FREEDOM SPORTS ASSOCIATION
ADULT SOFTBALL

2012 FREEDOM SPORTS
RULE BOOK

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FREEDOM ADULT SOFTBALL RULES

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GENERAL GUIDELINES

RULE INTERPRETATIONS

General slow-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 Area Director for a decision. Should there be no Area Director present, then they may appeal to a National 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 have any involvement on the final ruling.

ALTED 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 vising 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.

APPEAL PLAY - A play in which an Official cannot make a ruling until requested by a team manager, coach, or player. Appeal must be made to Official making the call. Appeal must be made at ANYTIME before any of the following: 1) next legal pitch, 2) the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory, or 3) 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. Use of a non-approved ball may be protested by the opposing team (once batter has taken the batters 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. Freedom Sports optic yellow ball is the only ball legal for gameplay.

BATS – Freedom shall reciprocate the approval of all bats on the current USSSA approved bat list. Senior bats are not allowed in Freedom in any division, even if they are on the USSSA approved bat list. Any bat not identifiable by the markings on the bat as an approved bat or with any visible cracks, shall be considered illegal.

TAPE: Players are free to tape bat in any manner, thickness, etc but length of tape is not to extend onto the taper of the bat.

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

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.

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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 bats status, the player will have 2 options: 1.) Admit that the bat has been altered, give the bat up to be destroyed, and take an immediate 1-year suspension. 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 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 on the spot a five year suspension with no eligible appeal.

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

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.

BASE PATH – The base path is an imaginary line 3’ to both sides of the straight line between all bases. 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 - Any ball hitting a player or offensive equipment other than the on deck batter/batters 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 fair ball whereas the Batter does not completely break his wrists after making contact with the ball. Result shall be a dead ball out. A chopped ball is not a bunt.

CATCH - A catch shall be declared as such upon the fielder presenting the ball to show that he maintained possession of the ball. Exclusion applies only when fielder drops the ball during the transfer in an attempt to make another play.

CHOPPED BALL – When the batter swings downward with a motion in an attempt to drive the ball into the ground while breaking his wrists during the motion. A chopped ball is a legal swing in Freedom. Failure by the batter to break their wrists would be declared a bunt.
CLASSIFICATION

TEAM CLASSIFICATION: Teams shall be classified at the highest level that the majority of their players have played during the last 3 years with other softball associations recognized by and in good standing with Freedom. 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.

PLAYER CLASSIFICATION: Players classification is listed in the online system on Freedom Sports. The classification will be the players highest class played or the highest EOY (end of year) class showing for his/her name. If player feels their classification is incorrect or would like to be considered for a re-class for 1 level, they must submit a reclassification request via the Freedom Sports website and pay the $20 re-classification research fee. Any individual requesting to be dropped down must present good cause to FREEDOM in writing of which FREEDOM will have the absolute and final decision in regards to the decision.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY: Players must be at least 18 years of age to play FREEDOM sanctioned adult softball tournaments. A player MUST have signed a FREEDOM roster with liability waiver to be allowed to participate in any FREEDOM play. Playing without signing roster shall be cause for immediate forfeit of the team that said non-signing player is participating with. Players are not eligible for play in FREEDOM until roster has been approved by a Freedom State Director, National Director, or the Freedom Classification Board.

REQUIRED TEAM/PLAYER MOVE UP POLICY: Teams which finish in 1st or 2nd place in States & Worlds will be required to move up to the next higher classification. These teams will not be allowed to reclass as a team the following calendar year.

TEAM ROSTER GUIDELINES - 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. Players being added must be approved by the State Director or a National Director and can not have played with a team of more than one level higher class per the “Drop Down Rule”. Teams in the 1HR-Rec division are limited to (1) Drop Down Player per active roster from one division higher. 2HR-Lower teams may have (2) from one division higher. Teams in the 4HR-Upper division may have (3) players from the Elite Level. Players may not drop down more than one level to be a pickup. Example, No 4HR-Upper players are allowed in the 1HR-Rec division and No 8HR-Elite players are allowed in the 2HR-Lower division. If the coach releases a player from the roster he is free to be added back to that roster at any time at the coaches discretion. If a player requests to be released then he is no longer eligible to return to that roster during the calendar year. If a player plays up a level from his original class for 3 or more tournaments, he will be re-classified at that upper level. All teams that were not moved up during the previous year and had drop down players, Those players who were drop downs will still count as drop downs once again, those players have right to appeal to be dropped a class through the Freedom Sports website.
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 more drop down players then allowed by our criteria will constitute that team to be considered the level above. Example, a Rec team has 4 lower competitive players on that team, they will be considered illegal to play in the Rec division and would be considered a lower competitive (D) 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.

