

Nebraska Senior Softball  
**PLAYING RULES AND GUIDELINGS**

(Revised August 15, 2011)

Unless specified otherwise, rules published by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) will be in effect. Team managers, players and umpires affiliated with Nebraska Senior Softball (NSS) shall know and abide by the following special senior softball rules.

- I. **GOAL** The goal of Nebraska Senior Softball is to promote participation in the game and improve the physical, mental and spiritual wellness of seniors in Omaha and surrounding communities who enjoy fun, fitness and fellowship and who wish to develop new friendships and renew old acquaintances among active senior players
  
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**II. QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Age Qualification. A player must reach age 50 during the current calendar year to be eligible to play at any time during that year.
2. Skill Qualifications. In the interest of players’ safety, competitiveness and the integrity of the game, players shall possess these minimum skills in at least **three out of the four** hitting, running, throwing and fielding drills:
  - a. **Hitting:** Shall be able to hit a pitched softball to the outfield grass, either in the air or on the ground, a minimum of 5 times out of 10 strikes thrown.
  - b. **Running:** Shall be able to run 65 feet from home to first base in less than 6.0 seconds in at least one of three attempts.
  - c. **Throwing:** Shall be able to throw a regulation softball a minimum distance of 65 feet in the air to within three feet of the target, in 4 out of 5 attempts.
  - d. **Fielding:** Shall be able to cleanly catch a softball thrown from a distance of 65 feet to within arm’s reach, in 4 out of 5 attempts.

**III. REGISTRATION**

1. Electronic or Paper Registration. Players can complete the entire registration process on line at [www.neseniorssoftball.com](http://www.neseniorssoftball.com) Those choosing to register by paper can download the form and mail to the address indicated on the bottom of the form.
2. Registration Fee. The fee can be paid electronically through the above web site or by check mailed separately with the paper registration. Fees are applied toward the cost of fields, umpires, softballs,

issued caps and jerseys (spring league only), and other miscellaneous costs of administering the league.

3. Deadlines will be established by the Board each season. New players, however, may register at any time during the season. Team assignment for players registering after the deadline/draft will be at the discretion of the Board.

#### **IV. PLAYING FIELD** (refer to field diagram on last page)

1. **Pitching Zone.** For the safety of the pitcher, the pitching area is extended beyond the rubber. The pitcher may deliver the ball with at least one foot anywhere within 2 feet wide by 8 feet long rectangular box immediately behind the pitcher's rubber, which is 50 feet from home plate.
2. **Home Plate.** A standard, white-colored, 5-sided plate, which is overlaid by the Strike Zone Mat. It measures 17 inches across the front, 8 ½ inches down each side and 12 inches diagonally to a point nearest the catcher.
3. **Strike Zone Mat**  
A strike zone mat will be used to determine balls, strikes and outs at home plate. It measures 21 inches wide and 35 inches long, with a painted home plate centered at the front of the mat. The top of the mat will be placed at the top of home plate.
4. **Batter's Box Mat.** The batter's box mats will overly the entire 3 feet by 7 ½ feet batter's box area and will treated the same as a chalked box. A properly positioned mat will lie with the inner edge six inches from the white portion of home plate, while the end closest to the pitcher, is 4 ½ feet ahead of a line drawn line through the middle of the white portion of home plate. This will locate the back edge 3 feet from the line drawn through the middle of home plate. See illustration on the last page.
5. **Bases.** First base, located 65 feet from home plate and measuring 15 x 30 inches will include an orange colored runner's safety bag. The white half of the bag will be positioned in fair territory, while the orange half is in foul territory.
6. **Commitment Line.** A six foot Commitment Line shall be marked across and perpendicular to the third base foul line and placed twenty feet from the back left corner of home plate. A straight chalk line shall be marked from third base to the Scoring Plate, passing through the Commitment Line.
7. **Scoring Plate.** An additional base identical in dimension to home plate. The back point of the Scoring Plate is located 8 feet from the left front (3rd base side) of Home Plate, and lies in line with the first base line.
8. **Pitching Screen.**
  - a. A pitching screen is available for use, at the pitcher's request, as an added safety measure. **PLAYERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE THE SCREEN.** When used, it will be placed in front of the pitching rubber at a distance not to exceed 6 feet, and offset laterally to the pitcher's glove hand side.
  - b. Any batted ball hitting the screen will be declared a dead ball/no pitch. A ball hitting the screen after being touched by a fielder however will be treated as a 'live ball' and play will continue. A thrown ball hitting the screen is treated as a live ball.
  - c. The decision to use the screen must be stated to the umpire and opposing manager prior to each pitcher's first pitch of the game and that decision will be in force throughout the duration of his pitching in that game.
  - d. When used by only one pitcher, the net will be placed in foul territory beyond that pitcher's dugout when his team bats. If not used by either team, the net will be removed from the playing field.

