



2019 - 2020 Rule Changes
Summary and Interpretive Notes

Updated November 28, 2018

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Summary and Interpretive Notes

The following rule changes were approved at the 2018 Softball Canada Annual General Meeting on November 10, 2018 and are effective for play beginning in 2019.

Please note what follows reflect the principles of the changes to the rules but will not appear word for word as such in the new and updated Softball Canada Official Softball 2019-2020 Rule Book which will be available in the first quarter of 2019.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please forward your questions to:

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New Rule / Change #1:

FP/O: Batters may now be intentional walked by the defence without pitches needing to be thrown.

Why:

Helps to speed up the game and brings us in line with the WBSC.

What it means:

If the defence wishes to intentionally walk a batter, they may do so by any one of the pitcher, catcher or head coach advising the umpire at any time prior to the batter completing their turn at bat, regardless of count, that they wish to walk the batter.

Following this notification, the plate umpire will advise the batter that they have been awarded first base.

If the defence wishes to the walk the following batter, they must wait until the first batter reaches first base.

Note: The defence may still elect to throw the four pitches.

Note: For the purpose of these rules, the defence's notification to the umpire shall be considered "a pitch."

Rule References to be amended / added:

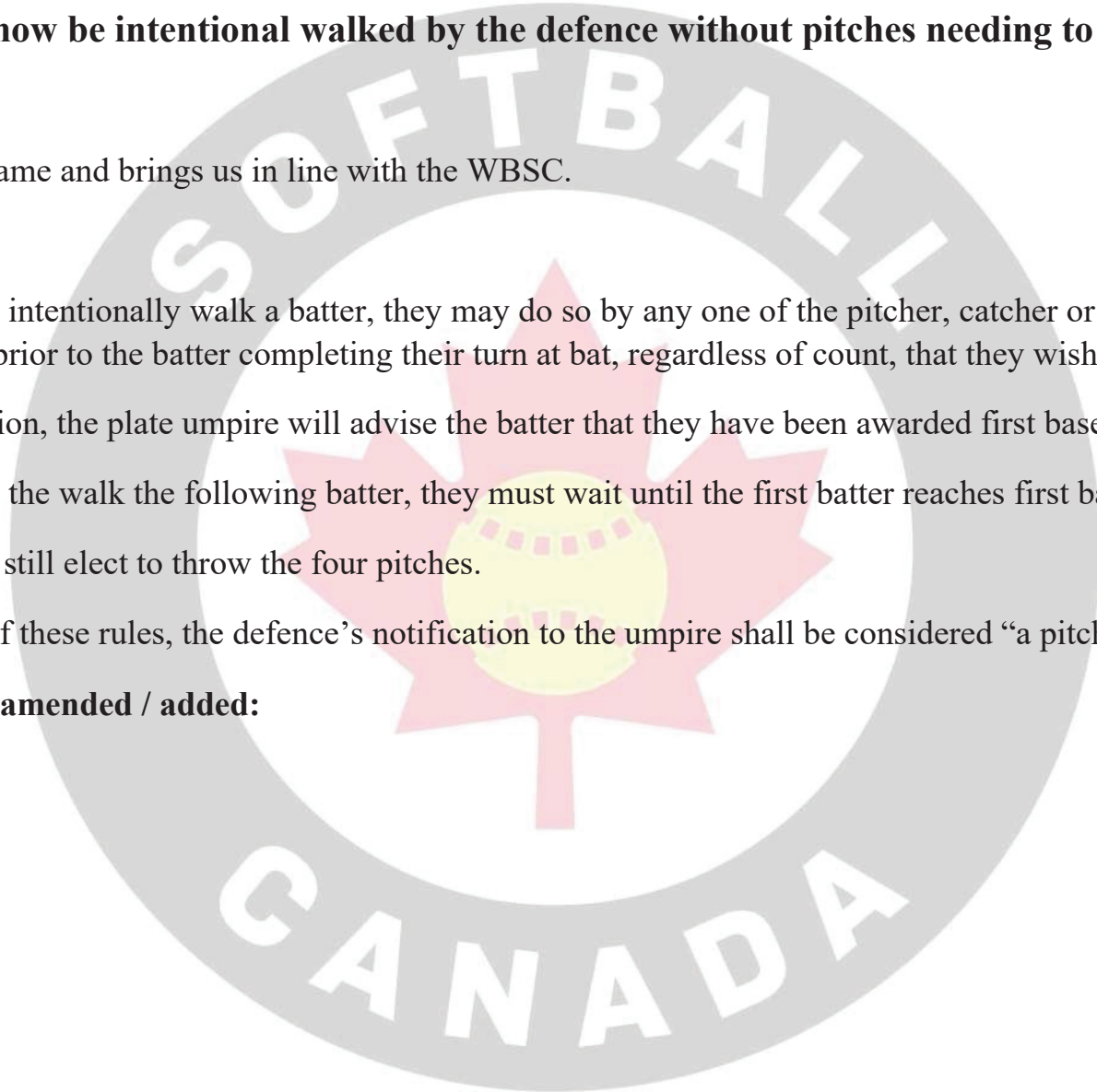
1 - 5.c

6 – 4

M6-4

O6-4

8 – 1.c.3



New Rule / Change #2:

FP/O: Protective Face Masks for Pitchers U12 and Below

Why:

Increased safety.

What it means:

All pitchers are required to wear a protective face mask in U12 categories and below.

The game cannot be played unless a pitcher has a mask on.

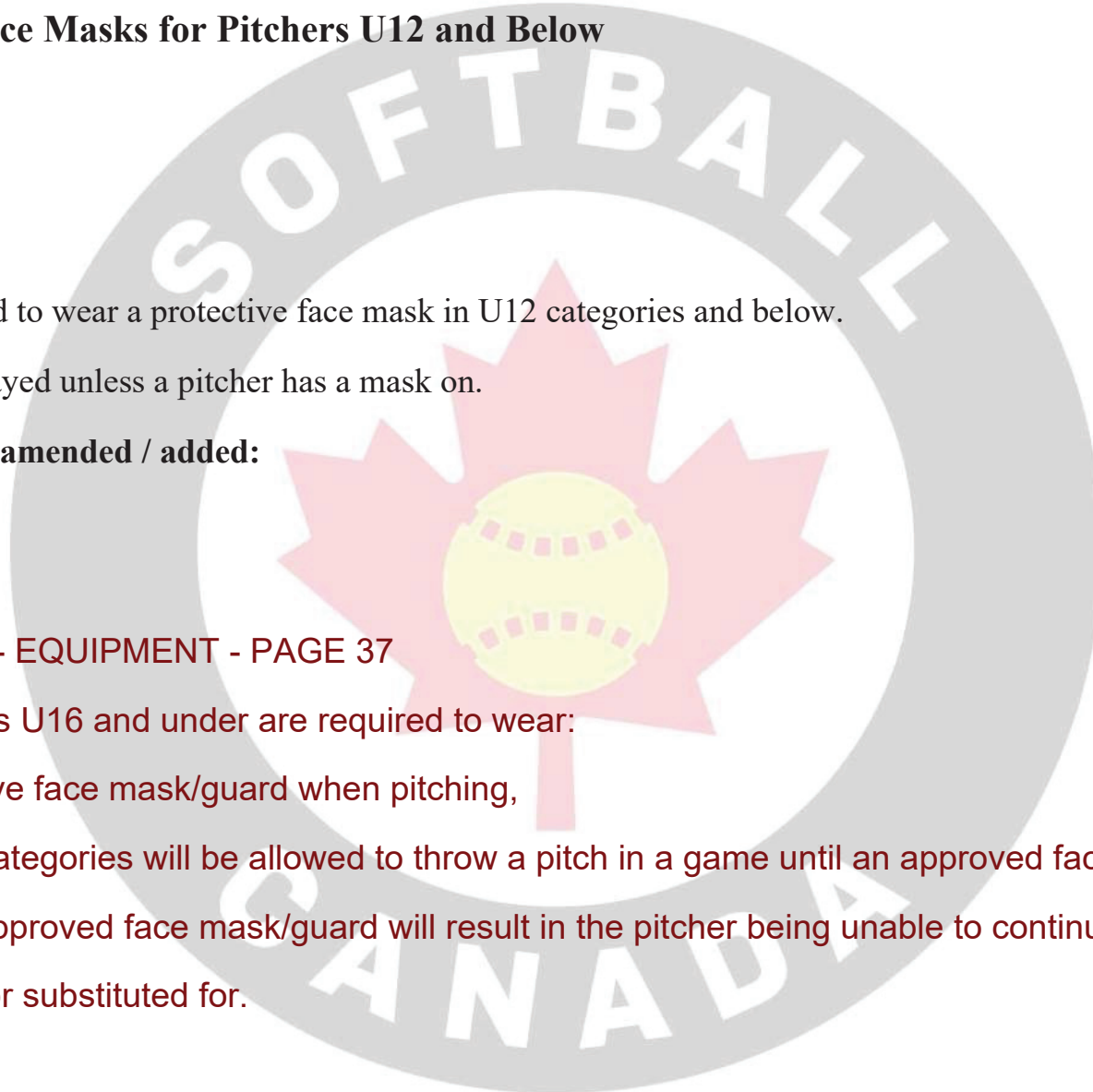
Rule References to be amended / added:

3 - 6 b. 4.

SOFTBALL ALBERTA - EQUIPMENT - PAGE 37

d) Pitchers in categories U16 and under are required to wear:

- i) An approved protective face mask/guard when pitching,
- ii) No pitcher in these categories will be allowed to throw a pitch in a game until an approved face mask/guard is worn,
- iii) Failure to wear an approved face mask/guard will result in the pitcher being unable to continue pitching and they must be replaced and or substituted for.



New Rule / Change #3:

FP/O: Adoption of WBSC definition of the Strike Zone

Why:

Brings us in line with the WBSC.

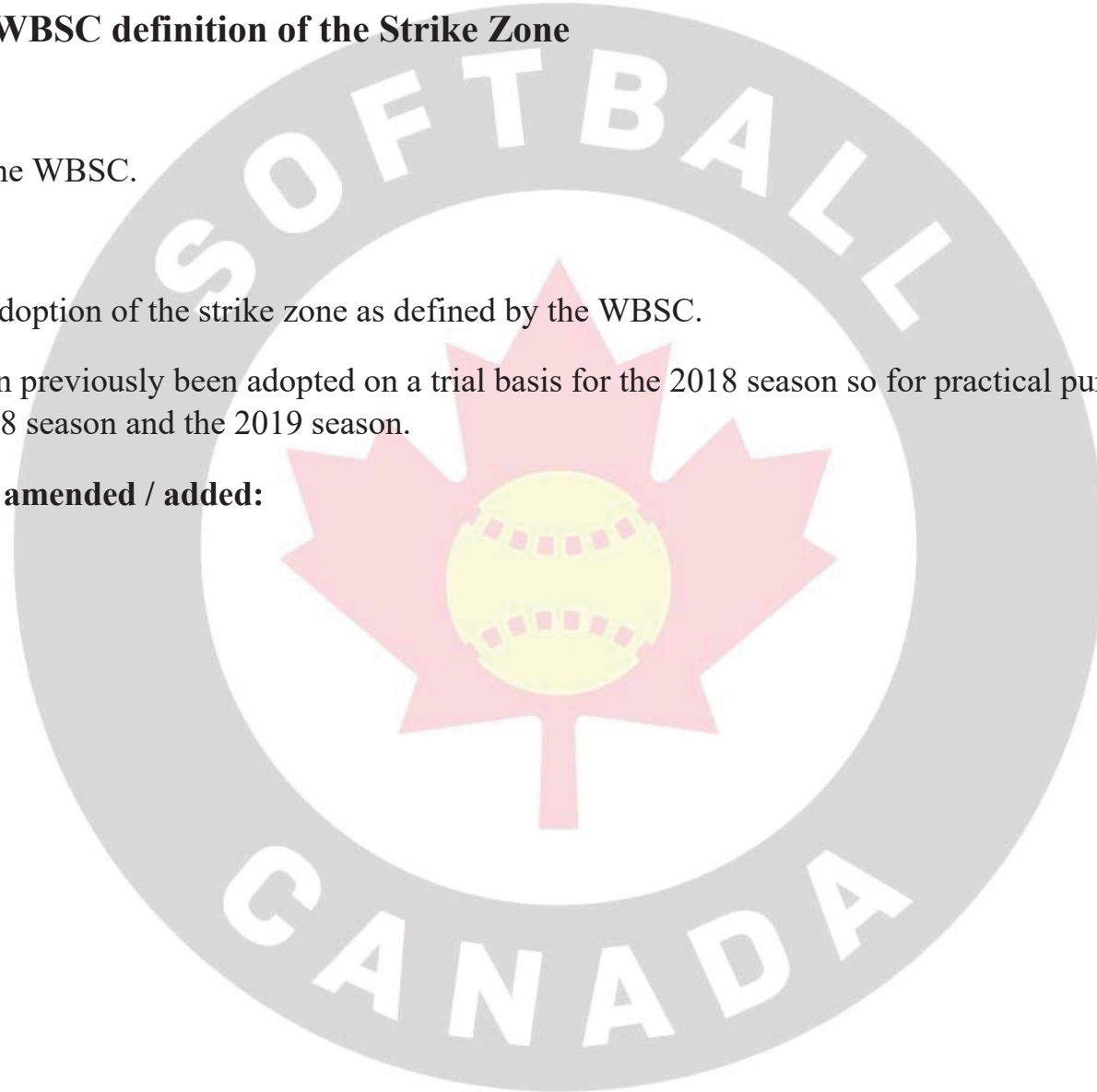
What it means:

This is the permanent adoption of the strike zone as defined by the WBSC.

This definition had been previously been adopted on a trial basis for the 2018 season so for practical purposes there will be no change between 2018 season and the 2019 season.

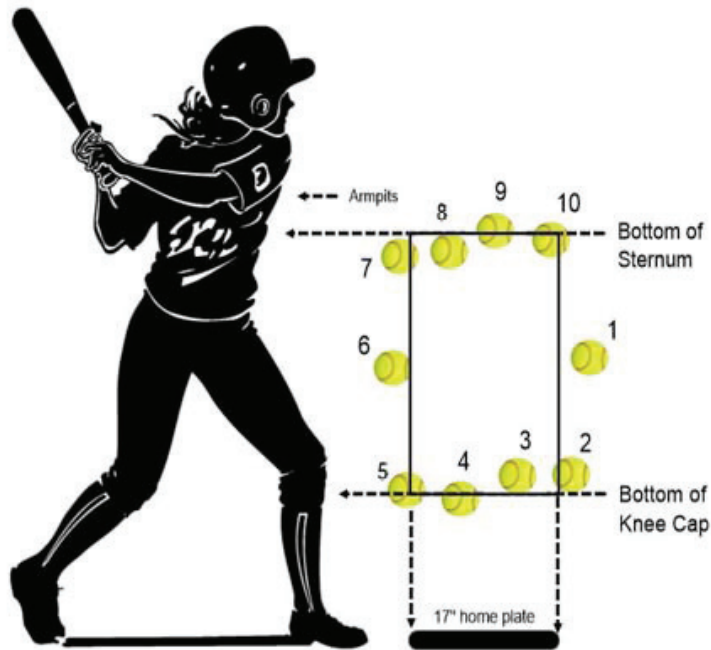
Rule References to be amended / added:

1 - 89



Strike Zone

The space over any part of home plate between the *bottom of the batter's sternum (chest plate)* and the *bottom of the batter's knee cap*, when they assume their natural batting stance. The natural batting stance is the stance the batter takes after the release of the pitch when deciding to swing or not swing at the pitch.



Rulings: 1) ball, 2) strike, 3) strike, 4) ball, 5) ball, 6) strike, 7) strike, 8) strike, 9) ball, 10) ball

A STRIKE

When any part of a pitched ball enters the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing, *provided the top of the ball is at or below the sternum or the bottom of the ball is at or above the bottom of the knee cap.*

Umpires are expected to "adjust" the zone to match the level of play at lower skill levels.