**LOCKED ROSTERS** - Players whom are on a “Worlds” qualifying team roster, will be frozen to that team roster for all other “WORLDS QUALIFYING” Tournaments. During non Worlds Qualifying Events, players may pickup, WITH APPROVAL, on another team’s roster. A Team must have a minimum of 6 rostered players to earn points towards the Freedom Points Race. 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 the National Office. Any player caught playing on another roster will be suspended regardless of the classification being played for a period of (6) months.

At the time a team’s roster becomes locked the team will be allowed to add 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 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 an NIT and gets a berth to worlds. Team A then decides to release 4 players and need 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 2 player pickup may be changed at the Freedom National Offices discretion.

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

1. The qualified team 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.

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

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

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

A players 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.

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

**DIVISION OF PLAY** – Elite (8hr), Competitive Upper (4hr), Competitive Lower (2hr), Rec (1hr), Upper Coed (4hr), Lower Coed (2hr), and Women’s (UNL hr). 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 and must be 18 yrs of age and have signed the waiver.

**DROPPED BALL** – Any ball dropped intentionally at the umpires discretion, shall be declared a dead ball. This only includes a ball that's natural path has been altered by a fielder. A fielder may let the ball 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 shall be declared out.

**EXTRA INNINGS** - Teams are FREE to use FREEDOM RUNNER OR LAST BATTED OUT on 2B for each extra inning. Extra innings shall be 1 Pitch, no courtesy foul. Extra Innings shall be declared upon the completion of the 7th inning OR the completion of the current inning after the time has expired.

**FAKE TAG** - Fake tags are prohibited. Fake tags shall result in each base runner being awarded one additional base. Player shall also be warned. A 2nd offense shall result in player being ejected.

**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 - Players have the FREEDOM to use ANY glove (not greater than 15”) in any position, at anytime.

FOUL BALL - Baserunners have the freedom to make an attempt to advance on any caught ball, fair or foul, this includes 3rd strike.

FOUL TIP - A batted ball that goes directly into the catcher’s mitt from the bat will be considered an 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.

HOME RUNS

ELITE DIVISION – 8 and 1 up, extra hit - only an out
UPPER COMPETITIVE DIVISION - 4 and 1 up, extra hit – only an out
LOWER COMPETITIVE DIVISION - 2 and 1 up, extra hit – inning ending
REC. DIVISION - 1 and inning ending
LOWER COMP. CO-ED – 2 and 1 up, extra hit– inning ending.
UPPER COMP. CO-ED - 4 and 1 up, extra hit – only an out.

***Home run limits only apply to the men in Co-Ed(Either Div.). Women can hit unlimited.

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

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 judgement 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.

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. 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 - A routine catchable ball hit within reach of infielders with baserunners occupying 1st and 2nd Base or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, shall be declared an out. Runners may advance at their risk of being put out during an infield fly play.
**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.

**LINEUP** – Teams must have a minimum of 8 players to be eligible to begin a game however teams are FREE 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 on the lineup if they were listed on the official lineup card at the start of the 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 is FREE to intentionally walk a batter to get to outs. Teams may bat up to 12 players in the lineup.

**OBSTRUCTION** – An attempt by the defensive player to impede the progress of a baserunner unless the fielder has possession of or is attempting to retrieve a ball. Obstruction does not have to be intentional. 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.

**BASE PATH** – The base path is the imaginary line three feet on either side of a direct line between a base and the runners position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag a runner.

**OVERTHROW** – When the ball is in play and is thrown beyond the boundary lines of the field or becomes blocked or out of play. The ball is dead and all runners will be awarded 2 bases, and the award will be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder’s hand. If two are runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

**THE RUNNER IS OUT WHEN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:**

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:

\[ \text{EFFECT: The ball is dead, runner is out for interference and the batter is awarded 1st base. All other runners may advance one base if they are pushed. For Example: Runners on 1st and 3rd, a batted ball strikes the runner on 3rd base while not in contact with the base. Batter will get first base awarded and push the runner from first to second. The runner on 3rd base is out.} \]

L. When a 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

\[ \text{NOTE: IF the base runners feet go over knee high, or if the defensive player is kneeling, and the base runners feet go above the waist. The base-runner is out, and may be ejected from the game.} \]

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 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 difficult 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 teams 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 players 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, crashes into the defensive player.