#### **V. PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

1. **Bat Standards**  
Except as noted below, Nebraska Senior Softball follows the bat specifications of ASA. Bats must bear either the 2000 or 2004 ASA certification mark, and not be on the ASA **non approved** bat list.

ASA bats specifically **approved** by manufacturer and model number will be permitted even though the ASA label has worn off, so long as the model is identifiable (umpire's judgment).

**Exception:** Players who will reach the age of 70 or greater in the calendar year may use any bat with a BPF rating of 1.20 or less. e.g. Miken Ultra II and Senior Combats are allowed. Managers must label these bats with a readily identifiable mark (e.g. bright tape) to preclude unintended use by teammates. Umpires discovering altered or non approved bats will:

- a. If noticed prior to the batter entering the batter's box, issue a warning to the player and to the team. No out is declared. The bat must be replaced.
- b. If noticed after the batter enters the batter's box, declare a dead ball out and issue a warning to the player and team.
- c. If discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, no out is declared. Warning is issued to the team.
- d. If the next batter also uses a non approved bat, above actions apply only to him.
- e. Once a player is warned, subsequent usage of an illegal bat during the season will result in ejection from the game.

## 2. Softballs

The official ball shall be of approved slow pitch design, 12-inch circumference, .44 COR, Compression Rating of 400 psi, and yellow optic in color. Only balls issued by the league will be used. The manager of the Home team will deliver a new ball to the umpire before the start of the game. The Visiting team will supply a high quality used ball.

## VI. THE GAME

### 1. Umpires.

The Umpires assigned to work NSS games are considered representatives of the league and as such are authorized and required to enforce each and every section and part of the Official ASA Rulebook, as modified by NSS Rules and Guidelines.

### 2. Players and Replacements

- a. Ten defensive players constitute a team. However, a team may start a game with no fewer than nine players including replacements. (See replacement players procedures, para VIII, 8)
- b. Any team unable to field at least seven players (for 12-man rosters) or six players (for 11-man rosters) by the scheduled start time will suffer a forfeit. Note: Roster size can only be officially reduced to 11 or less by the Director of Player Personnel when he is notified by the manager that a player, due to injury or illness, will miss at least four consecutive game nights.
- c. Re-entry Rule. The original starter may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered provided he occupies his original position in the batting order.

### 3. Pitch Count

- a. Each batter will start with a 1 ball, 1 strike pitch count.
- b. After two strikes, the batter is allowed one courtesy foul ball.
- c. If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, he may do so by notifying the umpire who shall award the batter first base.

### 4. Pitch Arc.

The pitched ball must rise a minimum of six feet, and to a maximum of 12 feet above the playing surface.

### 5. Length of Game

- a. A regulation game is seven innings. The umpire will keep the official game clock.
- b. When 1 hour and 5 minutes has expired, the umpire will stop play and announce to both managers that the current inning will be completed plus one more.
- c. Tie games after seven innings will begin extra innings with a runner on second base who completed the last official at bat the previous inning. A maximum of two additional innings will

be played. If the game is still tied, play will end and each team will be awarded ½ win and ½ loss.

6. Five Run Rule

Each team may score a maximum of five runs per inning, or five runs more than their opponent, whichever is greater. In the 7th or final inning, the visiting team is limited to ten runs, or ten runs more than their opponent, whichever is greater. No mercy rule will be in effect.

7. Home Run Limit

A maximum of two over the fence home runs per game per team will be allowed. Additional home runs will be recorded as one base hits with no advancement of other runners except as forced.

## VII. PLAYING RULES

1. Home Plate and Strike Zone Mat

- a. Legal pitches striking any portion of the Strike Zone Mat shall be strikes.
- b. A base runner will be retired at Home when the defensive player has possession of the ball while touching any part of the Strike Zone Mat after the runner passes the Commitment Line, but has not yet touched the Scoring Plate.
- c. If there is an attempt by the defensive team to tag the runner who has advanced beyond the Commitment Line, the runner is automatically safe.

