



TECHNICAL BULLETIN



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

**Changes to 2010 -2013 ISF Rules
wording 9th Dec 2009.**

* Changes highlighted in yellow

Date: 04/03/2010

Subject: 2010 Playing Rule Changes from the 2009 ISF Rules Congress. SAL TB 2009-2 V2.

A total of 65 rule change proposals were submitted to the 2009 ISF Congress Playing Rules Commission for consideration.

Of these, 11 were withdrawn, 10 were rejected, 25 were approved, 15 were approved with an amendment and 4 were referred to the technical code.

Of the approved changes, some will only apply in World Championship and Olympic Play, while others relate purely to Slow Pitch. Several of the changes were cosmetic, while some were simply a rewording without affecting the intent of the rule.

Following a review of the changes, Softball Australia has directed that all the new rules are to apply from the 1st of January 2010.

The most significant changes relate to appeal plays and appeals for force play situations regarding the timing of infraction effecting the scoring of runs, penalties for flex player violations, charged defensive conferences, pitching in relation to leaping and foot work, deception by runners and interferences penalties for non playing team members

As a result the rule changes that will have the most effect at the 2010 Championships are listed below, with appropriate comments. Changes are in **Bold**

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| RULE 1. Sec. 2 | Appeal Play |
| RULE 1. Sec. 35 | Force out |
| RULE 1. Sec. 68. | OPO. |
| RULE 4. Sec. 5i, EFFECT 5 g-i. | Flex Player. |
| RULE 5. Sec. 8b. | Scoring of runs. |
| RULE 5. Sec. 9b NOTE 5(d). | Defensive Conference |
| RULE 6. Sec. 1-3. | Pitching. |
| RULE 8. Sec. 2k. | Interference by non playing team member. |
| RULE 8. Sec. 9n. | Interference by runner. |
| RULE 8. Sec. 9s. | The runner is out, deception. |

RULE 1. Sec. 2 APPEAL PLAY

A live or dead ball appeal is a play or situation on which an umpire cannot make a decision unless requested by a Manager, Coach or player of the non-offending team. A coach or manager may only make a dead ball appeal and only after stepping onto the playing field.

~~Delete Exception~~

If made by a fielder, the fielder must be in the infield when making the appeal. The appeal may not be made after any of the following has occurred:

- a. A legal pitch has been thrown **or an illegal pitch has been called.**

EXCEPTION:

1. An appeal for the use of an Illegal Substitute, an Illegal Re-entry, a Replacement Player or Withdrawn Player (either leaving or returning to the line-up under the **Replacement Player Rule**) and not reporting to the umpire **can** be made at any time while such player is still in the game.
 2. **An appeal for runners switching positions may be made any time until all such runners are in the dugout or the inning is over.**
- b. Same
 - c. Same

Types of appeals.

- 1.
- 2.
- .

9. Runners switching positions

Comment.

The new rule change clarifies an appeal and that runners switching bases at any time is illegal.

RULE 1 Sec. 35. FORCE OUT

A force-out is an out which can be made only when a runner loses the right to the base which he is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or a succeeding runner has been put out. **On an appeal the force out is determined by the situation at the time of the appeal not at the time of the infraction.**

Comment.

Currently the rules state that on an appeal you can still have a force out. It does not state when the force out is determined. The new rule stipulates that it is determined when the team appeals, not when the infraction occurred. Game situations change after the infraction and a force is now determined when the team appeals not when the infraction occurred.

Clarification

On an appeal play, the force out is now determined by the situation at the time the appeal is made and not at the time of the infraction.

A missed base on appeal in a force situation is still a force out.

However if a base is missed in a force situation, and after the missed base but before the appeal, the batter-runner or a succeeding runner is put out then the missed base would not be considered a Force out. He is just out for missing the base.

RULE 1. Sec. 68. Offensive Player Only

An Offensive Player Only (OPO) is a player in the batting order that continues to play offence, but not defence, when the DP plays defence for that player rather than for the FLEX PLAYER for whom he is batting.

Comment.

“Temporary DP” is a term used when an offensive player remains in the line-up but no longer plays defence because of the DP playing defence for other than the FLEX. The term used now is an “Offensive Player Only” and refers to the offence player batting only and not fielding as the DP is fielding for them.

