpire, any Freedom Sports Association personnel, or any other player/team.
- H. If a player or coach refuses to leave a game after being ejected or remains in the field of play longer than 2 minutes.

Sec 8. A CALLED STRIKE. A batter shall be charged a strike when:

- A. A legally pitched ball enters the strike zone in the air and is not swung at.
- B. A batter swings at a pitched ball and misses.
- C. A ball is fouled off and not caught.
- D. A batter takes greater than fifteen (20) seconds to obtain proper position in the batter's box.

Sec 8. A CALLED BALL. A batter shall be charged a ball when:

- A. A pitched ball does not enter the strike zone and the batter does not swing.
- B. A pitcher pitches an illegal pitch not swung at or hit.

RULE 5. THE PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Sec 1. A team shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of twelve (12) players. A minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of ten (10) players shall play defense. A player can play anywhere in the field as long as it's in fair territory at the start of every pitch except the pitcher and the catcher who shall play in legal positions. **NOTE:** *The designated positions are: Pitcher, Catcher, First Baseman, Second Baseman, Third Baseman, Short Stop, Left Fielder, Center Fielder, Right Fielder, Designated Hitter, and Additional Hitters or Extra Players.*

Sec 2. LINEUP AND SUBSTITUTIONS. Lineup cards must be filled out and handed over to the home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. The lineup card shall contain first initial, last name and jersey number. The following governs the substitution of players:

A. A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in the teams batting order.

B. The coach or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time when the substitute enters. The umpire shall then report the change to the scorer and the other team. A substitute is not officially in the game until a pitch has been thrown or a play has been made.

C. If a substitute player enters the game without reporting, and after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown, or after a play has been made, the use of an unreported substitute must be brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team. An out will be declared and opposing team shall lose said player as substitute for remainder of the game. An out will be given to his/her spot in the lineup for rest of game.

D. If the coach or player in violation informs the umpire prior to the team bringing this violation to the attention of the umpire, there is no violation. All action prior to the discovery is legal.

E. If a team is left with a vacant spot in their lineup due to a player being ejected, then an out will be declared when that vacant spot occurs in the batting order. A team may walk a batter in order for the vacant spot to occur and receive an automatic out.

F. A substitute shall be reported to the official and will be officially declared in the game when:

- 1.** The substitute steps into the batter's box and a pitch is made.
- 2.** The substitute steps onto the field into a fielding/defensive position and a pitch is made.
- 3.** The substitute replaces a runner on a base and a pitch is made.

Sec 3. RE-ENTRY Any of the starting players, may be substituted and re-entered once, provided players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the line-up. The player and the substitutes may not be in the line-up at the same time. Once a substitute leaves the game and the starter re-enters the substitute is no longer allowed to re-enter the game. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest when brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing team, and may be made any time during the game. The protest need not be made prior to the next pitch. **EFFECT:** *Both the manager and illegal player are ejected. All play that occurred while the illegal re-entry was in the game will stand.* **NOTE:** *If the re-entry violation also violates the unreported substitute ruling, those penalties would also be in effect.*

NOTE: *A starting player removed from the pitching position by the umpire and substituted for, can re-enter the game at another position, but cannot return to the pitching position.* **EFFECT:** *If an illegal pitcher returns to the pitching position and has thrown one pitch, he is ejected from the game.* **NOTE:** *This is not considered a re-entry violation, so the manager is not ejected.*

Sec 4. ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION. The opposing team must make an appeal to the umpire at any time

during the game. An umpire cannot declare an illegal substitution violation until a player is officially in the game. As a result, any change can be corrected. An illegal substitution must be declared prior to:

A. The next pitched ball for an offensive illegal substitution.

B. The next pitched ball or before the defensive team and umpire have left the field for an illegal defensive substitution. **NOTE:** *If an umpire declares an offensive illegal substitution violation, the player shall be declared out, ejected from the game and all other runners must return to previous occupied base. Any outs made during the play shall stand. If an umpire declares a defensive illegal substitution violation, the offensive team shall have the option to replay the pitch or let the play stand and the illegal player shall be ejected from the game.*

Sec 5. REMOVAL OF PLAYER. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup, regardless of cause, and there is no substitute available, an out shall be declared each time the vacant spot is due to bat. If the vacant spot is due to injury and there is no substitute available, the opposing coach shall have at their sole choice, the option to request that an out be declared each time the vacant spot is due to bat OR to allow the lineup to be compressed, thus removing the injured player permanently from the game and lineup and with no out being declared. **NOTE:** *If a player is ejected his/her spot in the lineup cannot be replaced and an out will be in place of their position in the batting order. If a team is batting more than 10 batters an extra hitter may take a position in the field so the team with the ejected player will still have 10 players on defense. A team cannot finish a game with less than 8 players so the coach shall have no decision should the opposing team only have 7 players remaining.*

RULE 6. BASE RUNNING

Sec 1. A base runner shall touch the bases in the order of first (1st) base, second (2nd) base, third (3rd) base and then home plate. **EXCEPTION:** *The batter-runner and all baserunners do not have to run the bases on a homerun in "Hit and Sit" play.*

Sec 2. Base stealing is permitted. A runner shall steal a base:

A. After a pitched ball leaves the pitchers hand and hits the ground.

B. After a pitched ball leaves the pitchers hand and crosses the plate

C. After a Batter is awarded a base on balls since ball is live until the batter touches 1st base or Stops Walking to 1st Base.

NOTE: *It is a Dead ball, if batter swings and misses, makes a false swing attempt or fouls off the ball.*

NOTE: *The ball is live and stealing can occur if it hits home plate.*

Sec 3. Two base runners shall never occupy the same base. **EFFECT:** *The first legal base runner to occupy the base shall be called safe and the other base runner shall be called out.*

Sec 4. A runner must touch all awarded bases.

Sec 5. A dead ball shall be declared and each runner including the batter-runner shall be awarded:

A. One base when:

1. If less than two (2) outs, a defensive player catches a ball and then comes into contact with dead ball territory with both feet.

2. When any defensive player obstructs a batter or touches the bat in order to reach a pitched ball.

3. If a defensive player on a tag causes a ball to go into dead ball territory.

B. Two bases when:

1. A fair-batted ball bounces or goes underneath fence or over fence and becomes dead.

2. A defensive player throws, holds or kicks an illegal mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a live pitched or thrown ball.

3. A defensive player intentionally throws a live ball into dead ball territory. **Note:** If two runners are between the same bases, the lead runner shall be awarded the two (2) bases and the second runner shall be awarded one (1) base.

C. Three bases when:

1. A defensive player throws, holds or kicks an illegal mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a fair-batted ball.

D. Four bases when:

1. A fair-batted ball goes over and above the fence line in the air between the two (2) foul poles.

2. A fair-batted ball comes into contact in the air with a foul pole.

3. A defensive player throws, holds or kicks an illegal mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a fair-batted ball and prevents the ball from going over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.

4. A spectator prevents a fair-batted ball from going over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.

Sec 6. When a thrown or batted ball comes into contact with any player not on deck or coaching the base, the ball shall be declared dead and interference shall be called. The umpire shall base on his/her judgment award or penalize teams in order to correct the interference.

Sec 7. A RUNNER IS CALLED OUT WHEN:

A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs out of the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of the fielder.

B. When the ball is in play and the runner is not in contact with a base, and is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder

C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base

D. When the runner fails to return to touch the base previously occupied or missed and is properly appealed.

E. When the runner physically passes the lead runner before that runner has been put out. **EFFECT:** The ball is in play and the runner is out.

- F.** When a base runner leaves the base to advance to the next base before a fly ball has been touched or touches some object, provided that if the ball is caught and legally held on the base left, or a fielder touches the runner with the ball before the runner returns to touch the original base.
- G.** When the runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to that base and is properly appealed.
- H.** When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second and is legally touched while off the base.
- I.** When running or sliding for home plate, and the runner fails to touch it, makes no attempt to return to it, and runner leaves the field of play, if fielder properly appeals to the official for a the declared out before the next pitch.
- J.** When the runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw a ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the judgment of the official, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the immediate succeeding runner will also be called out. **NOTE:** *Umpires may also call a Runner out for Verbal Inference if in their judgment a runner interferes will with a defensive player trying to make a play by yelling as they approach the defensive player.*
- K.** When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with the base in fair territory, and the runner is struck prior to the ball passing an infielder, excluding the pitcher: **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead, runner is out for interference and the batter is awarded 1st base. All other runners may advance one base if they are pushed. For **Example:** Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on 3rd base while not in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on 3rd base is out.*
- L.** When a batter-runner fails to touch an intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order while the ball is in play, and the ball is legally held on the missed base, or the runner is touched with the ball while off the base.
- M.** When the base-runner jumps over a defensive player to avoid a tag **NOTE:** *IF the base runner's feet go over knee high, or if the defensive player is kneeling, and the base runner's feet go above the waist. The base-runner is out, and may be ejected from the game.*
- N.** When the runner intentionally kicks a ball, which an infielder has missed.
- O.** When anyone, physically assists the runner while the ball is in play. If the assistance occurs prior to a caught, batted fly ball, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul, a delayed dead ball call will be made, after which the runner will be declared out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead if not caught. If a fair ball, award the batter- runner one (1) base, and if a foul ball the batter will bat again. This includes a home run.*
- P.** When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the third base line while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The runner closest to home will be declared out.
- Q.** When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing thereby confusing the fielder and adding to the difficult of making the play. **NOTE:** *Members of the team include a batboy or any other people authorized to sit on the team's bench.*
- R.** When a coach intentionally interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.*

S. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make play on another runner. **EFFECT:** *The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.*

T. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on their feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player with intent to cause harm. **EFFECT:** *The runner is out and ejected from the game, the ball is dead and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

U. When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until a pitched ball touches the ground, passes home plate or is batted. **NOTE:** *Standing on the safety or double bag at first is defined as standing off the bag.* **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead; the runner is out.*

V. When the runner abandons a base and enters the teams' dugout area or leaves the field of play.

W. If a base runner does not return to the base and be in contact with the base at the time the pitcher releases a legally pitched ball to the batter.

X. If a player touches 1st base with the bat in their hand when the ball is in play. **NOTE:** *if they touch 1st base with a bat in their hands when an over the fence home run has been hit, it will not be deemed an out since home runs are "hit and sit".*

Y. If a batter swings and hits a pitched ball that bounces before the plate, the ball will be a dead ball and the batter will be declared out.

Sec 8. THE RUNNER IS SAFE WHEN:

A. When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while in contact with the base. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead and the batter is awarded 1st base.*

B. If runner is still in contact with bag when struck the runner will be deemed safe and the batter is awarded a single, all other runners may advance one base if they are pushed. i.e. Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on first base while in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on third will remain at 3rd base.

C. When a fielder without the ball obstructs a runner by faking a tag. Each runner affected by the obstruction shall be awarded the base they would have reached per umpire's judgment.

Sec 9. FREEDOM RUNNER/ PINCH RUNNER. One "FREEDOM" Runner per team shall be designated before the game on the official lineup card. A FREEDOM Runner can be any player on the roster, regardless if they are in the lineup or not. They are FREE to run an unlimited number of times per inning/game. **Note:** *If a team opts to designate a Freedom Runner that is in the official lineup, and the Freedom Runner is on base during their turn to bat, an out shall be declared and the Freedom Runner shall be removed from the base to take their turn at bat. A team does not have the option of substituting the Freedom Runner if he is in the lineup once he has occupied a base for a player or reached on hit of his/her own. If a team does not declare a Freedom Runner on the official lineup card, then they will forfeit their right to any courtesy runners unless an actual substitution has been made.*

Sec 10. OVERTHROWS- When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked. Awarded bases shall be determined by the position of the baserunners at the time of the infraction.