New Rule / Change #6:

FP/O: Pace of Play Rule - Limited discussions between the members of the defence - U19 and Above

Why:

To prevent unnecessary delays and ensure that the game moves at a quick pace.

What it means:

In U19 and above, defensive players, including pitchers and catchers will now be allowed to leave their position to speak with each other one time per inning. This meeting will be called a “**Charged Defensive Delay.**”

To be considered a **Charged Defensive Delay**, the following three things need to occur:

1. At least one player leaves their position;
2. There is a conference / discussion involving two or more players;
3. It results in a delay of the game (Time does not have to be called).

A second charged defensive delay in an inning will result in a ball being added to the batter.

Normal communication between players that doesn't require either to leave their position on the field will not be considered a delay. It also will not be considered a defensive delay if players confer during a charged offensive injury or other administrative delay as long as they are ready to play upon the umpire's request.

If the team has used their charged defensive delay in an inning, the umpire will have the choice to allow a brief, escorted visit at the catcher's request if a cross up in signals has occurred between the pitcher and catcher.

Rule References to be amended / added:

1 - 17
5 - 10
7 - 5.f

New Rule / Change #7:

FP/ O: Concussions to be treated under the Replacement Player Rule.

Why:

The application of concussion protocols has become an important part of all sports and this revision will prepare us for their introduction. This will allow for the protocol to be applied and should it be negative, it would allow the player to return in the same manner as how we deal with 'blood'.

What it means:

When an existing concussion protocol is to be followed as a result of a player suffering an injury to the head, the player is able to be removed from the line-up in order to allow concussion protocol to be followed.

Just as in the case of a player who is bleeding, a temporary replacement player is able to be placed in the game while the concussion protocol is followed.

Once the concussion protocol has been administered and it has been determined that the player can participate in the game, they will be allowed to return to the lineup.

Rule References to be amended / added:

4 - 10 a & b

Refer to Softball Alberta Concussion Protocol Requirements

New Rule / Change #9:

FP/O/SP: Pitchers may not wear sweatbands, bandages, tape or bracelets or similar items on the fingers, wrists or forearm of the pitching arm.

Why:

This change puts the current rule interpretation into the rule and aligns with the current WBSC rule.

What it means:

Pitchers can only wear items on their pitching arm if they are covered by an undershirt (compression sleeves worn on each arm are considered an undershirt).

Rule References to be amended / added:

6-6 c.(FP - pg. 168)
6-6 c.(M - pg. 173)
6-6 c.(O -pg. 178)
6-5 d. & e. (SP - Page 75)

Softball Alberta - Page 38 - UNIFORMS

1. All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in colour, trim and style; which includes sanitary hosiery (in accordance with the colour code of the team). {Female Teams} Pants or shorts may be worn at the individual player's discretion.
 - a) Ball caps must be alike and are mandatory for all male players and must be worn appropriately.
 - b) Caps, visors and headbands are optional for female players but must be alike in team colour and must be worn appropriately.
 - c) Any defensive player or coach may wear an approved helmet of identical colour of the team caps. A helmet worn for defensive purposes does not require ear flaps.

There is no penalty:

- for a player wearing a wrong number. Correct the number in the score book and on the lineup card and continue play.
- for duplicate numbers. One player must change jerseys, or a substitute may enter for one of the players.

New Rule / Change #10:

FP: Permanent adoption of WBSC pitching rule for all categories U16 and above.

Why:

Allows for the majority of categories to play under the current WBSC pitching rule.

What it means:

This rule was added on a trial basis in 2018 and is being adopted permanently for all fast pitch categories U16 (Male and Female) and above.

No changes will be made to the Orthodox pitching rules.

