



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

October 7, 2010

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TO: Head Softball Coaches]
 Directors of Athletics] -- of NCAA Member Institutions
 Senior Woman Administrators] and Conferences that
 Conference Commissioners] Sponsor Softball.
 Conference Senior Woman Administrators]

FROM: Ken Eriksen, chair
 NCAA Softball Rules Committee

Dee Abrahamson, secretary-rules editor
 NCAA Softball Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: 2011 Softball Bat Compliance.

New for the 2011 season are mandatory barrel compression testing, the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List and a handful of rule changes to cover any incident of a nonapproved bat's appearance in a game.

2010 Lab Compliance Results. Lab compliance test results from the 2010 post-season were extremely disappointing. Of 24 bats tested, 7 passed. Specifically, 17 bats failed by registering a batted ball speed between 98.0 and 104.7 mph. The current standard requires that speed to be less than 98.0 mph for the life of the bat.

Despite the Softball Rules Committee's efforts to manage bat issues over the last four years of compliance testing, this year's lab results necessitated more significant changes in not only the monitoring process and penalties for non-compliance, but in determining which bats are allowed in NCAA competition.

Mandatory Barrel Compression Testing (BCT). BCT will be performed at select in-season tournaments and at postseason competition. When BCT is conducted, it will be before competition and all teams shall participate. A bat that fails will be immediately and permanently surrendered.

Knowing that all equipment being used in the tournament was tested should be a positive effect of the new requirement. And heading into postseason competition where BCT will be present, it should be helpful knowing your equipment was subjected to BCT during the season – even though future BCT could produce different results as bats continue to break in.

N a t i o n a l C o l l e g i a t e A t h l e t i c A s s o c i a t i o n

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NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. Earlier this month, the Softball Rules Committee asked bat manufacturers to provide names of bat models their company produces for inclusion on the (new) NCAA Approved Softball Bat List, which will be compiled and made public as soon as models are submitted. Bat manufacturers were asked to be confident that each model they put on the list is in compliance with the less than 98 mph standard and is appropriate for the collegiate game.

Effective January 1, 2011, the list will replace and supersede the current ASA Non Approved Bat List for purposes of the NCAA game. The list will be posted on several websites, including www.NCAA.org/playingrules and the Softball Umpire Improvement Program ([SUIP](#)) website. Because models may be added after manufacturers' initial submission or scratched based on lab test results conducted throughout the season, the list will be updated as frequently as necessary.

When a bat fails BCT, the model could be removed from the list. The complete protocol is explained in Attachment A, which is also on the websites listed above. In addition, a roundtable session will be conducted at the National Fastpitch Coaches Association convention in December to explain the process and answer questions.

Rule Changes. A few rule changes, approved by the Softball Rules Committee and subsequently approved by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel, were made to penalize a team with a non approved bat in competition. Basically, the definition of a non approved bat was changed, and the penalty for a non approved bat in a game was strengthened to include player ejection. Specifically, the new language is outlined in Attachment B.

2011 Postseason Bat Compliance. As in past years, bats will be secured from teams as they are eliminated from competition for lab compliance testing. Specific results from bats that fail will be shared with the institution, the appropriate championship committee and the bat manufacturer.

The Softball Rules Committee is optimistic that these changes will address the bat issues and help create a level playing field for all teams. Please contact either of us (eriksen@usf.edu or abrahamson@niu.edu) with questions about this information.

KE/DA:nkb

Attachments

cc: NCAA Softball Rules Committee
Selected NCAA Staff Members

NCAA 2011 SOFTBALL BAT COMPLIANCE

September and October 2010

Review of the barrel compression test (BCT) data and the Washington State University (WSU) lab results from the 2010 season by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee. Notification sent to institutions and manufacturers whose bats tested 98 mph or faster.

Request bat manufacturers to provide NCAA Softball Rules Committee with an initial list of their 2004 ASA certified bat model(s) they want placed on the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List. The criteria for inclusion should be models they believe to be appropriate to the collegiate fastpitch game and ones they are confident will be in compliance with less than 98 mph exit speed.*

Effective January 1, 2011, a NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List will replace and supersede the ASA list of nonapproved bats for purposes of the NCAA game. The bat list will be available on the central hub of the SUIP ArbiterSports website, as well as other appropriate websites including www.NCAA.org/playingrules. The bat list may be amended as the result of lab compliance testing or at a manufacturer's request; therefore, the list, as well as any e-mail or other such communications by the NCAA related thereto, must be monitored by coaches and umpires as contemplated herein. Games and scrimmages played during the fall season should continue to be played under the previous ASA nonapproved bat list. Additionally, it should be noted that the use of the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List only applies to game competition. Each institution makes its own decisions on what products, including bats, are appropriate to use during practice.

Notification sent to membership and umpires regarding NCAA Softball Bat Compliance program changes for 2011.

**Placement of bats on the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List does not guarantee, or otherwise mean, compliance with ASA/NCAA standards. Such placement is based on manufacturers' representations that they do so comply, and institutions take on the risk that bats may not so comply. Manufacturers are responsible for, and liable for any damages resulting from, any misrepresentations associated with the same.*

December 2010

Educational sessions and discussions held at the NFCA convention for coaches and for conference assignors/coordinators.