EFFECT: *For offensive equipment or an offensive player causing a blocked ball, the player closest to home plate is declared out, and all other runners must return to the last base touched when the ball becomes blocked.*

A. The ball is dead. In all cases where a thrown ball goes into the spectators' seats, goes over, through, or under any fence surrounding the playing field hits any person or object not engaged in the

game, including bats lying near benches, goes into the player's benches, whether the ball rebounds onto the playing field or not, or remains in the meshes of any wire screen, each and every base runner shall be awarded one (1) base.

B. When the first throw is made by an infielder, one (1) bases shall be awarded. The award shall be governed by the position of each runner at the time the pitch was made; however, if all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one (1) base when the infielder makes the wild throw on the first play after a pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made.

C. When a throw is made by an outfielder or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the two (2) base award shall be governed by the position of each runner and the last base he/she has Touched at the time the throw was made. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

D. When a fielder loses possession of the ball such as on an attempted tag and the ball enters a dead ball area or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one (1) base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked. If a runner touches the next base and returns to his/her original base, the original base he/she left is considered the "last base touched" for the purposes of an over throw award.

E. When a ball bounces or rolls into the stands, over, under, or through a fence; bounces out of play unintentionally off a defensive player or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field.
EFFECT: *The ball is dead and all baserunners are awarded two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.*

Exception: *If ball bounds over the fence between the foul poles unintentionally off a defender or a defender's glove, a four base error is recorded and batter and all runners are awarded four bases. This will not count against a teams home run limit.*

F. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead immediately. All baserunners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries a live ball into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all baserunners are awarded two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time he/she entered the dead ball area. **NOTE:** *A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have intentionally carried it there. A dead ball line is considered in play.*

Sec 11. If a runner coming from 3rd base to home grabs or is handed a bat that may be laying in the baseline and could cause harm to a runner No penalty will be issued if they touch home plate with it in their had as long as there is NO play at the plate. **NOTE:** *If there is a play at the plate and the runner touched the plate with the bat in their hand the runner will automatically be declared out.*

RULE 7. PITCHING

Sec 1. – Pitcher shall be given three (3) warm up pitches upon beginning of game and when a new pitcher comes into the game. One (1) shall be allowed at the beginning of each inning pitched after the first inning pitched.

Sec 2. The pitcher shall take a position with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and the ball in view of the umpire before delivering the pitch. His/her foot does not have to be in contact with the pitching plate upon release. The ball may be released up to six (6) feet behind the pitching plate.

Exception: *When releasing the ball in front of the pitching rubber, the pitcher must have pivot foot in contact with pitching rubber.*

Sec 3. Pump fakes/juking will be permitted for a maximum time of (3) seconds. The time count starts when the pitcher makes his/her first motion. Any pump lasting longer than (3) seconds will be deemed a dead ball and a ball will be awarded to the batter.

Sec 4 The pitcher may not use the glove to pitch the ball, the ball must be pitched from a bare hand.

Sec 5. The ball must be pitched underhand at a slow rate of speed, and must arc at least four (4) feet from the ground and may not rise higher than ten (10) feet. The speed of the pitch and height of the pitched ball are left entirely to the judgment of the umpire

Sec 6. The pitcher can deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball to the batter either on or off the pitching rubber **NOTE:** *Ball is live and all runners have the Freedom to steal once the ball hits the ground.*

Sec 7. There shall be only one charged conference between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with each and every pitcher in an inning. The second charged conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. **NOTE:** *It is not a charged conference when the coach or team representative enters the field of play and removes the pitcher from the pitching position. The player may return to the pitching position.*

RULE 8. BATTING

Sec 1. Each batter shall bat in the order in which each player's name appears on the lineup card. **NOTE:** *The order shall be followed for the entire game except when substitutions have been made and have followed the substitution rules.*

Sec 2. If batter improperly bats out of order and is discovered prior to that batter completing a turn at bat, time may be called and the proper batter placed up to bat and assumes the improper batters pitch count.

Sec 3. When a player bats out of order and completes a turn at bat, an out shall be declared on appeal of the opposing team.

A. If a defensive team appeals to the umpire prior to the next pitch or before the defensive team leaving the field of play an improper batter, who has become a runner or has been put out, the umpire shall declare the proper batter out and all runners must return to previous occupied base prior to the pitch. Any outs made on the play stand.

B. If no appeal is made prior to the next pitch or if the defensive team has left the field at the end of the half inning, then the improper batter becomes the proper batter and that turn at bat becomes legal. The batting order shall than continue with the name of the player that follows that of the now legal improper batter.

Sec 4. A batter shall have twenty (20) seconds to step into proper position in the batter's box once the umpire states "play ball" or requests for a batter. **EFFECT:** *A strike shall be called.*

Sec 5. A batter shall have at least one portion of his/her foot making contact with the batter's box and the other foot is not touching the ground completely outside of the batter's box or is making any contact with home plate **EFFECT:** *If one foot is making contact with the ground outside the batter's box or making contact with home a dead ball shall be called and the batter shall be called out.*

Sec 6. A batter shall not interfere with a catcher who is attempting to make a play or throw. If an interference occurs due to the batter improperly not making an attempt to move out of the way of the catcher who is attempting to make a play or throw, and any runner is unsuccessfully put out then the batter is declared out and all runners shall return to the previously occupied base and batter will be out. If there are two outs in the inning, then the batter shall be declared out and sides will change.

Sec 7. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order. The on-deck batter may loosen up with two official softball bats, an official warm up bat, or any other product that has been approved by Freedom Sports National Headquarters. **NOTE:** *Attachments are prohibited, such as a donut, fan etc. when loosening up.*

Sec 8. A BATTER IS CALLED OUT WHEN:

A. A third strike is called.

1. A batter swings at a third strike and the ball hits the batter.

B. A batter intentionally hits a batted ball for a second time and no runners shall advance.

C. A batter attempts to Chop the ball with two strikes and the ball lands in foul territory.

D. A batted ball is caught in the air either in fair or foul territory by a defensive player.

E. If a batted ball is hit in the air in fair territory in the infield and the infield fly rule is in effect.

F. If a batter steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat.

G. A defensive player intentionally drops a fly ball or line drive with runners occupying bases. A dead ball shall be declared and the batter shall be out and the base runners shall return to previous occupied base.

H. A batter steps out of the batter's box and hits a pitched ball.

Sec 9. A Batter has the Freedom to swing the bat with one hand with NO Penalty

Sec 10. HOME RUNS The following over the fence home runs are allowed:

CO-ED

Red Division – 1 Hrs., Extra Hr. penalty – Inning Ending

White Division – 3, Extra Hr. penalty– Inning Ending.

Blue Division – 5 & 1 Up, Extra Hr. penalty– Only an out.

Stars Division – 8 & 1 Up, Extra Hr. penalty – Only an aut.

WOMEN

Stars Division – 3 Hrs., Extra Hr. penalty– Inning Ending.

Stripes Division – Unlimited Homeruns.

MEN

LOWER COMPETITIVE. DIVISION – 1 Hrs., Extra Hr. penalty – Inning Ending

MEDIAL COMPETITIVE – 3hr Extra Hr. penalty– Inning Ending.

COMPETITIVE. DIVISION - 4 And 1 Up, Extra Hr. penalty – Only an out

UPPER COMPETITIVE DIVISION – 6 And 1 Up, Extra Hr. penalty – Only an Out

ELITE DIVISION – 8 And 1 Up, Extra Hit - Only an Out

MAJOR DIVISION – 12 And 1 Up, Extra Hit - Only an Out

Note: *Women's Hrs. do count against the Hr. limit in Coed*

RULE 9. DEAD BALL-BALL IN PLAY

Sec. 1. The ball is dead and not in play:

a. When the ball is batted illegally.

- b.** When a batter steps from one box to another when the pitcher is ready to pitch. **Note:** *If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the play stands.*
- c.** When a ball is pitched illegally.
- d.** When the umpire declares “No Pitch”.
- e.** When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter’s person or clothing, whether or not the ball is struck at.
- f.** When a foul ball is not caught.
- g.** When a baserunner is called out for leaving a base too soon on a pitched ball.
- h.** When the offensive team causes interference.
- i.** When the ball is outside the playing limits of the playing field. A ball is considered “out of play” when it touches the ground, person on the ground or object outside the playing area.
- j.** In case of interference with the batter or fielder.
- k.** When the batter bunts a pitched ball.
- l.** When the umpire calls time.
- m.** When the umpire calls time and an appeal play follows, the ball remains dead throughout the appeal.
- n.** When any part of the batter’s person is hit by his own batted ball while he is in the batter’s box.
- o.** When a runner runs the bases in reverse order.
- p.** When a coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while the fielder is attempting to make a play, and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- q.** When a baserunner fails to keep contact with his/her base until the pitched ball has reached home plate.
- r.** When a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he/she reaches first base.
- s.** When a blocked ball is declared.
- t.** When the batter enters the batters box with, or uses, an illegal bat or altered bat.
- u.** When a caught fair ball, including a line drive, which can be handled by any infielder with ordinary effort, is intentionally dropped, with less than two outs, and with a runner on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or 1st, 2nd or 3rd bases.
- v.** When a fielder carries a live ball into dead ball territory.
- w.** When a batter is hit with his/her own-batted ball in fair territory outside the batter’s box.
- x.** When a fair ball strikes an umpire or baserunner on fair ground before passing or touching an infielder.

Sec. 2. The ball is in play:

- a.** At the start of each half inning, when the pitcher has the ball in the pitching position and the umpire has called “Play Ball”.
- b.** When the infield fly rule is enforced.
- c.** When a thrown ball goes past a fielder and remains in playable territory.
- d.** When a fair ball strikes an umpire or baserunner on fair ground after passing or touching an infielder.
- e.** When a fair ball strikes an umpire on foul ground.
- f.** When the baserunners have reached the bases, which they are entitled, when the fielder illegally fields a batted or thrown ball.
- g.** When a baserunner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
- h.** When no play is being made on an obstructed runner, the ball shall remain alive until the play is over.
- i.** When the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- j.** When a baserunner must return, in reverse order, while the ball is already in play.
- k.** When a baserunner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out.
- L.** When a base is dislodged while runners are running the bases.
- m.** When a runner runs out of the base line in regular or reverse order to avoid a tag by a fielder.
- n.** When a runner is forced or tagged out.

- o. When the umpire calls the baserunner out for failure to return and touch the base when play is resumed, after a suspension of play.
- p. When a live ball strikes a groundskeeper, photographer, policeman etc. assigned to the game.
- q. When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
- r. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and in the judgment of the umpire, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball. The batter is not out and the ball is alive and in play.
- s. When a thrown ball strikes an umpire.
- t. When a thrown ball strikes a coach.
- u. As long as there is a play as a result of the hit by the batter. This would include an immediate live ball appeal before the umpire has called "time". Once the umpire has called "time" however, the ball remains dead during a subsequent appeal play.
- v. When a foul ball is caught **NOTE:** All runner can advance as long as they return to the bag they occupied when the ball was hit. (See Rule 6 Sec 7-F)
- w. When, in the judgment of the umpire, a coach touches or physically helps a runner. **Note:** A delayed dead ball signal will be given and play shall continue. The touched or assisted runner shall be ruled out and all other subsequent play will be ruled upon *accordingly*.

Sec. 3. The ball remains alive until the umpire calls "time", which should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area, and in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased.

RULE 10. APPEALS

Sec 1. During a dead ball appeal, the pitcher shall announce which runner and which base that is being appealed. **NOTE:** *A defensive team is only allowed one (1) appeal per runner.*

RULE 11. PROTEST

Sec 1. TYPES OF PROTEST.