RULE 3. Sec. 1. The Official Bat

- a. Shall be of one piece construction, multi-piece permanently assembled or two piece interchangeable construction. If the bat is designed with interchangeable components it must meet the following criteria:
 1. Mating components must have a unique locking key to prevent uncertified equipment combinations in the field.
 2. All component combinations must meet the same standards as if it were a portion of a one piece bat **when combined or a portion of a one-piece bat if separated.**

Comment.

Manufacturers are coming out with a safe two-piece bat designed to have interchangeable barrels. Both barrels and handles would have to bear the ISF approval logo.

RULE 3. Sec. 1. The Official Bat

- k. If metal and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other material insert approved by the ISF Equipment Standards Commission, firmly secured in the large end of the bat.
 1. The insert of the end cap shall be firmly and permanently sealed so it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer without damaging or destroying the end cap or barrel.
 2. The bat shall be free of rattles.
 3. The bat shall not have signs of tampering.

Note: A bat that is not free of rattles shall be considered an illegal bat. A bat that shows signs of tampering shall be considered an altered bat.

Comment.

Amendments better define when a bat is official and legal.

RULE 4. Sec. 5g. Players and Substitutes

The DP may play defence at any position. Should the DP play defence for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat, but not play defence, and is NOT considered to have left the game. **This player is referred to as the offensive player only (OPO).**

Comment

See also comments for Rule .1 Sec. 68.

RULE 4. Sec. 5i, EFFECT 5 g-i. Players and Substitutes

The provisions of Rule 4 Sec 8 and penalties for violations apply. Placing the FLEX in a position in the batting order other than that of the starting DP, results in **the ejection of both the manager/coach (whose name appears on the line-up card) and the FLEX, or his substitute.**

Comment.

Now there is a consistent penalty for the D.P. or the FLEX batting in a position which is illegal.

RULE 4. Sec. 8g, Effect 2-4 note 2. Players and Substitutes

NOTE 1: Should an Ineligible Player return to the game, it is declared a forfeit to the team not at fault.

NOTE 2: **After an upheld appeal for an unreported substitute or an illegal re-entry, the original starting player or his substitute is considered to have left the game.**

Comment.

The status of the player entered during an unannounced substitute is not stated in the rule book. The fact that an illegal substitute takes place should constitute a substituted player. The fact that a player was found guilty of being unannounced means the substituted player is considered to have been in and left the game.

RULE 5. Sec. 8b. Scoring of runs

- b. A run shall not be scored if the *third and/or last* out of the inning is a result of
1. The batter-runner being put out before legally touching first base.
 2. A runner being forced out (including on an appeal play) due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.

EXCEPTION to Sec 8b2:

If, prior to an appeal play on a forced runner for missing a base, a succeeding forced runner is called out, thereby removing the force situation, the ruling on the appealed runner becomes a 'Time Play'. This ruling would then be judged at the time of the appeal, rather than at the time of the infraction, so any runner who had scored PRIOR to the appeal MAY count.

Comment.

Eliminates the word "third out" and now says no run counts if the last out is the result of anything listed in the Rule. Previously it stated third out. We allow appeals after the third out to eliminate runs and re-instate the batting order. This new change makes any of the items listed in 8b 1-5 a reason to eliminate a run, also an appeal on a force out is determined at the time of the appeal not the time of the infraction. Also see clarification in Rule 1 sec35.

RULE 5. Sec. 9b NOTE 5(d). Charged Conferences

5. It is not a charged conference for the defence if:
- (d) The manager or coach makes a substitution for the pitcher.**

Comment:

The manager or coach may talk with the pitcher prior or after the change.

RULE 6. Sec. 1-3. Pitching

Sec. 1. PRELIMINARIES.

Before commencing the delivery (pitch), the pitcher

- a. Same.
- b. Same.
- c. Same.
- d. Same.
- e. Must, after taking the signal, bring his whole body to a full and complete stop with the ball in the **hand or glove with both held together** in front of the body. This position must be held for **not less than two (2) seconds** and not more than five (5) seconds before releasing the ball.

Sec. 2. STARTING THE PITCH.

The pitch starts **when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his wind-up.**

Sec. 3. LEGAL DELIVERY.

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

- g. Both feet must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step and the pivot foot must remain motionless at all times before the start of the pitch. (See 6-2)
- h. (new) **The pivot foot may remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times before the forward drag, leap or hop.**
- i. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher **may** take one step **with the leading, non-pivot foot** simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward toward the batter and within the 61.0 cm (24 inch) length of the pitcher's plate.