2. Batter's Box Mat.

The requirement to stay within the normally chalked batter's box will apply to the mat. Specifically, the batter is allowed to step **partially** off the mat with either or both feet while hitting. He shall be called out if either foot is **completely** off the mat (or any part of his foot is on the white portion of home plate) during the swing

3. Scoring Plate

The runner must touch the Scoring Plate to record the run. Sliding into the Scoring Plate is prohibited except for unintentional tripping or falling. Violation results in an out.

4. Courtesy Runners

- a. A batter/runner having successfully reached base, may ask for a courtesy runner. He may repeat this unlimited times during the game.
- b. Courtesy running is primarily intended as a safety measure for players with injury or physical difficulty. Normally the player on base will make the request. Managers must guard against abuse of this rule such as a strategy of excessive courtesy running to optimize scoring.
- c. No team shall exceed two courtesy running events per inning.
- d. No player shall enter as a courtesy runner more than once per game.
- e. No courtesy runner shall replace the runner at second base beginning extra innings play until he has advanced to third base. Exception: If injured or ill, the runner may be replaced, but must be removed from the game.
- f. No original runner shall re-enter as a courtesy runner for another player in the same inning.
- g. A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat will be declared out. The courtesy runner called out does not lose his turn at bat.
- h. No courtesy runner shall be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury or illness. The replaced runner will be removed from the game.
- i. Once an entering courtesy runner touches a base, the event is official.
- j. Neither substitute players nor bye players shall be used as courtesy runners.
- k. Effect: Violation of a courtesy runner rule results in an out at the runner's position when the violation is declared.

5. Avoiding Collisions

- a. A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases. If a runner misses a base to avoid a collision, the runner might not be called out (umpire's judgment).
- b. A batter running to first base shall not touch the white portion of first base if there is a play at first base.
- c. A runner from third base to home shall be called out when touching the strike zone mat instead of the scoring plate.

## **VIII. COMPETITION PROCEDURES**

1. League Play
  - a. Playing sessions will be split into spring and fall league seasons, commencing around the last week of April and mid August respectively. Games are played Monday and Wednesday evenings. A separate player registration will begin mid July for the fall league.
  - b. Location of games will be established each season. Currently games are played at LaVista Sports Complex, 7346 S 66th St, LaVista, Nebraska
  - c. The number of teams will be based on registrations received.
2. Team Composition
  - a. Teams will normally consist of approximately 12 players including manager. To prevent dominate teams from entering the league, no pre-formed teams will be accepted. All new players will be assigned to a team via the draft or pool player process described below.
  - b. By exception and subject to Board approval, a non-player manager/assistant manager may be approved when needed. He must be a former or injured league player, and shall:
    - 1). Complete the standard registration form
    - 2). Purchase the team jersey and cap.
    - 3). Comply with all manager responsibilities listed in paragraph IX.
3. Returning Players
  - a. Returning players from the previous spring may elect to return to their previous spring team or enter the draft for an extra fee (jersey cost). New players joining the league in the fall will enter the draft the following spring. Spring pool players enter both the fall draft and the next spring draft, however will be exempt from paying for a jersey the second time.
  - b. Players wishing to play with the same team will be pre-assigned in order of the registration post mark. Once the returning player's team roster reaches the maximum number of returning players allowed (12-13), subsequent returning players will go into the Player Draft System, or may be assigned as a Pool Player if registration is received after the stated deadline date.
4. New Players
 

New players will be evaluated for individual skills as describe under Playing Qualifications above. New players who register by the deadline and satisfy the Playing Qualifications will enter the player draft.
5. Pool Players
  - a. A player whose registration or fee is received after the registration deadline and/or Player Draft may be assigned directly to a team to fill existing vacancies or assigned as a Pool Player.
  - b. Pool Players who are present at least 15 minutes prior to the start of a game shall be temporarily assigned (for one game only) to a team that has less than the full team roster present.
  - c. Pool Players shall be in the batting order the entire game, may play any defensive position and must play a defensive position a minimum of four innings unless they are injured or request otherwise.
  - d. Pool players may decline the borrowed catcher draw in favor of opting for full pool player privileges.
6. Player Draft System