A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule – must be made before the next pitch or if on the last play of the game, before the Official(s) leave the playing field.

B. Illegal Substitute or re-entry – must be made while they are in the game, before the last play of the game and before the Official(s) leave the playing field.

C. Ineligible Player –Protested players must produce a Freedom ID Card if applicable along with a Legal ID. Should the protested player not be able to produce both IDS' within 5 minutes, the protest shall be upheld.

D. Protest of non approved or altered equipment. **NOTE:** Team must pay protest fee to the umpire and the show the umpire the equipment in question for him to take to the director with the protest fee. This must be done during game play, not after the game has finished or when the Official(s) leave the playing field.

NOTE: *Protests will not be considered or accepted if an Official bases them solely on a decision on the accuracy of a judgment call.*

Sec 2. PROTEST PROCEDURE.

A. The coach or manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate Official that the game is being played under protest. The Official shall then notify the opposing manager and Tournament Director.

B. Both team managers and the Official shall record the information (in official scorebook), details, and conditions surrounding the protest.

C. A \$50.00 Cash protest fee must be paid by the protesting team. Said fee will be immediately returned if protest is upheld. Failure to submit \$50.00 fee, will result in protest being null and void.

Sec 3. PROTEST DECISION. Shall result in one of the following:

A. The protest is determined to be invalid. The game stands as played.

B. When a protest is found to be valid due to a misinterpretation of a playing rule, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.

C. When a protest for ineligibility is determined to be valid, the offending team shall forfeit the game being played.

RULE 12. CONDUCT

Sec 1. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – Any verbal action by team members made towards umpires, Freedom Sports directors, members of the opposing team, or spectators as deemed as “Unsportsmanlike” by any Freedom Official, shall be grounds for an immediate ejection and suspension for ONE additional game. Any physical action shall result in the MINIMUM of an immediate ONE-year suspension from all Freedom sanctioned events.

Sec 2. If a player is ejected from a game said player must leave the park until the game is over. The player may return once the game they were ejected from is complete unless they were thrown out of the event. If said player refuses to leave the park or tries to sneak back in the game or park once they are ejected they will automatically be suspended for a period of ONE year unless National office feels the penalty should be longer

NOTE: *Freedom Sports Association reserves the right to reciprocate any suspension(s) that a player may receive from other sports associations including but not limited to ASA, ISA, NSA, and USSSA.*

RULE 13. UMPIRE

Sec 1. The umpire shall be the Official(s) appointed to officiate each Freedom Sports Association game. The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization for the particular game that they have been assigned. They are authorized and required to enforce the rules contained in this book. The umpires have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or refrain from doing, any act that is necessary to enforce any of these rules; and to inflict any penalties prescribed. The plate umpire shall have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules. **NOTE:** *An umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e. player, coach, officer scorekeeper, or spectator.)*

Sec 2. All Freedom Sports Association Umpires must be registered and have a valid umpire I.D. number prior to officiating any Freedom Sports sanctioned game.

Sec 3. The Umpire uniform shall consist of:

A. The official royal blue Freedom Polo style shirt.

B. The official Freedom Umpires hat, black slacks or solid black shorts

C. Black belt, black socks, black ball bag (optional) and black shoes.

D. Audible timer clicker and brush.

NOTE: *Slacks do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants, or other pants or slacks that **would not** be considered a dress slack.*

FREEDOM WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Freedom Sports Basic Rules will govern women's play with the following exceptions:

Sec 1. The Official approved softball for Freedom women's play shall be an 11-inch ball with a COR of .44 max. The ball must be an optic yellow ball with a Freedom Stamped logo on the ball.

Sec 2. Freedom Sports Representatives, Tournament Directors, and State Directors reserve the right to equalize by run spot, any Women's tournament as deemed appropriate. Each respective State Director will set the equalization standard for tournaments with the authority over the Women's Program.

Sec 3. As per rule 10, section 10, Homeruns in the Women's program will be unlimited for the **Stripes division**, and 3 homeruns for the **Stars division**.

Sec 4. **Stripes division Women's teams will spot all stars division women's teams (5) runs and lower level team will be permitted to use (11) fielders as well.**

Sec 5. If a stars division women's team picks up more than (2) players from a Women's stripes division team they also will now be considered an stripes team. All Women's teams are allowed (2) drop down players from Stripes division.

FREEDOM CO-ED PROGRAM

Freedom Sports basic slow pitch rules will govern play with the following exceptions:

Sec 1. NOTE. *It is not permissible to use eleven (11) players. Unless you have more Females than Males*

A. Red Division- Roster can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females, All Men must be lower to play in this division and women's classifications don't matter. Must have at least 3 women in the field at all times. There is no batting lineup requirements also. If a man is walked with a women behind him he will take second and the women will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup it's just one base. **NOTE:** *if a team is dominating the division or a Director thinks they are not a true lower team they will be bumped a division*

B. White Division- Roster can consist of either (6) males and (4) Females, or (7) males and (5) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. (2) Drop Down in the Medial division from competitive for mens, Women Classification's don't matter. Must have 4 women in the field at all times. There is no batting lineup requirements also. If a man is walked with a women behind him he will take second and the women will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup its just one base.

C. Blue Division- Rosters must be (5) males and (5) females or (6) males and (6) females. Only exception is more women are allowed than men. Women classifications don't matter, Men are allowed 2 upper competitive players and the rest must be competitive or lower. There is no batting lineup requirements also. If a man is walked with a women behind him he will take second and the women will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup its just one base.

D. Stars Coed- Rosters must consist of (5) males and (5) females or (6) males and (6) females.... Bring Your Team and play.... Any player can play There is no batting lineup requirements also. If a man is walked with a women behind him he will take second and the women will have the option to take 1st base. If a man is walked with a man behind him in lineup its just one base.

Sec 2. It will be permissible to have more females then males in the line up, but never more males then females. **EXCEPTION:** *IN White ,Blue, and Stars Coed if a female player(s) gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game, the team may continue to play as long as a minimum of (4) female players remain in the line-up. And 5 in division that requires 5* **EFFECT:** *The team will have to take a Out for the vacated female spot in the lineup.*

Sec 3. No batting order guidelines with Males & Females, you may set up the lineup any way you would like.

Sec 4. A team may end the game with only (9) players. **EFFECT:** *If injury occurs, an out is called if there is no substitute for the injured player.*

Sec 5. Male batters will hit the approved 12" softball and female batters will hit the approved 11" softball with Freedom Sports logo. **Note:** *Females have option to hit the 12" ball.*

Sec 6. Base on Balls – Any male batter who receives a base on balls whether intentional or not, will be awarded second base (all other runners will advance only if forced by this walk.) and the female batter following him, will have the option of taking an award of first (1st) base or taking an actual at bat. If she elects to take the base on balls, she must do so before the first legally pitched ball is thrown to her. No pitch may be made until the next female batter confirms her choice. **Exception:** if a male is walked and another male follows him he will only be awarded 1st base.

Sec 7. Freedom Runners - Teams may use an unlimited "Freedom Runner" of each sex per half inning all game long. One male and one female must be declared before the game as the Freedom Runners if no Freedom runner is declared then the team will have no option to use a courtesy runner the entire game. The female Freedom Runner can run for any female player unlimited times per half inning and the male Freedom runner may run unlimited times for any male per half inning. The Freedom Runner may be anyone on the team lineup or on roster but must finish their run before their turn at bat when applicable. Freedom Runners should always be assuming the role of base coaches to keep the game flowing and moving smoothly.

Sec 8. Defensive team must have the required amount of women in field per division

- A. Red -3 women in the field
- B. White-4 Women in the field
- C. Blue- 5 Women in the field
- D.Stars- 5 women in the field .

Sec 10. Home Runs – ALL Hrs. including Females will count against the Hr. limit.

Sec 11. Stealing is permitted in all the coed divisions.

Sec 12. Rosters shall be:

- a. **Red Division-** Roster Can consist of either (7) males and (3) Females, or (8) males and (4) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. No Drop Downs in the red division.

- b. **White Division-** Roster Can consist of either (6) males and (4) Females, or (7) males and (5) females, or (6) males and (6) females, or (5) males and (5) females. (2) Drop Downs are allowed from competitive men and rest must be comprised of Lower and Medial competitive men
- c. **Blue Division-** Roster Can consist of either (5) males and (5) Females, or (6) males and (6) females. (2) Drop Downs are allowed from upper competitive men and rest must be comprised of divisions below upper competitive.
- d. **Stars Division-** will be allowed any ranked player you want to bring. Roster Can consist of either (5) males and (5) Females, or (6) males and (6) females

Sec 13. EXTRA INNINGS. Extra Innings shall be declared upon the completion of the 7th inning OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired, and the score tied. **EFFECT:** *Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat using the FREEDOM RUNNER OR LAST BATTED OUT being placed on second base.*

FREEDOM MASTER'S PROGRAM

Freedom Men's Rules will govern all Masters play with the following exceptions:

Sec 1. A player 40th birthday must occur in the current calendar year to be eligible to play

Sec 2. Homeruns in the Masters Upper division will be 4hr and 1up. Homeruns in the Masters Lower division will be (2) and an out.

Sec 3. The state director or regional director in that region will determine upper division and Lower Division of the Masters program.

FREEDOM MILITARY PROGRAM

Freedom Men's Rules will govern all Military play with the following exceptions:

RULE 1. TEAM CLASSIFICATION

Sec 1. The Military Men's Program shall feature (2) Divisions: Military Upper & Military Lower

Sec 2. The Military Women's Program will consist of a Military Women's Division.

RULE 2. PLAYER ELIGILITY

Sec 1. Men's Military Teams may consist of: Active Duty, Reserves, ROTC, National Guard, retired military and military dependents 18 years or older and Department of Defense employees providing direct support to a military base. All Players must have a government Identification card. Retired military personnel and retired Department of Defense civilians are eligible to play with a team from the state where they retired or a team from the state of their permanent address. Contractors who have a DoD ID card or a common access card (CAC) are eligible to participate.

Sec 2. Women's Military Team may consist of: Active Duty, Reserves, ROTC, National Guard, retired military and military dependents 18 years or older and Department of Defense employees providing direct support to a military base. All Players must have a government Identification card. Retired military personnel and retired Department of Defense civilians are eligible to play with a team from the state

where they retired or a team from the state of their permanent address. Contractors who have a DoD ID card or a common access card (CAC) are eligible to participate.

RULE 3. TEAM ROSTER GUIDELINES

Sec 1. ALL PLAYERS MUST CARRY DRIVERS LICENCE AND PROPER MILITARY IDENTIFICATION ON THEM AT ALL TIMES.

Sec 2. Men's Military Upper Rosters must provide a valid CAC or DoD card to participate at this level.

A. Male players whose name appears on the Major Player List or Watch List are not eligible to compete in the Military Program

B. Men's Upper rosters are limited to one player whose name appears on the Men's Class A Roster

C. Upper rosters are limited to one contractor who must provide a DoD Common Access Card which contains a green color bar. And allowed 2 contractors/DD 214 players.

Sec 3. Men's Military Lower Rosters must provide the following documents:

A. Active duty reservists must provide a copy of PCS orders with Military ID at registration, which places them at current military installation or command

B. All other eligible players including retirees, DoD contractors (which must provide DoD Common Access Card with green color bar) and dependents must show proof of ID and residency from the state/local region they are playing in to prove eligibility. Also allow (1) contractor/DD 214 player in lower.