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.

EFFECT: the ball is dead.

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

Z. When a runner jumps over a tag or player on the way to the base, or any where in the field of play

AA. If a batter swings and hits a ball that bounces before the plate, the ball will be a dead
ball and the batter will be out and an ejection.

**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.

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.

**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. They are FREE to run an unlimited # 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.

**PITCH DELIVERY** – Pitcher shall be given 3 warm up pitches upon the start of each half inning and when a new pitcher comes into the game. A pitcher shall be required to make contact with the pitching rubber during release except in such case as additional distance has been granted to the pitcher by the Official, usually due to the mound being located less than 53’ from home plate. The pitcher must release the ball within 3 seconds of when the Official says “Play Ball”. Pump fakes will be permitted for a maximum time of 3 seconds. The count starts when the pitcher makes his first fake or takes the rubber. Any pump lasting longer than 3 seconds will be deemed a dead ball and a ball will be awarded to the batter. The pitcher may not use the glove to pitch the ball, the ball must be pitched from a bare hand. **Pitch arc will be 4ft to 10ft from the ground.**

**PLAYING FIELD** – The primary distances for FREEDOM Slow-pitch softball are 70’ Base Paths and 53’ from the pitcher’s mound to home plate. 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. For example, if playing on a field with a 50’ pitching mound, the pitcher shall be allowed to pitch from an additional 3’ behind the pitchers mound. In such case as a safety bag is present, during a play to the base, the fielder must use the white portion of the bag and the baserunner must use the colored portion of the bag. A baserunner may be in contact with either bag when standing on base.

**PROTEST** – There are three types of protests:

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TYPES OF PROTEST:

A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule – must be made before the next pitch of 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 Freedom ID Card along with a Legal ID. Should the protested player not be able to produce both ID’s within 5 minutes, the protest shall be upheld.

D. Protest of altered equipment, Team must pay the protest for the umpire and the show the umpire the equipment in protest for him to take to the director with the protest fee. This must be done during game play not after the game has finished.

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.

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’s 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.

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.

REGULATION GAME/TIME - 7 innings or time limit, or whichever occurs first. Any game played 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 are part of the FREEDOM Umpire’s Official Uniform. Upon the completion of the inning of which the audible alarm of the timer announces, any additional innings shall be governed according to the rules of “Extra Innings”. NO Time limits for all Nationals, NIT’s, States, and World.

Time Limits Per Division For Regular Tournaments:

1HR-Rec - 60 Minutes per game
2HR-Lower - 60 Minutes per game
4HR-Upper - 65 Minutes per game
8HR-Elite - 70 Minutes per game
Women’s - 60 Minutes per game
Lower Coed - 60 Minutes per game
Upper Coed - 65 Minutes per game

Penalty for Team Removal from an Event – If a team pulls out of a said tournament once game times occur the team will have to pay full entry for that tournament. All tournament Game times for regular events are posted 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 late.

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. 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 can not finish a game with less than 8 players so the coach shall have no decision should the opposing team only have 7 players remaining.

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.

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.
**RUN RULE** - Play shall cease in each of the following divisions if the home team is winning at the completion of the following inning; Lower Competitive (2HR), Rec Division (1HR), Women’s, and Coed:

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

Play shall cease in the Elite Division (8HR) and Upper Competitive (4HR) if the home team is winning at the completion of the following inning:

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

*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.

**SHOES** - Players must wear closed toe shoes during play. Coaches are FREE to wear sandals. Metal cleats are prohibited. A player found to be wearing metal cleats during play shall result an out and an immediate ejection from the game if shoes can’t be changed on the stops. All base runners must return to last base occupied.

**Time being called** – Most divisions in Freedom Sports have stealing, the ball will be deemed live until the umpire/official signals time and blows the play dead and stopped. Time is to never be assumed.

**STEALING** - Baserunners may attempt to advance upon the ball reaching home plate or making contact with the ground, whichever occurs sooner. Dead ball if batter swings, makes a false swing attempt or fouls off the ball.

**STRIKE ZONE** - Strike zone is the area between the batter’s front knee and rear shoulder as if the batter is standing in the center of the batters box. The balls must cross in this zone and the pitch must be from 4 feet to 10 feet from the ground.