- a. Players not assigned to an existing team will be selected by team managers prior to the season, in a fair and equitable draft procedure, on a pre-announced draft date.
  - b. The Board will decide each year how the draft will be run based on current league needs. The primary goal will be to promote team parity throughout the league. Preference will be given new teams to the extent of a likely .500 season. Existing teams' priority will also be based on creating overall average (.500) teams by adjusting their average strength through the draft allocations. Record and league standings of the previous spring season are the primary references for estimating team strength and needs.
  - c. During a 48 hour period following the draft, a manager may offer to trade up to three newly drafted players for other specific players. All respective managers must be in agreement.
- NOTE: Every third year (2011, 2014 etc), a draft of all returning and new players will be conducted prior to the spring season. Selections will be made by managers attached to a new set of major league team names.

#### 7. Player Participation

- a. Every available player including roster and replacement players shall be in the batting order the entire game. The league may temporarily exempt a given player from this requirement when, due to injury, he is unable to bat, but wishes to play defensively. Upon conclusion of this limited time, he will again be required to be in the batting lineup each game he plays.
- b. Every available player shall play a defensive position a minimum of four innings per game unless he is injured or requests otherwise.
- c. A roster player arriving after the game has begun will bat last in the lineup and may enter the game immediately. (Exception: when replacing a replacement player, see below).
- d. Once the game has begun, if a player is injured or must leave the game, his position in the batting order will be vacated, and no "out" will be charged. If his team then has less than nine players, a replacement player will be randomly drawn. He will fill the vacated position in the batting order, and will play only first base, right field or right center field.
- e. A roster player present at game time, who declares himself unable or unwilling to play, may not reverse his declaration at a later time and enter that game.
- f. Ejection. A player ejected from the game by the umpire must leave the premises. His spot in the lineup will be recorded as an out the remainder of the game. Teammates (if available) may fill his defensive position; however no replacement draft will take place. Ejection resulting in less than nine defensive players (including borrowed catcher), will result in a forfeit.

#### 8. Replacement Player/Game Draft Procedures

- a. When a team is short of players for a scheduled league game, the following order of priority will be used to pick up replacements:
  - 1) **Pool Player** - A player who is not permanently assigned to a team.
  - 2) **Bye Player** - A player assigned to a team that was not schedule to play that night
  - 3) **Substitute Player** - A player from another team playing that night who desires to play an additional game.

**Note:** The term “**replacement player**” is a general reference to any of the above three.

- b. A team with less than its full roster of players present may be required to pick up a Pool Player to ensure these players are allowed to participate each game night they attend. The team with the fewest players present will be staffed first.
- c. Replacement player requirements shall be determined as follows: Teams with a current roster of 12 or more must have a minimum of seven roster players present at game time to secure replacement players and can pick up by random draw a maximum of two players, but may not exceed a total of nine players. See borrowed catcher below. Those teams with 11 or fewer current roster players must have a minimum of six roster players present in order to start a game and can pick up by random draw a maximum of three players, but may not exceed a total of nine

players. Note, the 9-player limits above do not apply to pool players, only bye and substitute players.