C. Men's teams that cannot provide player eligibility documents will be moved to Men's Upper Division. **EXCEPTION:** *Any player receiving PCS orders within 30 days of the Freedom Military World Tournament can request an exception from the Freedom National Director*

Sec 4. FREEDOM rosters will be limited to 20 players per sanctioning year of which every player must be on an online roster at www.FreedomSports.com. If a team changes its name throughout the year they must pay a new sanction fee. Players may be added onto team rosters until states. The State Director or a Regional Director must approve players after states being added to a roster.

Sec 5. Military Drop Down Rule: Men's Military Lower Division may have (2) players from the Men's Military Upper Division on their Roster.

Sec 6. Once a team has completed its first game during a FREEDOM tournament, that team will not be allowed to add additional players to its roster without special permission and for good cause, from the Tournament Director. Teams may always play up a division but can never play lower than their current approved division of play. Any team with Two drop down players then allowed by our criteria will constitute that team to be considered the level above. Example, a Military Lower team has 4 Military Upper players on that team, they will be considered illegal to play in the Military Lower division and would be considered a Military Upper Team. There will be no rotating of drop down players, meaning a team cannot bring 4-5 drop downs and only play so many at a time. All players playing must be on the roster, and when more than allowed drop downs are on the roster it will make the team be considered a classification level higher or applicable to who they bring and roster. The team will also be forfeited out of game or tournament with illegal rosters.

RULE 4. HOMERUN RULES

Men's Military Upper Division: 8 and 1 up, extra hit – only an out
Men's Military Lower Division: 3 and 1up, extra hit – only an out.
Women's Division: Unlimited

RULE 5. MILITARY WORLDS

Sec 1. For Teams participating in the Military World Tournament, Players may participate in only one (1) division of play, Upper or Lower. TDY personnel are eligible to compete in the World Tournament if the TDY assignment is (6)" months or more in duration. A team from one state may combine with only one other team from the same state. The players from the resulting team can be from only two installations and the resulting team must compete in the Upper Division. The Women's Program may also combine with only one other team from the same state. The players from the resulting team can be from only two installations.

Sec 2. Teams must play in at least one Freedom Tournament or participate in a Freedom sanctioned league to be eligible to advance to the Freedom Military World Tournament.

** All playing rules not specifically covered in the Military Program shall be governed by the other rules as outlined in the Current Freedom Softball Rule Book as it pertains to said program **i.e.:** Men's or Women's Non-Military Divisions.

MILITARY ABBREVIATIONS:

CAC - Common Access Card
DoD - Department of Defense
PCS - Permanent Change Order
TDY - Temporary Duty

FREEDOM WORLD TOURNAMENT

FREEDOM "WORLDS" - Teams that participate in their respective divisions at each of the following events: **FREEDOM STATES**, and **FREEDOM NIT'S** shall receive an eligibility to play in **FREEDOM WORLDS**, to be held in the fall. 1st place teams shall receive PAID Berths while 2nd place, 3rd place, and pass down berths shall be NON-PAID Berths. Teams winning said berths shall have until August 1st to confirm berth by paying entry fee to Freedom National Office. Teams with Paid Berths shall have entire entry fee returned upon completion of first game at WORLDS.

All teams **MUST** have matching jerseys for the World Tournament, any team without matching jerseys will automatically be the visiting team. If both teams do not have matching uniforms, then a coin flip will decide home and away. Matching jerseys will be defined as identical matching shirt with numbers on the back matching to the fullest for all players on the team.

To qualify for World's teams must play States and an N.I.T. and if a team is coming from a state where Freedom Sports doesn't have a state tournament, said team may have to play in another states N.I.T. and/or Regional event as well.

All teams must pay a deposit to hold spot for Freedom Worlds event if teams no show the deposit will not be refunded or go toward owed entry fee.

FREEDOM YOUTH FASTPITCH

GENERAL GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of coaches, sponsors and players to know the FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION Rules and By-Laws. Ignorance of these Rules and By-Laws is not grounds for protest or appeal. Softball is a contact sport, played with Composite, Aluminum, Wood and other approved materials in design of approved bats. The game of softball can be a dangerous sport to participate in. In playing the game of softball, the player and the parents of the youth players participating in the game of softball assume for themselves and for the youth children participating in the game of softball the risk of serious injury or possible death. By agreeing to be placed on an FREEDOM SPORTS roster, the participants or parents of participants understand these risks.

RULE INTERPRETATIONS

General youth girls fast pitch terms used in FREEDOM softball play, such as batter, runner, fielder, infield fly, etc., will be generally the same as defined by all major softball associations. If an interpretation is unable to be made by the Tournament Director and the UIC of a specific event, then a team may protest to the State Director for a decision. Should there be no State Director present, then they may appeal to a Regional Director. Decisions made in the above manner, shall be binding. Any Freedom Director or Umpire whom has any interest in an appeal (whether player, coach, sponsor, etc) may not have any involvement on the final ruling.

ALTERED BAT – A bat is considered to be altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or a non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat. Using any process that exerts more pressure on a bat than is experienced during normal play, such as rolling or rolling a bat, is considered altering a bat.

APPEAL PLAY - A play in which an official cannot make a ruling until requested by a team coach, or player. Appeal must be made to official making the call. Appeal must be made at ANYTIME before any of the following:

- A. Next legal pitch.
- B. The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory.
- C. The Officials have left the field of play.

NOTE: *Judgment calls cannot be appealed.*

BALL - Official "FREEDOM SPORTS" stamped 47-375 core-compression softballs must be used in all Freedom play. The ball must be stamped with the Freedom Logo and no other logo ball shall be used unless approved by the National office. Eleven (11) or Twelve (12) inch balls may be used.

BATS – **The official bat** shall be round in cross section, straight in length and measure 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat, and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. Its weight shall be at least 26 ounces but not more than 38 ounces. All bats must be Freedom Sports Association approved.

BASE PATH – Imaginary line 3' to both sides of the straight line between all bases. **NOTE:** *A player must stay within the base path except when momentum rounding bases carrying them outside of the base path. Any attempt to avoid a tag beyond the 3' base path shall result in an out.*

BLOCKED BALL - A blocked ball is a fair ball, batted or thrown, which is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game; or touches any object which is not part of the official equipment or official playing area; or touches loose equipment. **NOTE:** *Any ball hitting a player or offensive equipment other than the on deck batter/batters equipment, shall be declared an out. Base runner closest to home plate shall be the out and all other runners must return to their base held last. A Blocked Ball is NOT declared when ball strikes a base coach or an Official as an Official is deemed part of the playing field.*

BUNT – When a batter holds the bat in the path of the ball in order to place or slowly tap the ball into fair territory. The batter does not swing to hit the ball.

CALLED GAME – A game will be considered called when declared by the Umpire or site director due to weather, darkness. Or any other hazardous event.

CATCH - A catch is the act of a fielder getting secure possession in a hand or glove of a live ball in flight and firmly holding it. **NOTE:** *In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of it and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.*

CHARGED CONFERENCE – A conference will be considered charged when during the game a coach or other bench personnel requests time-out to meet with offensive or defensive personnel.

CHOPPED BALL – When the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion so that the ball bounces high into the air, this is considered a chopped hit ball.

CROW HOP – Is when the pivot foot is replanted prior to the delivery of pitch

DEAD BALL – When the ball is not in play, a dead ball shall be declared. The pitcher must be stationed within the 16-foot circle and the umpire must call play ball in order for play to resume after a dead ball is declared.

DISLODGED EQUIPMENT – When a fielder contacts or catches a batted or thrown ball with his or her cap, glove or any part of his or her uniform while detached from its proper place. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead and the runner shall be entitled to three (3) bases if a batted ball or two (2) bases if a thrown ball. If the illegal act was made on a fair ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, a home run shall be awarded, and a four (4) base error will be scored on the play with the home run not counting against the team's home run total.*

DEAD BALL - The ball is not in play and not considered in play again, until the pitcher has the ball in her possession and the umpire has called "play ball".

DELAYED DEAD BALL - An infraction, signaled by the umpire, in which the ball remains alive until all play has been completed and the umpire calls time.

DIVISION OF PLAY –The different divisions of play offered are: Red (A), White(B) and Blue (C). Age classifications shall be: 10u,12u,14u,16u, and 18u.

DRAG BUNT - When a batter attempts to bunt a ball by running forward in the batter box while carrying the bat.

DROPPED BALL – Any ball dropped intentionally at the umpire's discretion, shall be declared a dead ball. **EFFECT:** *All runners return to their last held base and batter shall be declared out.*

FAKE TAG - When a fielder not receiving a throw fakes the catching motion. **EFFECT:** *Fake tags are prohibited. Fake tags shall result in each base runner being awarded one additional base. Player shall also be warned. A second offense shall result in player being ejected from the game.*

FAIR BALL - A batted ball that:

Is on or over fair territory when stopped in the infield or is bounding toward the outfield. Contact with any Base shall be a fair ball.

1. First makes contact in fair territory beyond 1B or 3B including the foul line.
2. Passes over the outfield fence while over fair territory or hits the foul poles.
3. Hits an outfield fence on or between the foul poles.

FIELDING GLOVE - Gloves must be worn by all fielders. Players have the FREEDOM to use ANY glove (not greater than 15 fifteen inches) at any position, at anytime.

FOUL BALL - Any batted ball that stops or settles in foul territory without first being touched in fair territory, or which is first touched in foul territory, or that first touches some out-of-play object or area in foul territory, or that first touches foul ground beyond first and third base, or which does not conform to the requirements that would make it a fair ball. **EFFECT:** *Baserunners have the freedom to make an attempt to advance on any caught ball, this includes third strike caught ball.*

FOUL TIP - A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batters head, to the catcher's hands or glove, and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike. The batter is out if it is the third strike.

FORCE OUT - A force out is an out which can be made only when a baserunner loses the right to the base he/she is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-baserunner and before the batter-runner or a succeeding baserunner has been put out.

FORFEIT - Score of a forfeit game shall be deemed a 7-0 win for the non-forfeiting team in such case as the tournament director is unable to obtain an alternate team to play in the forfeiting teams place.

FREEDOM RUNNER - A runner that is free to run an unlimited number of times per inning per game. **NOTE:** *Freedom runner can be any player on the roster, regardless of if they are in the lineup or not. One Freedom runner per team shall be designated at the coin flip.*

GAME - A game is considered regulation when seven (7) innings have been completed or time limit has been reached unless extra inning(s) are necessary because of a tie score or when home team does not require its half of the seventh (7th) inning. A called game will be considered regulation after four (4) complete innings.

ILLEGAL PLAYER - Illegal use of re-entry rule, or an unreported substitute or base runner shall be deemed an Illegal Player. And this illegal player will be deemed an out.

INELIGIBLE PLAYER - Player under an assumed name or a player not on the teams' roster. **EFFECT:** *Penalty shall result in immediate Forfeit of game if protested properly. The Tournament Director or UIC may declare a player ineligible immediately without having a team protest, no matter their roster status.*

INFIELD FLY - An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (rule does not preclude outfielders from being allowed to make the catch); and provided the hit is made before two are out and at a time when first and second base or all bases are occupied.

LINEUP - A team shall consist of a minimum of nine (9) players and a maximum of twelve (12) players if the two (2) optional Extra Player (EP) and the Designated Hitter (DH) are used.

OBSTRUCTION - A defensive team member who hinders or impedes a batter's attempt (intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal) to make contact with a pitched ball or who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is fielding a batted ball. **NOTE:** *A catcher's obstruction is called when the catcher obstructs or hinders the batter from swinging at a pitch. Prior to the pitch, catcher obstruction does not apply, a dead ball shall be called and allow the batter and runners (if applicable) to re set themselves.*

PLAYING FIELD - The area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded.