**SUBSTITUTIONS**
A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in the team’s batting order. The following regulations govern the substitution of players:

A. The coach or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time of 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

**Effect:** The coach of the offending team shall be ejected for the remainder of the game. After
one half-inning of being in the game, the unannounced substitute is considered legally in the game, and no ejections shall occur. **Re-entry**

A. Any of the starting players and substitutes, 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.

30B. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest when brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended 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.

C. 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.

**UMPIRE** – Shall be the Official(s) appointed to officiate each Freedom game. They are responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with the rules within this book and for maintaining discipline and order among the playing field during the game. Each Umpire, as an Official of Freedom Sports Association, has the authority to carry out or omit any act, which in their judgment, is necessary to give force and effect to the rules. The Umpire uniform shall consist of the official royal blue Freedom Polo, the official Freedom Umpires hat, black pants or solid black shorts, and optional black belt, black socks, and black shoes.

**UNIFORMS** - Must have matching color/style Jerseys at National/State Tournaments including individual #’s. Penalty shall be that the team with matching Jerseys shall be awarded the option of home/visitor.

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT** – Any verbal action by team members 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. **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.**
FREEDOM WOMEN’S PROGRAM

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

A. The Official approved softball for Freedom women’s play shall be an 11 inch ball with a COR of .44 maximum. The ball must be an optic yellow ball with a Freedom Stamped logo on the ball.

B. The Freedom 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.

C. Homeruns in the Women’s program will be unlimited.

D. Upper Women’s teams will spot all other women’s teams 5 runs or the other team will be allowed to use 11 fielders as well.

E. If a women’s teams pick up more then (3) players from a Women’s upper team they also will now be considered an upper team. All Women’s teams are allowed (3) drop down players from upper division.

Re-entry
A. Any of the starting players and substitutes, 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.

30B. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest when brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended 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.

C. 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.
FREEDOM COED PROGRAM

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

A. 5 males and 5 female players will be considered a legal team or 6 males and 6 female players.

B. It will be permissible to have more females then males in the line up, but never more males then females. EXCEPTION: If a female player(s) gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game, the team may continue to play as long as (4) female players remain in the line-up. At no time will six (6) males be permitted to play defense at the same time.

C. Batting order for Coed teams must always alternate between sexes.

D. Two females may bat back to back, but never two males.

E. A team may end the game with only 9 players. If injury occurs, EFFECT: An out is called if there is no substitute for the injured player. EXCEPTION: A team may start a game with a minimum of five (5) female players. If a female player(s) gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game, the team may continue to play as long as four (4) female players remain in the line up. At no time will six (6) males be permitted to play defense at the same time.

F. Male batters will hit the approved 12” softball and female batters will hit the approved 11” softball with Freedom Sports logo.

G. 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 a free base on balls for her time at bat. If she elects to take the free 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 to the umpire her choice of taking the free base on balls or a time a bat.

H. 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 in the whole 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.

J. Defense – Defensive team must have at least five females in the field playing defense. EXCEPTIONS: A team may start a game with a minimum of 5 female players. If a female
player(s) gets injured, ejected or unexpectedly leaves the game, the team may continue to play as long as four (4) female players remain in the line-up. At no time will six males be permitted to play defense at the same time. If the team loses their EH women then an out will be issued everyone time her turn comes to bat. Women and Men may play anywhere they choose to in the field, i.e. teams can stack 10 players in the infield or outfield. Men and Women may choose any position of play on the field at all said times.

K. Home Runs – In the Coed division any home run hit by a woman will not count against the home run limit. Women may hit unlimited home runs on both the Upper, Lower, and Rec Coed divisions.

L. Stealing is only permitted in the lower and upper coed divisions.

Lower Coed Guidelines: Each team is allowed 1 upper competitive male and 1 upper women’s female or no upper competitive male and 2 upper womens females.

Upper Coed Guidelines: Each team is allowed all level players male and female.

**FREEDOM MASTER’S PROGRAM**

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

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

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

C. The acting state director or national director in that territory will determine upper division and Lower Division of the Masters program.
FREEDOM "WORLDS" - Teams that finish in the top 4 of their respective divisions at each of the following events: FREEDOM WINTER NATIONALS, FREEDOM STATES, and FREEDOM NIT'S shall receive a berth to FREEDOM WORLDS, to be held November in Florida. 1st place teams shall receive PAID Berths while 2nd place, 3rd place, and pass down berths shall be NON-PAID Berths. Elite, Women’s, Upper Competitive and Lower competitive Division Winners shall receive CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS. 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 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 must play in another states N.I.T. and a Regional event as well.