Rule References to be amended / added:

6

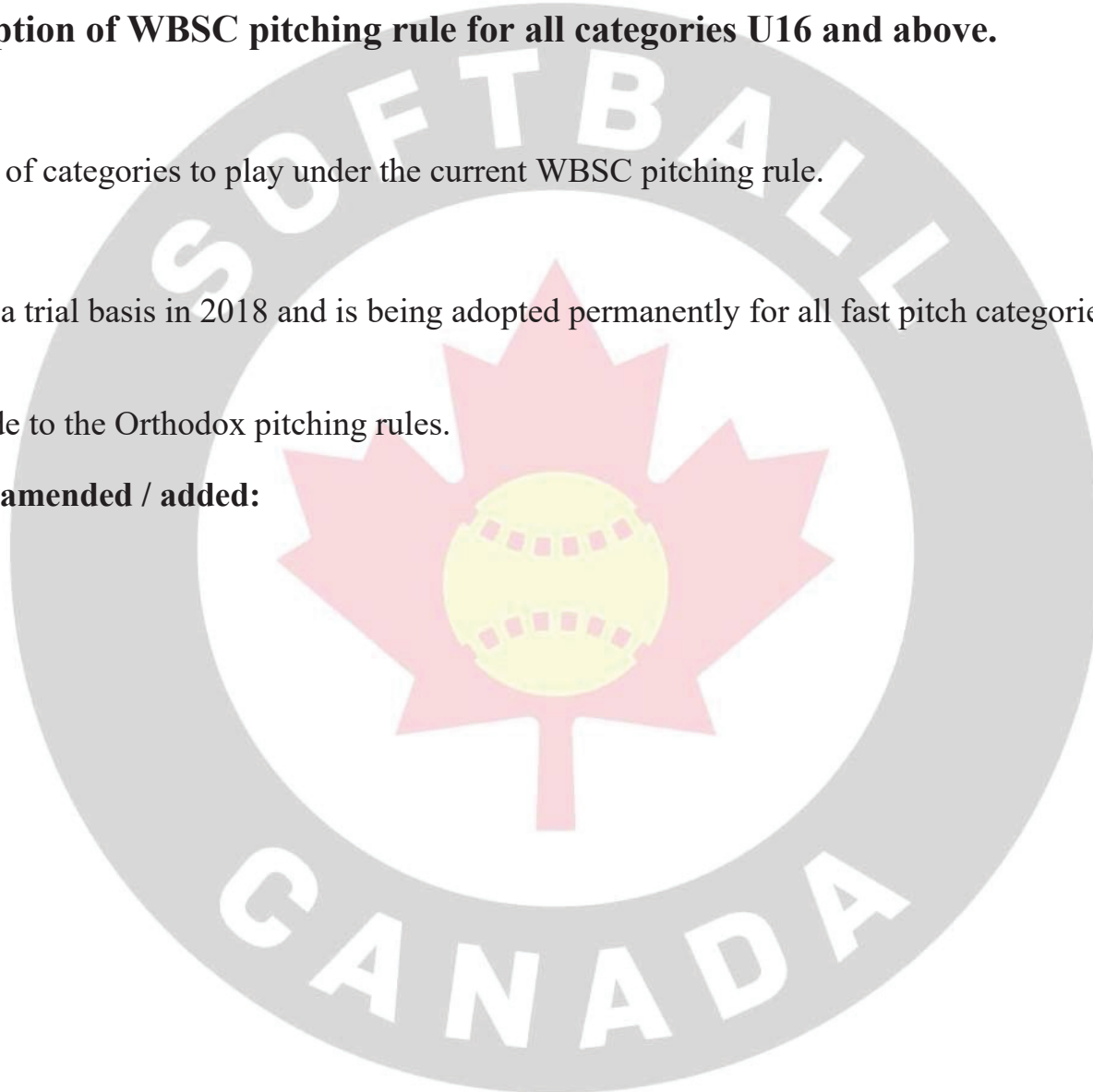
M6

M6 - 1.c

M6 - 1.e

M6 - 3.g

6 - 1.e



Pitching Regulations



Stance

Both feet must be in contact – U14 and below

But not off to the side – all categories

WBSC – U16 and above



Signal

- **the pitcher must be on the pitching plate**
- **after the pitcher and catcher are in position**
- **hands apart, ball in bare hand or glove**



SOME COACHES TEACH PRESENTING THE BALL THIS CAUSES THE HANDS TO COME APART AND BACK TOGETHER AND APART AGAIN THIS IS ILLEGAL.