SACRIFICE- A sacrifice is a bunt which enables any runner to advance, or a fly ball which enables a runner to score; but, in either case, results in the batter-runner being put out before reaching first base or would have resulted in the batter runner being put out if the hit had been fielded without error and provided two were not out when the ball was hit. A sacrifice is not listed as a "time-at bat."

SLIDE (LEGAL) - Is either feet first or head first. One leg and buttocks must be on the ground and the runner must be within one (1) foot from the base.

SLIDE (ILLEGAL) - If a runner tries to injure a defensive player, raises her legs above the fielder's knee level, rolls or pops up into a defensive player or slides beyond the bag and interferes with the defensive player shall be called an illegal slide and the runner declared out.

SLAP HIT - When a batter appears to bunt the ball but instead the batter uses a modified swing or "slap" at the ball as it approaches home plate.

STEALING - The act of a runner attempting to advance to the next base without the aid of a base hit, putout, or a fielding (including batter) error. **NOTE:** *An attempted steal involving more than one runner (two or three) is considered a double or triple steal. The act of a runner attempting to advance during the pitch or after the pitch has reached the plate is considered to be the act of stealing.*

STRIKE ZONE - The strike zone is the area over the plate between the batter's armpits to the tops of their knees. A strike will be called when any part of the ball in flight passes over the strike zone. The Umpire shall determine the strike zone for each said batter based on that said batters usual batting stance.

TURN AT BAT- A turn at bat begins when a player first enters the batter's box and continues until the player is substituted for, put out, or becomes a batter runner while at bat.

WILD PITCH- A wild pitch is a pitch that cannot be handled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

RULE 1. CLASSIFICATIONS AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 1. THE YOUTH GIRLS FAST PITCH PROGRAM WILL BE DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING CLASSIFICATIONS. A player's age on December 31, of the previous calendar year determines the age classification in which the player is eligible to participate. See below for quick reference chart.

<u>10-Under Age Classification</u>	A player born after December 31, 2004 is ELIGIBLE.
<u>12-Under Age Classification.</u>	A player born after December 31, 2002 is ELIGIBLE.
<u>14-Under Age Classification.</u>	A player born after December 31, 2000 is ELIGIBLE.
<u>16-Under Age Classification.</u>	A player born after December 31, 1998 is ELIGIBLE.
<u>18-Under Age Classification.</u>	A player born after December 31, 1996 is ELIGIBLE.

Sec. 2. PLAYER IDENTIFICATION. Upon request by league, directors, or tournament officials including State or Nationals, a player must produce proper identification (which shall include a current birth certificate of the player) or the player shall be declared ineligible and the team subject to suspension.

Sec. 3. SIGN-IN/FREEDOM ROSTER (WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY) FORM. Every player must sign-in on the Freedom roster with liability waiver prior to that said player participating in any league or tournament. All forms must be co-signed with that said player's legal guardian and team manager. Playing without signing a Freedom Roster with liability waiver shall be cause for immediate forfeit of the team that said non-signing player is participating with. The following penalties will be enforced:

A. Any team caught with forged signatures on an official roster, will be suspended from all FREEDOM play for (6) SIX Months.

B. Any team caught playing in a FREEDOM Tournament without turning in a completely filled out roster including signatures of all participating players, will forfeit any game that began without roster having been turned into the Tournament Director.

C. Any player caught playing in a FREEDOM Tournament without signing their team roster will be suspended from all FREEDOM play for (6) SIX Months.

D. Any player who signs a fake name to a roster will receive a one (1) year suspension from the said date of occurrence. Team coach will be subject to a one (1) year suspension from the said date of occurrence.

Sec. 4. FREEDOM FAST PITCH SEASON. The Freedom fast pitch season and team sanction/registration fee will run from August 1st until July 31st.

Sec. 5. TEAM ROSTER GUIDELINES - FREEDOM rosters will be limited to twenty (20) players per sanctioning year of which every player must be on an online roster at www.FreedomSports.com. Players may be added onto team rosters until state tournament. Players being added must be approved by the State Director or a Regional Director and cannot have played with a team of more than one level higher class per the "Drop Down Rule".

A. Once a team has completed its first game during a FREEDOM tournament, that team will not be allowed to add additional players to its roster without special permission and for good cause, from the Tournament Director.

B. Teams may always play up a division but can never play lower than their current approved division of play.

C. A player's name on a roster unsigned does not guarantee the team that the player in question is a valid rostered player.

EXAMPLE: Team B writes Jane Doe's name on the team's tournament roster and Jane Doe was not there to play. If they win a berth at this tournament Jane Doe will not be considered on the roster until the roster is cleared to insure she does not put the team over their roster limitations, until it is confirmed she is not on another locked roster, and until notice is given to the Freedom National Office by said player and coach stating that she is indeed a part of the team.

1. Any player can play in any of Freedom's higher age classification team, but no player can ever play on any lower age classification team.

2. A player cannot compete in any sanctioned Freedom tournament with more than one (1) team during the same tournament.

Sec 7. TEAM CLASSIFICATION:

A. Teams shall be classified at the highest level that the majority of their players have played during the last three (2) years with other softball associations recognized by and in good standard with Freedom Sports.

B. Teams must still meet the specified requirements of the division. (See Sec. 8. Divisions for requirements).

C. Any team may submit a "Classification Appeal" in writing to Freedom Sports Association via our website and all decisions will be researched and approved/denied within 14 business days.

D. Freedom reserves the right to bump or drop a team at any time at their own discretion.

Sec 8. DIVISIONS. Every age group shall be divided into three divisions: Red (Elite), White (Competitive) and Blue (Recreational). Freedom Sports Association and its National Office shall have the right to move teams at time into another division (Red, White or Blue) based on team performance and specified requirements listed below.

A. Red. The Red division shall consist of elite teams/players. Any team considered to be the highest level competitive travel team. If your team is normally in contention to win each tournament you enter and you beat the "better" teams in your state, and you have multiple front line pitchers, then you should consider yourself an "Elite" team. **A small percentage of teams qualifies for Red division play.**

B. White. The White division shall consist of upper competitive teams/players. Any team considered to be an average to above average level competitive travel team. If your team is occasionally in contention to win a tournament you enter and you are competitive with most teams in your state, and you

have solid but not overwhelming pitching, then you should consider yourself an "Competitive" team. **The majority of teams qualifies for White division play.**

1. The 8 & under White division shall be coach pitch.

2. Any White division team shall have no team members or players considered collegiate athletes (NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA or any similar organization).

3. Any White division team will be allowed up to two (2) Extra Players (EP) in their line-up per game.

C. Blue. The Blue division shall consist of lower competitive teams/players. Any team that typically only plays in a local league, a town league, an all star team from a local league or a team that might only play in one or two tournaments a year. A "Lower Competitive " team is also any team considered to be an entry level or new travel team with kids new to travel softball and lacks the experience and number of skilled players and pitchers to compete on a National or State levels with the higher skilled Class "Red and White" teams

1. The 8 & under Blue division shall be coach pitch.

2. Any Blue division team shall have no team members or players considered collegiate athletes (NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA or any similar organization).

3. Any Blue division team will be allowed up to four (4) Extra Players (EP) in their line-up per game

Sec. 9. LOCKED ROSTERS. Players whom are on a "World Series" qualifying team roster, will be frozen to that team roster for all other "WORLD SERIES QUALIFYING" Tournaments. During non-World Series Qualifying Events, players may pickup, WITH APPROVAL, on another team's roster. No player on a frozen roster will be allowed to be added to another team's roster unless a player release form has been submitted and approved by the State Director or Regional Office. Any player caught playing on another roster will be suspended regardless of the classification being played for a period of six (6) months.

A. At the time a team's roster becomes locked the team will be allowed to add two (2) non-locked players to their frozen world roster. These additions must be approved by the FREEDOM National Office and may not exceed the roster limitations. If for any reason the team adds more players than the allotted two (2) pickups their world berth will be forfeited and their roster will be unlocked and they will need to qualify again for worlds with a new roster. **EXAMPLE** *Team A wins a qualifier and gets a berth to world series. Team A then decides to release 4 players and needs to pickup (3) players to have a valid roster. Team A will forfeit their world berth and be forced to qualify for worlds again. Under extenuating circumstances, the two (2) player pick-up may be changed at the Freedom National Office discretion.*

B. Players may be released from a roster of a qualified team only under the following conditions:

1. The qualifying teams disbands and written notice is given to the FREEDOM National Office.

2. Written notice has been submitted to the FREEDOM National Office with written notice returned to the team manager or coach, confirming approval of player's release. No player can return to a team that it released from during the current season.

RULE2. FIELD OF PLAY

Every effort will be made by each Freedom Director to obtain Softball Complexes with the official field dimensions. Each director will compensate any varied distances when possible.

Sec. 1. BASE PATHS. The primary distances for FREEDOM youth fast pitch softball are 60' Base Paths.

Sec. 2. PITCHING PLATE. Youth fast pitch pitching mound will have a circle drawn from the mid-point of its front edge and have a radius of 8ft and a diameter of 16ft round.

A. The pitching plate shall be 24 inches in length, white and made of rubber.

<u>DIVISIONS</u>	<u>PITCHING DISTANCE</u>	<u>FENCE DISTANCE</u>
8 & Under	40ft	175ft
10 & Under	40ft	200ft
12 & Under	40ft	200ft
14 & Under	43ft	200ft
16 & Under	43ft	200ft
18 & Under "White" "Blue"	43ft	225ft
18 & Under "Red"	43ft	225ft

Sec. 3. FIELD DISTANCES. The suggested field distance appears above. Distances may vary depending on field complex.

Sec. 4. DOUBLE BASE. The double first base may be used. One portion of the base is white [which will be in fair territory and the other is orange or colored [which will be in foul territory]].

A. Any batted ball hitting the white portion of a double first base bag will be called a fair ball. Any batted ball hitting the orange or colored portion of a double first base bag will be called a foul ball.

B. Whenever a play is being made by the defensive player at first base, the defensive player must use the white portion of a double first base bag and the batter-runner must use the orange or colored portion of a double first base bag. When a throw pulls the defensive player over the orange or colored part of the double base, the runner may use the white portion to avoid a collision. When this occurs, no penalty will be enforced. A base runner may be in contact with only the white bag when standing on base.

1. If a batter-runner touches the white portion of a double first base bag when a play is being made by a defensive player, the runner will be called out by the umpire, and a dead ball will be declared.

2. Interference and an out will be called on the batted runner if that said batted runner touches the white portion of a double first base bag and collides with the defensive player who is about to catch a thrown ball. This will also result in a dead ball being called and all other runners must return to their last occupied base.

This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base. This does not include:

1. Returning to the base after over running,
2. Running on a base hit to the outfield (runner may touch the orange or white part) or
3. Re-tag to advance on a fly ball.

EFFECT: *If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after safely securing first base and is not in contact with the white portion, then he/she is considered off the base.*

Sec. 5. BATTER'S BOX. The batter's box shall be seven (7) feet in length and three (3) feet wide. The batter's box shall be six (6) inches from the plate and the front of the batter's box shall be four (4) feet from the center of the plate.

Sec. 6 THREE FOOT LINE. A three (3) foot line shall be drawn parallel to the first base foul line starting halfway between home plate and first base and extending all the way to first base.

Sec. 7. CATCHERS BOX. The catcher's box shall be ten (10) feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be eight (8) feet five (5) inches wide.

RULE3. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must conform to industry standards and must not be altered in any way or form.

Sec 1. HELMETS. NOCSAE approved helmets must be worn by all batters, runners, on deck batters and any offensive players in the field of play. Each offensive player must also have an attached face guard or mask to their helmet that is NOCSAE approved and every helmet must have dual earflaps, which covers both ears and temples. **NOTE:** *Any player found violating the helmet rule will be issued one (1) warning to comply and any warning thereafter will result in that player being ejected from the game.* The following shall also apply:

A. Any offensive player found or observed by an umpire deliberately removing their helmet during live game play (while ball is live) and is in live territory, the umpire shall issue one (1) warning to the player and the coach of that player. Any violation afterwards will result in an out and ejection of that player.