NOTE to Sec 3i:

It is not a step if the pitcher slides *either* foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate **and there is no movement backwards of the non-pivot (stepping) foot**. Lifting the pivot foot off the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate, creating a rocking motion, is an illegal act.

- j. The pivot foot **must** remain in contact with, or ~~may~~ push off and drag away **from the pitcher's plate** or be **airborne** prior to the stepping (non-pivot) foot touching the ground, ~~provided the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground.~~

NOTE: It is legal to drag, leap or hop and then land and throw as long as the original push starts from the pitcher's plate. It is not legal to step off with the pivot foot and then drag, leap, or hop and throw.

- ~~j. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate before the stepping (non-pivot) foot has left the plate is considered a "crow hop" and is illegal.~~
- k. (new) **The pitcher shall not push off from a place other than the pitcher's plate prior to separating his hands.**
- l. Same.
- m. Same.
- n. Same.

Comment:

Suggests the ball can be in either hand while holding them together and reconfirms the 2 second rule. Rules that the pitch starts when the hands are separated or the pitcher makes any motion to pitch.

Enforces the feet must remain in contact with the pitching plate at all times. Note: lifting of the heel or toes is legal as long as the foot does not move forward and break contact with the plate.

Allows leaping, dragging and hopping, and replanting as long as the first push off was from the pitching plate and the hands are separated when he lands and pushes.

As the pitcher pushes from the pitcher's plate the hands must be separated. They cannot be joined in the glove and all movement of the pitching arm must be continuous.

Special Comment:

The interpretation, application and inconsistency of policing the pitching rule has caused considerable concern to Federations around the world for many years. This has particularly been the case in the perceived leniency in applying penalties for infractions of the pitching rules in male play compared to female play.

As a result, several Federations submitted various proposals to the ISF Rules Commission to amend/alter/change/delete different components of the pitching rule, including to have separate rules for male & female play.

These, in the main, were rejected after discussion at ISF, and in turn Softball Australia Limited (SAL), and it was viewed it would be desirable for the entire pitching rule to be enforced consistently across all genders internationally.

The now approved changes to the pitching rule were seen by the ISF Rules Commission as the best 'fit' to achieve this consistency internationally.

Following this decision, and in particular noting the strict enforcement of the pitching rules at the recent 2009 Men's World Championship in Canada, SAL Senior Management, National Coaches and Administrators have directed the Australian umpiring sector to enforce the new, updated pitching rules nationally, to the standard now established internationally.

As a result, the umpires in Australia will need the full support of players, coaches and administrators, in fact, everybody associated with the sport, in the implementation and enforcement of the pitching rule as approved by the ISF Rules Commission at Congress.

- On the 15th of January 2010 ISF published a Points Of Emphasis to the pitching rule stating "As the pitcher pushes from the pitcher's plate the hands must be separated. They cannot be joined in the glove and all movement of the pitching arm must be continuous". This was discussed in depth at the 2010 Open Men's and Women's National Championships. Senior staff and coaches decided SAL will adopt and enforce these rules.

RULE 8. Sec. 2k. The Batter is Out.

- k. *When a member of the team at bat, who is not a batter, batter-runner, runner or on-deck batter, interferes with a fielder attempting to catch a batted foul fly ball or with a foul fly ball that a fielder is attempting to catch.*

~~If a runner creates the interference, then the runner is out.~~

EXCEPTION: If this interference occurs while there are runners on base, then the runner closest to home at the time of the interference is out.

NOTE: In ~~both exceptions~~ **this case** the batter-runner will return to bat with an additional strike on the foul ball, provided the count prior to hitting the ball was less than two strikes.

- (a) (FP ONLY) If this interference is the third out, the batter-runner will return to bat as the leadoff batter in the next inning, with the original ball and strike count cancelled.
- (b) (SP ONLY) If this is the third strike, the batter-runner is also out, unless the third out of the inning was the runner interference call, in which case the batter-runner shall be deemed to have completed his turn at bat.

Comment:

When this rule change was originally proposed in 2005 it was intended to deal with interference caused by a non-playing team member such as a coach or bat boy. When written into the rule book, the reference to the non-playing member was inadvertently omitted. Interference by runners, batters, batter runners and on-deck batters are already covered under the rules.

RULE 8. Sec. 9a-d & e. The Runner is Out.