- d. Borrowed Catcher. In addition to the random draws described above, the 10th defensive player, a “borrowed catcher” will be selected from either idle players or the opponent. Order of priority will be bye players, substitute players and then opponent. The bye or substitute borrowed catcher will be randomly drawn. If none is available and willing, the borrowed catcher will be from the opponent, as chosen by the opponent’s manager. This borrowed catcher can be swapped with any of his original team’s players, at any time at the discretion of his manager. In all cases the borrowed catcher will play only as catcher and will not bat for the receiving team. The receiving team will bat with a 9-player lineup.
- e. When “Byes” are built into the league schedule, players assigned to bye teams are welcome to show for other scheduled games and will be treated as replacement players. Scheduled teams will not be required to fill their game roster beyond ten players for Bye players.
- f. Bye players will be treated as such for one game. After they have played one game, they will be treated as other "Substitute" players.
- g. If a team has a player currently playing for another team approaching game time, that player will be considered absent for substitute player purposes. The manager has the option of drafting a substitute player or counting on his player being available by game time. If a substitute is drafted and the manager's player is available by game time, the substitute is not needed. If the manager's player is not available when the umpire says "Play Ball", the substitute will be part of the lineup and must bat once before being replaced by the regular player.
- h. The substitute player draft should not be delayed waiting for another game to finish. Draft from the available players.
- i. Players who have already played one game that night as a replacement player will not be eligible as a replacement player unless there are not enough "new" replacement players available
- j. The Draw
  - 1) Team managers, with assistance of an umpire if available, will be in charge of running the replacement player draft
  - 2) Managers will call for available replacement players ten minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game.
  - 3) The total number of players will then be determined for all teams at a given game time slot. A single random drawing for substitute players will be conducted when feasible.
  - 4) A separate draw for pool players or for borrowed catcher may be necessary depending on circumstances.
- k. If a manager knows one of his regular roster players is running late but feels confident the player will arrive, he has the option of choosing not to select a replacement player. He must announce this decision before the selection process begins. If this player arrives after the game has begun, he must bat last. If the player does not show up, the team will play shorthanded for the entire game. **Note:** no game will be started with less than nine players per team including replacements.
- l. A tenth player from the team’s regular roster may be added any time during the game, after all replacement players have been replaced, batting in the last position. No out will be called for the missing tenth player at any time.
- m. If a regular roster player arrives after the replacement player draft is completed, but before the umpire calls “play ball”, the player will be allowed to enter the game immediately and the substitute player sits out. If the player shows up after the call to “play ball”, he will not be allowed to enter the game until the substitute to be replaced has batted at least once. At that time, the substitute player will be removed in the reverse order he was selected and the roster player inserted in the same place in the batting order. Pool players may not be replaced in the batting order, only Substitute and/or Bye players from another team.

- n. A Pool player who has already played in a league game and desires to play in additional games that evening shall be treated the same as any other league player. Pool players may bat in any position in the batting order and may play any defensive position
- o. Bye and substitute player restrictions (does not apply to pool players):
  - 1) Must bat at the end of the order
  - 2) Must play 1<sup>st</sup> base, right field, or right-center field.
  - 3) May not be used as a courtesy runner

**IX. MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1. Team managers are responsible for the team's actions on the field. They will represent the team in communication with the umpire and the opposing team. In addition to the usual player/coach duties, the manager shall be responsible for the conduct and sportsmanship of his team members. Above all, he shall at all times demonstrate an exemplary model of sportsmanship for members of his team to respect and follow.
- 2. Managers are expected to understand and comply with the Playing Rules and Guidelines. They will proactively enforce League policies and respond to guidance from the Commissioner, Associate Commissioner or any Board member.
- 3. Managers have both the authority and responsibility to apply corrective action toward players failing to comply. In the event of severe or unusual circumstances involving lengthy suspensions or expulsion, the league Corrective Action Panel will be assembled to recommend appropriate action to the Board who will have final approval. Keeping the Commissioner informed of all disciplinary matters is imperative.
- 4. Wear of the uniform. Players will wear the issued jersey and it will not be ragged, frayed, torn or “cut-off”. Caps will be worn as intended by the manufacturer. Baseball pants/shorts or athletic wear are encouraged.
- 5. Each winning manager is responsible to ensure his game score is posted on the website by noon the following day.

**X. CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Nebraska Senior Softball League players, guests, volunteers, spectators and umpires are expected to adhere to the following articles, on and off the field. Failure to comply may result in warning, suspension or expulsion from the league.