B. Any runner found or observed by an umpire deliberately removing their helmet during playing action will result in a dead ball and all other runners must return to previously occupied base. That runner and coach will be issued one (1) warning and any violation thereafter will result in an out and that player being ejected from the game.

C. Chinstraps are optional.

Sec 2. CATCHER'S. Catcher's shall wear a NOCSAE approved catcher's helmet with dual earflaps, throat protector, chest/body protector and shin guards. NOCSAE hockey style catcher's mask are approved and do not need separate throat protector. **NOTE:** *Individuals in the field of play or outside field of play must wear approved catcher's equipment when warming up a pitcher and during game play.*

Sec 3. OFFICIAL BAT. The official bat shall be round in cross section, straight in length and measure 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat, and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. Its weight shall be at least 25 ounces but not more than 38 ounces. The bat shall have a safety grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter's swing. The safety grip shall be not less than 10 inches long, nor extend more than 15 inches from the small end, or handle end, of the bat. A tolerance of 1/16 inch is permitted, to allow for expansion on the round bat. The bat must be smooth, round and free from deep dents, cracks, flat spots, rivets or other such hazardous defects. It shall not be more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. **NOTE:** *Any bat with such defects will be deemed unsafe and removed from game play. Graphics, including BPF markings, must be permanent and cannot be decals or any other method that can be easily removed or added to the bat. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF testing procedure. The bat shall be made of aluminum, composite, fiberglass, wood, or other such materials approved by FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION.*

A. TAPE: Players are free to tape bat in any manner, thickness, etc. but must maintain a minimum of 10" bat tape or safety grip on the bat handle.

B. KNOB CUFF: Players are free to use knob cuffs but cuff must be taped over with 1/8 knob exposed at all times.

C. INSPECTION: During all FREEDOM play, any Umpire, UIC, or Director has the right to request the inspection of any bat or ball that is brought into the sports complex. The player will have two (2) options:

1. Admit that the bat has been altered, give the bat up to be destroyed, and take an immediate one (1) year suspension (automatic life suspension for second time offenders).

2. Allow us to test bat. If the bat fails compression testing, the bat will be sent to the manufacturer for a formal determination on why the bat failed the compression test. Should the bat be found to be altered, the player will receive an immediate five (5) year suspension. If the bat passes compression testing, the bat shall be returned immediately. Any refusal to allow us to test a bat shall result in an immediate five (5) year suspension. Suspensions shall be binding on the person swinging the bat as well as the bat owner.

D. PUBLIC NOTICE: The user and/or owner's name of any bat found to be altered shall be posted (along with team name) on the FREEDOM Sports Association website for the public to view.

E. BAT PROTEST FEE: For a protest fee of \$50.00, a team may protest an opposing team players bat or ball. If the bat is tested and fails compression testing, the fee shall be returned to person whom protested. If bat or ball passes test, FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION shall retain fee. Protest time shall be limited until the umpire leaves the field of play at the completion of the game. Any team caught with an altered bat shall be forfeited from the tournament, placed in last place, and shall forfeit both points and prizes.

Sec 4. OFFICIAL BALL. The official ball to be used shall have raised seams and shall be of spherical design with a smooth surface. The center or core of the ball shall be of a material and design traditionally used to make softballs, or of other material, or design, approved by Freedom Sports Association. The cover shall be of horsehide, cowhide, or other material approved by Freedom Sports and shall be cemented to the core and stitched with cotton, linen, or nylon or any other material approved by Freedom Sports Association. The following will also apply:

A. The official ball cover color shall be optic yellow.

B. The ball must be stamped with the Freedom Logo and no other logo ball shall be used unless approved by the National office.

C. "Official Fast Pitch Softball" must be clearly printed on the ball.

D. The maximum compression/core for Freedom Sports Girls Fast Pitch balls shall be "47 MAX COR, 375 MAX COMPRESSION"

E. A 12-inch ball will be used for all division of girl's fast pitch softball except for the 10 and under division, which shall use an 11-inch ball.

NOTE: *Use of a non-approved ball may be protested by the opposing team (once batter has taken the batter's box.) and an out will be declared. If protested before, the ball is to be replaced with the correct ball with no penalty. Opposing team may also protest a ball that has been put in play. All players return to last base occupied, and player hitting the ball is out.*

Sec 5. GLOVES/MITTS. All defensive players must wear a glove in the field. Gloves must be no more than 14 inches in height, uniform in color (no grey, optic yellow or white), be made of leather or other approved material and contains no circles or writing on the outside that will give the appearance of a ball. Any glove not meeting these requirements will be considered illegal and removed from the game of play.

Sec 6. FOOTWEAR. All individuals in the field of play must wear shoes. No sandals will be allowed. Shoes must be made of leather, canvas, nylon, plastic or other similar material. Cleats must be made of either

modeled plastic (soft or hard cleats) or have a smooth surface. No metal cleats or spikes are allowed. If an offensive player is found to have metal cleats or spikes during the game, an out will be declared for that player and all other runners must return to their previously occupied base.

Sec 7. JEWELRY. No jewelry will be allowed on the field of play. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are allowed and must be taped to the body to protect from any hazards and must still remain visible. Any individual not abiding by the no jewelry rule will result in one (1) warning and the jewelry must be removed. Any warning thereafter will result in ejection of the player.

Sec 8. UNIFORMS. All uniforms of each team member must be alike in color and style. Caps or visors may be worn but is not mandatory. If players choose to wear either a cap or visor, they must be identical in color and style. Numbers must be at least 6 inches in height and visible. No two players on the same team may have identical numbers. If it is found that this has occurred, it must be corrected immediately. **NOTE:** *Any team not in compliance with the uniform rule shall be reprimanded by allowing the other opposing team, if in compliance with the uniform rule, to have a choice of home or away. If both teams are in compliance or not in compliance with the uniform rule, then a coin flip will decide which team shall be home and away.*

Sec 9. OTHER MATERIALS. A cast (hard or soft) worn by any player will be deemed unsafe and are not allowed on the playing field. Any braces, splints or prosthesis (knee braces, elbow pads, sliding pads) can be worn as long as all metal areas are well protected or padded so that no hazardous material is visible or can come into contact with any other player. At any time, the umpire can deem any material unsafe or hazardous and must be removed from the game.

Sec 10. REMOVAL OF EQUIPMENT. All Freedom Sports Directors and Umpires have the right at any given time to inspect or remove equipment from a said game or complex. Any refusals of this will result in suspensions for teams, players, and coaches. **NOTE:** *If a batted ball strikes a player in the Infield (grounder, line-drive, etc) and hits a player the umpire has the right to remove the bat and ball from the game for inspection, that said player does not need to leave the game for this action to take place.*

RULE4. THE GAME

Sec 1. HOME/AWAY. The home and away team shall be decided by a coin flip at a pre-game conference at home plate. If a team is not in compliance with the uniform rule, they forfeit their rights to a coin flip and the opposing team (which is in compliance with uniform rule) has the rights to choose either home or away.

Sec 2. REGULATION GAME. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings or at the end of one hour and thirty minutes of play. Any game played four (4) or more innings shall be deemed OFFICIAL. A new inning starts if the 3rd out is recorded before the audible alarm of the timer. A Timer with both an audible alarm and a digital display will be used to keep official time. **NOTE:** A game that is tied after the seven innings or when time expires and shall require additional innings shall be governed according to the rules of "Extra Innings".

Sec 3. EXTRA INNINGS. "Tie Breaker" rule will be used. Teams are FREE to use FREEDOM RUNNER OR LAST BATTED OUT on 2B for each extra inning. Extra Innings shall be declared upon the completion of the 7th inning or the completion of the current inning after the time has expired.

Sec 4. RUN RULE. Play shall cease in each of the following divisions if one team is winning at the completion of the following inning; **12** runs - after 3rd Inning, **10** runs – after 4th Inning , **8** runs – after 5th Inning or if the home team is winning at the completion of the following innings; **12** runs - after 2 ½ Innings, **10** runs – after 3 ½ Innings , **8** runs – after 4 ½ Innings.

Sec 5. END OF GAME. The end of game shall be called when the team behind in score records its 3rd out at the end of the seventh inning, when time has expired or in any extra inning.

A. The winning team will be the team that scores the most runs when the “end of game” is called.

B. The recorded score at the end of a regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last completed inning or incomplete inning if the home team scores more runs than the away team in the incomplete inning.

C. The umpire is entitled to call a game at any time because of darkness, weather, or any other hazardous events.

Sec 6. FORFIET GAME. Score of a forfeit game shall be deemed a 7-0 win for the non-forfeiting team in such case as the tournament director is unable to obtain an alternate team to play in the forfeiting teams place.

A. A forfeit shall be called by an umpire for one of the following reasons:

1. A team is late in appearing for a scheduled game.

2. If a team refuses to play or continue play after 2 minutes once “play ball” has been announced.

3. If a team uses tactics to delay or shorten a game.

4. If a team willfully violates any of the rules after being warned by the umpire.

5. If a team can no longer field eight defensive players.

6. If a team or coach of a team threatens or attacks an umpire, any Freedom personnel, or any other player/team.

7. If a player or coach refuses to leave a game after being ejected or remains in the field of play longer than 2 minutes.

Sec 7. DEFENSIVE CHARGED CONFERENCE. Defensive teams shall be allowed only two (2) charged conference meetings during a seven (7) inning game without penalty. If a game remains tied and extra innings are necessary, then one charged conference meeting shall be permitted per extra inning without penalty.

A. A conference meeting shall occur when a coach, player, or any member of the team request time for a conference.

B. No more than one (1) charged conference shall be allowed per inning per pitcher. A second conference per pitcher in any one (1) inning shall result in removal of that pitcher. A conference shall not be charged to a team when a pitcher is removed from the game or when an injury has occurred.

C. When more than two (2) charged conferences are made in seven (7) innings or when more than one (1) charged conference is made in each extra inning, the pitcher shall be removed for the remainder of the game.

Sec 8. A CALLED STRIKE. A batter shall be charged a strike when:

A. A legally pitched ball enters the strike zone in the air and is not swung at.

B. A batter swings at a pitched ball and misses.

C. A ball is fouled off and not caught.

D. A batter take greater than twenty (20) seconds to obtain proper position in the batter’s box.

Sec 9. A CALLED BALL. A batter shall be charged a ball when:

A. A pitched ball does not enter the strike zone and the batter does not swing.

B. A pitcher pitches an illegal pitch not swung at or hit.

C. A pitcher pitches a ball outside of the strike zone and hits a batter. The batter shall automatically receive ball four (4) and walk to first base.

D. A pitcher takes longer than twenty (20) seconds to deliver a pitch.

RULE 5. THE PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Sec 1. LINEUP – A team shall consist of a minimum of nine (9) players and a maximum of twelve (12) players if the two (2) optional Extra Player (EP) and the Designated Hitter (DH) are used. Teams can play a maximum of nine (9) players on defense. **NOTE:** Teams will be allowed to start with 8 players with the 9th spot in the batting order being an out. If the 9th player shows up, he/she can be immediately inserted into the 9th spot in the batting order. All teams that are playing in Freedom Sports events have the right to see the officially lineup card before the game after each team has filled it out. *NOTE: Lineup cards must be filled out and handed over to the home plate umpire prior to the start of the game. The lineup card shall contain first and last name and player number.* **EXCEPTION:** *The Blue (lower) division may start a game with the minimum of eight players to the maximum of 14 players in their lineup. Players 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 shall be considered four (4) extra players and 1 designated hitter.*

A. The designated positions are: Pitcher, Catcher, First Baseman, Second Baseman, Third Baseman, Short Stop, Left Fielder, Center Fielder, Right Fielder, Designated Hitter, and Additional Players or Extra Players.