When anyone, other than another runner, physically assists him while the ball is in play **or when the ball is dead after a home run or award of bases.**

NOTE: If a fly ball is caught on the play, the batter-runner will also be out.

EFFECT – Sec. 9a-e: The ball remains in play.

Exception Sec 9e: When the runner is assisted after a home run or award of bases the ball remains dead.

Comment:

Situation of assisting a runner on a dead ball such as a home run or award of bases is not covered by the current rules.

RULE 8. Sec. 9n. The Runner is Out.

THE RUNNER IS OUT.

- n. **When he interferes with a fielder attempting to catch a foul fly ball, or with a foul fly ball that a fielder is attempting to catch, in which case the batter-runner will return to bat with an additional strike on the foul ball, provided the count prior to hitting the ball was less than two strikes.**
- i) **(FP ONLY) If this interference is the third out, the batter-runner will return to bat as the leadoff batter in the next inning, with the original ball and strike count cancelled.**
 - ii) **(SP ONLY) If this is the third strike, the batter-runner is also out, unless the third out of the inning was the runner interference call, in which case the batter-runner shall be deemed to have completed his turn at bat.**

Comment:

Clarifies what happens if the runner causes interference on a foul fly ball.

RULE 8. Sec. 9s. The Runner is Out.

When he runs bases in reverse order, **or off the base line while not attempting to advance, in an attempt to either confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.**

Comment:

Runner 1 (R1) on third base, Runner 2 (R2) on first base. On the pitch R2 sprints toward Right Field (F9) and remains at right field, the catcher throws the ball to short stop (F6) for the tag on the perceived steal to second base. F6 confused moves toward F9, at this point R1 steals for home. Ruling: The ball is dead and the runner is out.

This action is not in the spirit of the game; deception is not part of the game of softball.

RULE 8. Sec. 9z. The Runner is Out.

- z. When runners switch positions on the bases.

Effect 9 z

This is an appeal play. When properly appealed, each runner discovered to have switched positions on the bases will be declared out and the Head Coach shall be ejected for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

NOTE: **The appeal** can be made any time until all runners who switched positions are in the dugout or the inning is over. If one of the runners who switched bases is on base, both he and all other runners who switched bases will be out, even if they had scored, and any run(s) scored by any of the runners who switched bases will be nullified.

Comment:

See Rule 1 sec 2

RULE 9. Sec. 1n. Dead Ball

When the runner runs bases in reverse order, **or off the baseline, while not attempting to advance, in an attempt to either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.**

Comment:

Adds that the deception created by not directly advancing to the next base by running off the base path results in a dead ball.

RULE 10. Sec. 1L. Umpires

The plate and base umpire have equal authority to.

5. Call an infield fly.

Comment:

Depending on the course of the fly ball and the position of the fielders, the base umpire can have a better angle than plate umpire to determine whether it is an infield fly or an outfield fly.



TECHNICAL BULLETIN



Australian Government
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The Following items were added to the ISF Technical Code and will become part of the SAL Championship Rules for National Championships.

- 1. In World Championship or Olympic Play, on skinned or loose surfaces there shall be a marker of rope or horse hair staked below the surface to mark the outside corners of the batter's box, or at least a line marked across the back of the batters boxes from one to the other extending 0.91 meter (3ft) passed the outside of the box, to determine the back of the box as the game progresses and the lines disappear.**

Comment:

If batting box lines become erased or faded over the course of the game or disappear from slide in plays, the tags will assist the umpires in determining the limits of the batter's box so they can then enforce the rules and manage the game. It also helps out with line marking as the dimensions of the box are permanently marked when using a tag system.

In the Australian championship regulations it will be written as" In all Australian Championships or tournaments, on skinned or loose surfaces.....

- 2. At World Championship play, Olympic Play, or Tournaments when the line up is submitted to the Umpire in chief before the game as per the championship regulations, the line up must be signed by the Head Coach/Manager. Once submitted to the Umpire in chief the line up will be official.**

Comment.

The current rules does not cover the line ups being handed to the TCU of a tournament although the Championship rules do. There could be issues with line ups not signed when line ups handed into TCU. This rule addition makes the list approved and official. Changes can still be made at the plate meeting as per rule book for sickness or injury. We don't want the line up changed at the plate meeting.

In the Australian championship regulations it will be written as" In all Australian Championships or tournaments when the Line up is submitted

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