Pause

- Facing the batter with hips in line with 1st and 3rd
- The ball held together in both hands
- The hands must be in front of the body, i.e. not in back
- **Body to a complete stop for 2-5 seconds.**

Pitch starts when...

hands come apart or pitcher begins any wind-up motion



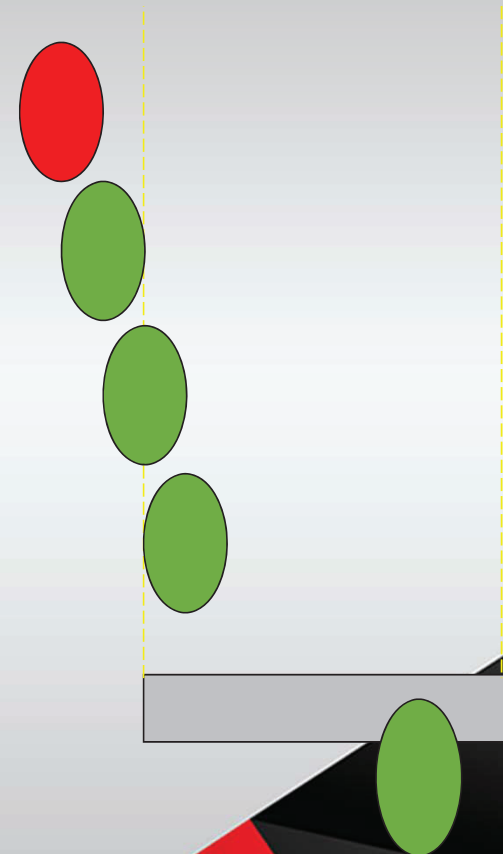
Level 1

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BIGGEST ISSUE IN MINOR BALL IS MOVEMENT DURING THE PAUSE, ROLLING THE BALL IN THE GLOVE IS NOT PERMITTED

Step

- only 1 allowed
- non-pivot towards plate & **within the chute** (touching is in)
- simultaneous with delivery of the pitch



Step (cont'd)

FP U14 and under

Before lead (non-pivot) foot touches the ground, the pivot foot may:

- remain in contact with pitching rubber, or
- push and drag away from pitcher's plate in contact with ground



Step (cont'd)

FP - U16 and up

Before the lead (non-pivot) foot touches the ground, the pivot foot may:

- remain in contact, or
- push and drag, or
- leap or hop

starting from the pitcher's plate.

Note: If airborne from the pitching plate, he may land and throw.



Delivery

- **No stop or reversal on the forward motion**
- **windmill pitch allowed (< 2 revolutions)**
- **only 1 complete revolution of the arm permitted**
- **wrist not farther from the body than the elbow**
- **hand below the hip**
- **may not continue to wind-up after release**
- **palm facing up or down**



Illegal Pitch

Violation of a pitching rule
constitutes an **ILLEGAL PITCH**

**Mechanics &
Effects?**



New Rule / Change #11:

FP / O: Face masks are required on helmets for U16 and below players.

Why:

Increased safety for participants as it will help players avoid serious injuries and brings the national rule in line with the many Provincial and Territory rules.

What it means:

All batters, on-deck batters and base runners must wear helmets that have an attached face mask in the U16 and below categories.

In order to be considered a face mask, the mask must be attached to both sides of the helmet.

Specifically, the one piece attachment that extends only from one side of the helmet does not meet the requirements of the rule.



The above are examples of acceptable styles only and do not imply endorsement by Softball Canada.

Rule References to be amended / added:

3 - 6 f. 4.

SOFTBALL ALBERTA - EQUIPMENT - PAGE 37

b) The protective batting helmet for Minor categories includes: i) A chin strap fastened securely under the chin, ii) And an “approved face mask/guard”.

EFFECT: A player not wearing a helmet will be warned by the Umpire. If in the umpires’ judgment the helmet is intentionally removed, interference shall be called and the player whose helmet was removed shall be declared out.