B. All designated substitutes shall be listed in the appropriate spot on the lineup card by first name, last name and number.

C. A coach must announce to the umpire if a substitution shall enter the game. Any announcement not made to the umpire of a substitution shall be in violation of the re-entry rule. The illegal player shall be declared out, ejected from the game and the team and coach warned. Any further violations will result in ejection of the illegal player and coach from the game.

D. Any player can be substituted from the line-up and re-entered once in a game, but must re-enter in the original batting position. Any team in violation of the re-entry rule, the illegal player shall be declared out, ejected from the game and the team and coach warned. Any further violation will result in ejection of the illegal player and coach from the game.

E. If a team is left with a vacant spot in their lineup due to a player being ejected, then an out will be declared when that vacant spot occurs in the batting order. A team may walk a batter in order for the vacant spot to occur and receive an automatic out.

F. A substitute shall be officially declared in the game when:

1. The substitute steps into the batter's box and a pitch is made.

2. The substitutes steps onto the field into a fielding/defensive position and a pitch is made.

3. The substitute replaces a runner on a base and a pitch is made.

Sec 2. ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION. An appeal to the umpire must be made by the opposing team at any time during the game. An umpire cannot declare an illegal substitution violation until a player is officially in the game. As a result, any change can be corrected.

A. An illegal substitution must be declared prior to:

1. The next pitched ball for an offensive illegal substitution.

2. The next pitched ball or before the defensive team and umpire have left the field for an illegal defensive substitution.

a. If an umpire declares an offensive illegal substitution violation, the player shall be declared out, ejected from the game and all other runners must return to previous occupied base. Any outs made during the play shall stand.

b. If an umpire declares a defensive illegal substitution violation, the offensive team shall have the option to replay the pitch or let the play stand and the illegal player shall be ejected from the game.

Sec 3. DESIGNATED HITTER. If a designated hitter (DH) is used the player's name shall be placed in the proper batting position with the DH as the player's position. The player that the DH replaces in the lineup shall be designated and labeled the "defensive player" and shall be placed in the proper substitution box in the lineup card.

A. The designated hitter may be used for any player in the lineup and for all subsequent substitutes for that player.

B. A designated hitter must be chosen prior to the start of the game. A designated hitter is not mandatory.

C. A pinch batter may be used for the designated hitter and the said player shall become the new designated hitter and bats in the same position in the lineup. The previous designated hitter may re-enter under the re-entry rule.

D. A designated hitter is negated when the defensive player for whom the (DH) is used bats or pinch hits for the designated hitter or when any designated hitter assumes a defensive position.

Sec 4. EXTRA PLAYER. If extra player(s) (EP) is used the player's name shall be placed in the proper batting position with the label EP as the player's position.

A. An extra player must be chosen prior to the start of the game. An extra player is not mandatory.

B. An extra player may play defense as long as their original position in the batting lineup remains the same and their status shall remain the same.

C. An extra player may be substituted for with the new substitute becoming the extra player. The substitute shall be a player that has not played in the game. The re-entry rule must be followed if an extra player is substituted.

Sec 5. REMOVAL OF PLAYER. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup, regardless of cause, and there is no substitute available, an out shall be declared each time the vacant spot is due to bat. If the vacant spot is due to injury and there is no substitute available, the opposing coach shall have at their sole choice, the option to request that an out be declared each time the vacant spot is due to bat OR to allow the lineup to be compressed, thus removing the injured player permanently from the game and lineup and with no out being declared. A team cannot finish a game with less than (8) players so the coach shall have no decision should the opposing team only have (7) players remaining.

RULE 6. BASE RUNNING

Sec 1. A base runner shall touch the bases in the order of first (1st) base, second (2nd) base, third (3rd) base and then home plate.

Sec 2. Base stealing is permitted. A runner shall steal a base:

A. After a pitched ball leaves the pitchers hand.

B. When the pitcher no longer has control of the ball within the 16-foot circle.

Sec 3. No two base runners shall occupy one base. The first legal base runner to occupy the base shall be called safe and the other base runner shall be called out.

Sec 4. Batter may become a runner if strike three (3) is called and the catcher drops the ball. An exception is when another runner is occupying first base; the batter cannot advance and shall be called out.

Sec 5. All awarded bases must be touched by a runner.

Sec 6. A dead ball shall be declared and each runner including the batter-runner shall be awarded:

A. One base when:

1. A pitched ball goes into dead ball territory or lodges into an umpire or catcher's equipment.

2. If a pitcher pitches an illegal pitch.

3. If less than two (2) outs, a defensive player catches a ball and then comes into contact with dead ball territory with both feet.

4. When any defensive player obstructs a batter or touches the bat in order to reach a pitched ball.

5. If a defensive player on a tag causes a ball to go into dead ball territory.

B. Two bases when:

1. A fair-batted ball is blocked from bouncing over or going through a fence and becomes dead.

2. A defensive player throws, holds or kicks an illegal mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a live pitched or thrown ball.

3. A defensive player intentionally throws a live ball into dead ball territory.

Note: If two runners are between the same bases, the lead runner shall be awarded the two (2) bases and the second runner shall be awarded one (1) base.

C. Three bases when:

1. A defensive player throws, holds or kicks an illegal mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a fair-batted ball.

D. Four bases when:

1. A fair-batted ball goes over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.
2. A fair-batted ball comes into contact in the air with a foul pole.
3. A defensive player throws, holds or kicks an illegal mitt/glove or detached player's equipment at a fair-batted ball and prevents the ball from going over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.
4. A spectator prevents a fair-batted ball from going over the fence in the air between the two (2) foul poles.

Sec 7. When a thrown or batted ball comes into contact with any spectator, the ball shall be declared dead and interference shall be called. The umpire shall have based on his/her judgment award or penalize teams in order to correct the interference.

Sec 8. A runner is called out when:

A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs out of the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of the fielder.

B. When the ball is in play and the runner is not in contact with a base, and is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder

C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base

D. When the runner fails to return to touch the base previously occupied or missed and is properly appealed.

E. When the runner physically passes the lead runner before that runner has been put out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is in play and the runner is out.*

F. When the runner leaves the base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder, provided the ball is returned to that base and is properly appealed.

G. When the runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to that base and is properly appealed.

H. When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second and is legally touched while off the base.

I. When running or sliding for home plate, and the runner fails to touch it, makes no attempt to return to it, and a fielder while touching the plate, properly appeals to the official for a decision.

J. When the runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw a ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the judgment of the official, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner will also be called out.

K. When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with the base, and the runner is struck prior to the ball passing an infielder, excluding the pitcher: **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead, runner is out for interference and the batter is awarded 1st base. All other runners may advance one*

base if they are pushed. **Example:** Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on 3rd base while not in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on 3rd base is out.

L. When a base runner leaves the base to advance to the next base before a fly ball has been touched or touches some object, provided that if the ball is caught and legally held on the base left, or a fielder touches the runner with the ball before the runner returns to touch the original base.

M. When a batter-runner fails to touch an intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order while the ball is in play, and the ball is legally held on the missed base, or the runner is touched with the ball while off the base.

N. When the base-runner jumps over a defensive player to avoid a tag **NOTE:** *IF the base runner's feet go over knee high, or if the defensive player is kneeling, and the base runner's feet go above the waist. The base-runner is out, and may be ejected from the game.*

O. When the runner intentionally kicks a ball which an infielder has missed.

P. When anyone, other than another runner, physically assists the runner while the ball is in play. If the assistance occurs prior to a caught, batted fly ball, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul, a delayed dead ball call will be made, after which the runner will be declared out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead if not caught. If a fair ball, award the batter- runner one (1) base, and if a foul ball the batter will bat again. This includes home run.*

Q. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the third base line while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The runner closest to home will be declared out.

R. When one or more members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing thereby confusing the fielder and adding to the difficulty of making the play. **NOTE:** Members of the team include a bat boy or any other people authorized to sit on the team's bench.

S. When a coach intentionally interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on a runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. **EFFECT:** *The ball is dead and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.*

T. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make play on another runner. **EFFECT:** *The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.*

U. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on their feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player with intent to cause harm. **EFFECT:** *The runner is out and ejected from the game, the ball is dead and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*

V. When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until a pitched ball touches the ground, passes home plate or is batted. Standing on the safety or double bag at first is defined as standing off the bag. **EFFECT:** *the ball is dead; the runner is out.*

W. When the runner abandons a base and enters the teams' area or leaves the field of play.

X. If a base runner does not return to the base and be in contact with the base at the time of the pitcher releases a legally pitched ball to the batter.

Y. When a runner stands motionless in a base path when the pitcher has control over the ball in the 16-foot circle.

Z. When a base runner is not in contact with the base and a pitched ball leaves the pitcher hand.

Sec. 8 The runner is safe when:

A. When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while in contact with the base.

EFFECT: *The ball is dead and the batter is awarded 1st base.*

B. If runner is still in contact with bag when struck the runner will be deemed safe and the batter is awarded a single, all other runners may advance one base if they are pushed. **i.e.** *Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on first base while in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on third will remain at 3rd base.*

C. When a fielder without the ball obstructs a runner by faking a tag. Each runner affected by the obstruction shall be awarded the base they would have reached per umpire's judgment.

Sec 9. FREEDOM RUNNER/ PINCH RUNNER. One "FREEDOM" Runner per team shall be designated at the coin flip. A FREEDOM Runner can be any player on the roster, regardless of if they are in the lineup or not. **Note:** *They are FREE to run an unlimited number of times per inning/game. If a team opts to designate a Freedom Runner that is in the official lineup, and the Freedom Runner gets caught on base during their turn to bat, an out shall be declared and the Freedom Runner shall be removed from the base to take their turn at bat. A team does not have the option of substituting the Freedom Runner to avoid an out being declared. If a team does not declare a Freedom Runner, then they will forfeit their right to any courtesy runners unless an actual substitution has been made.*

RULE 7. PITCHING

Sec 1. A pitcher shall position herself with the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's rubber and the pivot foot on or partially on the surface of the pitching rubber. The pitcher's hands shall start apart from each other. The ball may either be in the pitcher's hand or in the pitcher's glove. Then the pitcher must bring the hands together for a minimum of two (2) seconds and no more than ten (10) seconds prior to starting the pitching windup.

Sec 2. A pitcher is considered officially in their pitching motion when after pausing for the desired time limit they start their windup.

A. The pivot foot shall remain in contact with the pitching rubber until the ball is released from the pitcher's hand.

B. The pitcher shall not stop or reverse any forward motion.

C. The pitcher shall not make no more than one revolution of the arm in the windup.

D. The pitcher's hands must be below the hips.

E. The pitcher who stops or fakes the pitching motion shall have a dead ball called by the umpire and a ball issued to the batter.

F. The pitching windup must be continuous.

G. The pitcher shall not bounce, drop or roll the ball to the batter. An illegal pitch shall be called and a ball shall be issued. The pitcher shall be warned and any further instances shall result in the removal of the pitcher.

Sec 3. The pitching windup must be made under hand.

Sec 4. The pitcher shall not have any markings or drawings on the pitching hand, glove or on the pitcher's hips/thighs that may be distracting to the batter.

A. The pitcher or any defensive player or coach shall not apply any foreign substance to the ball in order to enhance or deface the ball.

Sec 5. Powder resin may be used by any pitcher to dry the pitching hand.