**Article 1** Abide by rules, guidelines and policies of ASA and the Nebraska Senior Softball League.

**Article 2** Accept the decisions of umpires and managers in the spirit of good sportsmanship.

**Article 3** Refrain from taunting or degrading players, or using abusive or profane language.

**Article 4** Avoid bodily contact which may cause injury.

**Article 5** Exercise control over family members and guests to the extent of Article 3.

**Article 6** Refrain from smoking or consuming alcoholic beverages on the field, inside or outside the dugout.

**Article 7** Refrain from the commission of any acts contrary to the goals and objectives of the league.

**XI. WEATHER PROCEDURES**

- 1. Tornado Warning
 

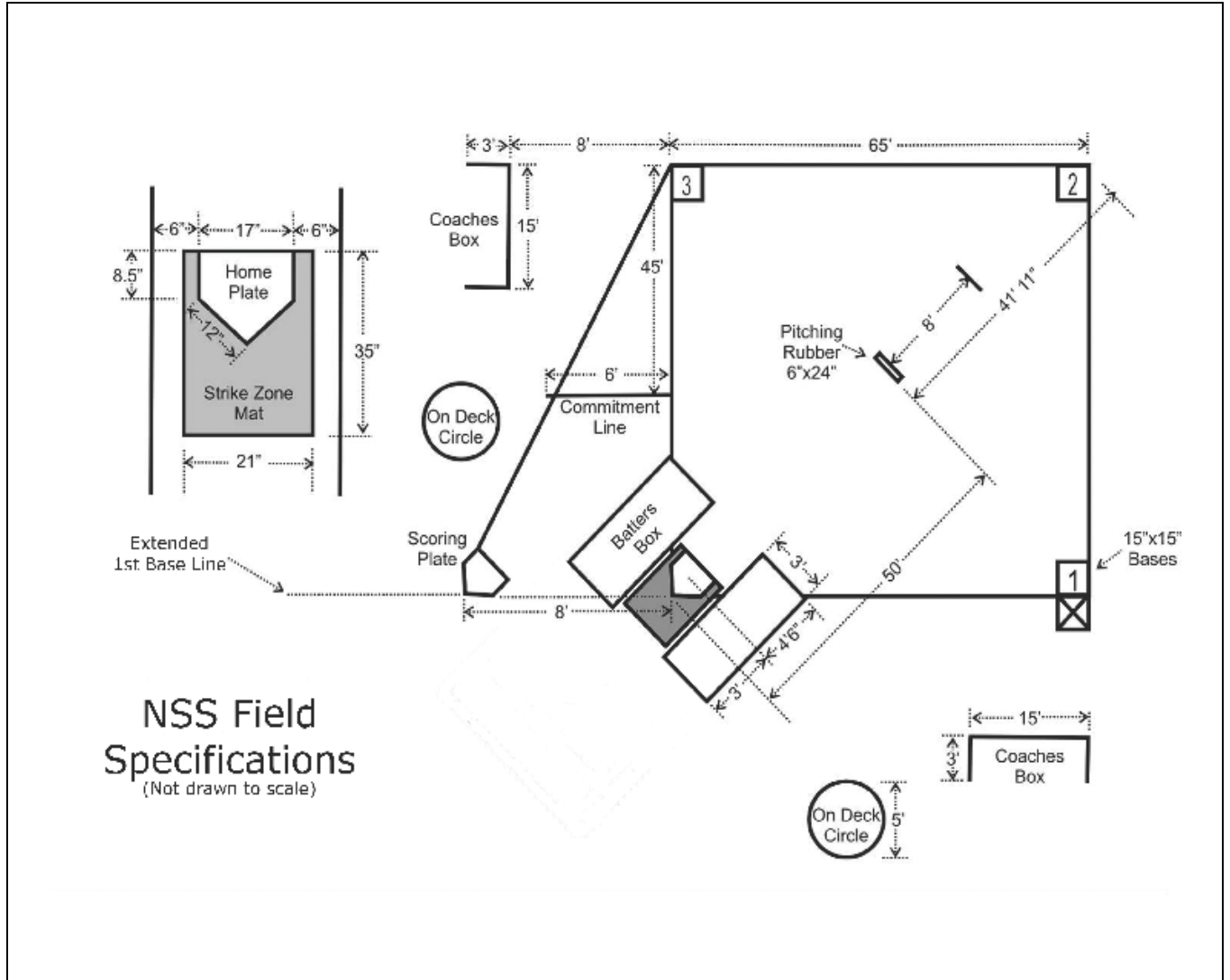
In the event a Tornado Warning (not to be confused with Tornado Watch) has been issued for the ball field region, games will be postponed and players should take appropriate action regarding travel to/from the ballpark. **Note:** The La Vista fields are located on the northern edge of Sarpy County, near the southern boundary of Douglas County. Games in progress will be suspended at the discretion of the umpire
- 2. Hot Weather Procedures

As a guideline, games will not be played when the heat index is in excess of 105 degrees Fahrenheit

3. Cold Weather Procedures

As a guideline, games will not be played when the ambient temperature is less than 45 degrees Fahrenheit

**XII. FIELD DIAGRAM**



**Figure 1 Nebraska Senior Softball Field Specifications**