Sec 6. A pitcher shall be allowed three (3) warm-up pitches at the beginning of each inning.

Sec 7. The catcher shall return the ball to the pitcher after each pitch except on strike three, on a play made by the catcher, or to make a play on a runner.

Sec 8. The pitcher shall have twenty (20) seconds to pitch the ball once the ball has been returned to the pitcher.

Sec 9. No pitch shall be called when:

A. The ball comes out of the pitcher's hand during the windup.

B. A foul ball has been called and the base runner has not returned to the base prior to the pitch.

C. A base runner has left the occupied base too early.

RULE 8. BATTING

Sec 1. Each batter shall bat in the order in which each player's name appears on the lineup card.

A. The order shall be followed for the entire game except when substitutions have been made and have followed the substitution rules.

Sec 2. If batter improperly bats out of order and is discovered prior to that batter completing a turn at bat, time may be called and the proper batter placed up to bat and assumes the improper batters pitch count.

Sec 3. When a player bats out of order and completes a turn at bat, an out shall be declared on appeal of the opposing team.

A. If a defensive team appeals to the umpire prior to the next pitch or before the defensive team leaving the field of an improper batter who has become a runner or has been put out, the umpire shall declare the proper batter out and all runners must return to previous occupied base prior to the pitch. Any outs made on the pay stand.

B. If no appeal is made prior to the next pitch or if the defensive team has left the field at the end of the half inning, then the improper batter becomes the proper batter and that turn at bat becomes legal. The batting order shall then continue with the name of the player that follows that of the now legal improper batter.

Sec 4. A batter shall have ten (10) seconds to step into proper position in the batter's box once the umpire states "play ball" or requests for a batter, a strike shall be called.

Sec 5. A batter shall have both feet in the batter's box when making contact with a pitched ball. If any foot is completely out of the batter's box or is touching home plate, a dead ball shall be called and the batter shall be called out.

Sec 6. A batter shall not interfere with a catcher who is attempting to make a play or throw. If an interference occurs due to the batter improperly not making an attempt to move out of the way of the catcher who is attempting to make a play or throw, then any runner unsuccessfully put out, the batter is declared out and the runner shall return to the previously occupied base. If there are two outs in the inning, then the batter shall be declared out.

Sec 7. A BATTER IS CALLED OUT WHEN:

A. A third strike is called or is caught.

1. A batter swings at a third strike and the ball hits the batter.

B. A batter intentionally hits a batted ball for a second time and no runners shall advance.

C. A batter attempts to bunt the ball with two strikes and the ball lands in foul territory.

D. A batted ball is caught in the air either in fair or foul territory by a defensive player.

E. If a batted ball is hit in the air in fair territory in the infield and the infield fly rule is in effect.

F. If a batter steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat.

G. A defensive player intentionally drops a fly ball or line drive with runners occupying bases. A dead ball shall be declared and the batter shall be out and the base runners shall return to previous occupied base.

H. A batter steps out of the batter's box and hits a pitched ball.

Sec 8. A BATTER IS NOT CALLED OUT WHEN:

A. A batter strikes out and the catcher drops the ball. First base must not be occupied.

RULE 9. APPEALS

Sec 1. During a dead ball appeal, the pitcher shall announce which runner and which base that is being appealed. A defensive team is only allowed one (1) appeal per runner.

RULE 10. PROTESTS

Sec 1. TYPES OF PROTEST.

A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule – must be made before the next pitch or if on the last play of the game, before the Official(s) leave the playing field.

B. Illegal Substitute or re-entry – must be made while they are in the game, and before the Official(s) leave the playing field.

C. Ineligible Player – can be made anytime during the game. Protested players must produce a birth certificate. Should the protested player or coach not be able to produce certificate, the protest shall be upheld.

D. Protest of non approved or altered equipment. **NOTE:** Team must pay protest fee to the umpire and the show the umpire the equipment in question for him/her to take to the director with the protest fee. This must be done during game play not after the game has finished, or when the Official(s) leave the playing field.

NOTE: *Protests will not be considered or accepted if they are based solely on a decision on the accuracy of a judgment call by an Official.*

Sec 2. PROTEST PROCEDURE.

A. The coach or acting manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate Official that the game is being played under protest. The Official shall then notify the opposing manager and Tournament Director.

B. Both team managers and the Official shall record the information, details, and conditions surrounding the protest.

C. A \$50.00 Cash protest fee must be put up by the protesting team. Said fee will be immediately returned if protest is upheld.

Sec 3. PROTEST DECISION. Shall result in one of the following:

A. The protest is determined to be invalid. The game stands as played.

B. When a protest is found to be valid due to a misinterpretation of a playing rule, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.

C. When a protest for ineligibility is determined to be valid, the offending team shall forfeit the game being played.

RULE 11. CONDUCT

Sec 1. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – Any verbal action by team members, coach, or parents made towards officials, members of the opposing team, or spectators as deemed as “Unsportsmanlike” by any Freedom Official, shall be grounds for an immediate ejection and suspension for ONE additional game. Any physical action shall result in the **MINIMUM** of an immediate ONE-year suspension from all Freedom sanctioned events. **NOTE:** *Freedom Sports Association reserves the right to reciprocate any suspension(s) that a player may receive from other sports associations including but not limited to ASA, ISA, NSA, PONY and USSSA.*

RULE 12. UMPIRE

Sec 1. The umpire shall be the Official(s) appointed to officiate each Freedom Sports Association game. The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization for the particular game that they have been assigned. They are authorized and required to enforce the rules contained in this book. The umpires have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or refrain from doing, any act that is

necessary to enforce any of these rules; and to inflict any penalties prescribed. The plate umpire shall have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules. **NOTE:** *An umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e. player, coach, officer scorekeeper, or sponsor.)*

Sec 2. All Freedom Sports Association Umpires must be registered and have a valid umpire I.D. number, prior to officiating any Freedom Sports sanctioned game.

Sec 3. The Umpire uniform shall consist of:

- A. The official royal blue Freedom Polo style shirt.
- B. The official Freedom short bill umpires hat, black slacks or solid black shorts
- C. Black belt, black socks, black ball bag (optional) and black shoes.
- D. Audible timer clicker and brush.
- E. **Chest protector**

NOTE: *Slacks do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants, or other pants or slacks that **would not** be considered a dress slack.*

RULE 13. 8 & UUNDER RULES

Sec 1. All Freedom rules shall apply expect specified below.

Sec 2. All 8 & under players who play the infield must wear a fielding mask or mouth guard.

Sec. 3 Coach Pitch Rules (Blue (Lower) Division)

- A. Any coach 18 years or older may be designated as the team's pitcher.
- B. A coach shall not be allowed to field any balls when pitching.

1. Any batted ball that come into contact or hits a coach that is pitching shall be declared a dead ball and the batter shall be awarded first base and all runners allowed to advance one (1) base from previously occupied base.

C. Nine (9) defensive players shall be allowed on the playing field. A team may place six (6) fielders in the infield including a catcher and three (3) fielders in the outfield or five (5) fielders in the infield including a catcher and four (4) fielders in the outfield.

D. All players on a roster shall bat in order.

E. Each batter shall get three (5) pitches. If a batter does not hit a fair ball or strike out after receiving the maximum three (5) pitches, then the batter shall be declared out.

F. Games shall have a time limit of one hour and twenty minutes.

G. A maximum of eight (8) runs per half inning or 3 three outs. Once either has been obtained the half inning shall be declared over.

H. An Eleven (11) inch optic ball shall be used with a "47 MAX COR, 375 MAX COMPRESSION". See Rule 3. Sec 4. for complete specifications.

Sec 4. Coach Pitch Rules (White (Upper) Division).

A. Any coach 18 years or older may be designated as the team's pitcher.

B. A coach shall not be allowed to field any balls when pitching.

1. Any batted ball that come into contact or hits a coach that is pitching shall be declared a dead ball and the batter shall be awarded first base and all runners allowed to advance one (1) base from previously occupied base.

C. Nine (9) defensive players shall be allowed on the playing field. A team may place six (6) fielders in the infield including a catcher and three (3) fielders in the outfield or five (5) fielders in the infield including a catcher and four (4) fielders in the outfield.

D. All players on a roster shall bat in order.

E. Each batter shall get five (5) pitches. If a batter does not hit a fair ball or strike out after receiving the maximum five (5) pitches, then the batter shall be declared out. Players may walk.

F. Games shall have a time limit of one hour and twenty minutes.

G. A maximum of nine (9) runs per half inning or 3 three outs. Once either has been obtained the half inning shall be declared over.

H. Pitching distance shall be 40 feet.

I. An Eleven (11) inch ball shall be used with a "47 MAX COR, 375 MAX COMPRESSION". See Rule 3. Sec 4. for complete specifications.

Sec 5. Player Pitch Rules (Red (Elite) Division).

A. Nine (9) defensive players shall be allowed on the playing field. A team may place six (6) fielders in the infield including a catcher and three (3) fielders in the outfield or five (5) fielders in the infield including a catcher and four (4) fielders in the outfield.

B. All players on a roster shall bat in order.

C. Each batter shall get five (5) pitches. If a batter does not hit a fair ball or strike out after receiving the maximum five (5) pitches, then the batter shall be declared out. Players may walk.

D. Games shall have a time limit of one hour and twenty minutes.

E. A maximum of ten (10) runs per half inning or 3 three outs. Once either has been obtained the half inning shall be declared over.

F. Pitching distance shall be 40 feet.

G. An Eleven (11) inch ball shall be used with a "47 MAX COR, 375 MAX COMPRESSION". See Rule 3. Sec 4. for complete specifications.

RULE 14. 10 & UUNDER RULES

Sec 1. All Freedom rules shall apply expect specified below.

Sec 2. An Eleven (11) inch ball shall be used with a “47 MAX COR, 375 MAX COMPRESSION”. See Rule 3. Sec 4. for complete specifications.

Sec 3. Pitching distance shall be 40 feet.

RULE 15. WORLD SERIES RULES

Sec 1. FREEDOM “WORLDS” - Teams that finish in the top 3 of their respective divisions at each of the following events:

- 1 Regional Championships
2. State Championships
3. Special World Series qualifiers

Shall receive a berth to FREEDOM “WORLD SERIES”, to be held at a date and place to be determined. 1st place teams shall receive PAID Berths while 2nd place, 3rd place, and pass down berths shall be NON-PAID Berths. 18 & Under Red (Elite) Division and 16 & Under Red (Elite) Division shall receive CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS. All other divisions shall receive CHAMPIONSHIP BRACELETS. Teams winning said berths, shall have 10 days to confirm berth by paying entry fee to Freedom National Office. Teams with Paid Berths shall have entire entry fee returned upon completion of first game at WORLD SERIES.

RULE 15. INSURANCE

Sec 1. All teams must provide team insurance at the time of team registration. Any team without insurance shall not be allowed to play in any Freedom Sports Association event.

Sec 2. Teams may purchase insurance on their own or purchase insurance from Freedom Sports Association via current insurance agency.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES

While risk of one athlete infecting another with HIV/AIDS during competition is close to non-existent there is a remote risk that other blood borne infectious diseases can be transmitted. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in blood as well as in other body fluids. Procedures for reducing the potential for transmission of these infectious agents should not be limited to the following:

1. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered, and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the athlete may participate.
2. Routine use of gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.
3. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated (in contact) with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
4. Clean all blood contaminated surfaces and equipment with a solution made from proper dilution of household bleach (CDC recommends 1- 100) or other disinfectants before competition resumes.
5. Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices.
6. Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags or other ventilation devices should be available for use.
7. Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition is resolved.
8. Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.

9. Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling bloody dressings, mouth guards, and other articles containing body fluids.