2011 Traditional Season

Bats must bear the 2004 ASA certification seal and be a model listed on the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List in order to be used for NCAA competition played under the NCAA Softball Rules and Interpretations book. The NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List attempts to limit the number of allowable bat models to those consistent with the Softball Rules Committee's core values of ensuring fair and equitable competition between teams, supporting the delicate balance of offense and defense within the game, and maintaining vigilance regarding both student-athlete safety and risk minimization.

Under existing NCAA softball playing rules, coaches are responsible for properly equipping their team. Therefore, coaches are expected to continuously monitor the condition and performance of all equipment, particularly bats used in competitions. In addition, coaches are responsible for monitoring, at minimum every Monday, the bat list that will be updated throughout the season; for receiving NCAA e-mail or other notifications indicating changes to the list and complying with any such changes no later than the beginning of the day after each such notification; and for providing the bat list (as it stands on that particular day) when they host competitions.

As in the past in collegiate games, umpires will continue to inspect bats as part of their pregame responsibilities and remove any bats without the ASA 2004 certification seal or that are unfit for play (for example, dented, cracked). In addition, umpires will share responsibility with opposing coaches/players to *ensure bats used in the game are only those listed on the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List*. If an umpire or opposing coach/player detects a nonapproved bat in the possession of the batter who enters the batter's box or has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire. If the bat is detected at any other time during the contest, the bat is immediately surrendered to the plate umpire. Bats removed for any of these reasons shall be returned to the team at the end of competition, and the plate umpire shall file an incident report.

In selected-regular season competition, when and wherever NCAA bat compliance testing is taking place, NCAA teams shall participate in pre-competition BCT. All bats to be used in competition (bats with the 2004 ASA seal and appear on the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List) will be checked in and tested using a portable BCT machine. Bats that pass pre-competition screening will have a dated sticker affixed indicating suitability for use in that event. *In the unlikely event that a bat without the appropriate sticker is discovered* in the possession of a batter who enters the batter's box or has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter is declared out and ejected, and the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire. If the bat is detected at any other time when the umpires are present on the field, the bat shall be immediately surrendered to the plate umpire. In either case, the bat shall be returned to the team at the end of competition and the plate umpire shall file an incident report.

A bat that fails BCT will not be allowed to be used during competition and will be shipped to the NCAA Softball Secretary-Rules Editor (SRE) for one additional BCT test using a different BCT machine (than the one on site) that is, in her discretion, the best or most accurate one available to her. This is referred to as a **unit failure**. Following a unit failure, the bat that failed BCT will be shipped to the NCAA Softball SRE who will retest it as provided above.

If the bat passes the additional BCT, it is considered **unit failure** only; however, the unit remains surrendered and will not be returned to the team. There is a *compliance verification* opportunity (see below) by means of the requestor paying for further testing in the WSU lab.

If the bat fails the additional BCT, it may be sent to the WSU lab for further testing, as determined by the NCAA. If the bat passes in the lab and remains intact, the bat will be returned to the institution. If the bat fails in the lab, it is considered **model failure**; a strike is assessed to the bat model, and the bat remains surrendered and not returned to the team.

There is a *failure verification* opportunity (see below) by means of the requestor paying for autopsy testing in the WSU lab. Results of the autopsy that may or may not prove tampering will be communicated to the institution, manufacturer, the appropriate Softball Championship Committee, and the NCAA Softball Rules Committee, and the latter shall determine, in its discretion, whether any further action is warranted in response thereto, including, without limitation, the removal of a strike.

Strikes are amassed based on **model failure**. For example, if a bat fails on-site BCT and is surrendered and sent to the NCAA Softball SRE for further testing and it fails the additional testing, the bat may then be sent to the WSU lab, as further contemplated herein. If it fails there, that results in a strike and the bat remains surrendered. Similarly, if a team has three bats of the same model and all three fail on-site BCT testing and subsequent retesting by the NCAA Softball SRE, and also fail in testing at the WSU lab, three strikes are assessed for that model.

When a model is assessed three strikes, the NCAA will send an e-mail or other such communication to coaches and officials, notifying them that the model will be scratched from the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List and will not be allowed in NCAA competition, as of the beginning of the day following the day of the above-referenced notification. The notifications will be sent to the e-mail addresses for each coach and official on file with, or otherwise held by, the NCAA in its database or through ArbiterSports. Each coach and official is responsible for checking his/her respective e-mail account referenced herein on a daily basis, for reviewing and complying with any such notification received thereat, and for informing the NCAA in writing of any requested changes to the recipient e-mail address or for providing one to the extent one is not on file with, or otherwise held by, the NCAA.

2011 Postseason

During the NCAA postseason, the above protocol will remain in place with the following additions:

1. The participant's handbook will have bat compliance information including details of the location and times for testing. The coaches meeting will be a forum for any last minute details including notification of any bat model entering the championship with strikes.
2. Surrendered bats from BCT will be shipped overnight to the NCAA Softball SRE for further testing in an effort to gain immediate feedback and possible lab testing.
3. Should a bat model fail lab testing and that strike becomes the third strike for that bat model, the NCAA Softball SRE will notify the NCAA championship managers. The championship managers will contact their respective championship site directors to notify them a model has been scratched from the NCAA 2011 Approved Softball Bat List as of 8 a.m. local time the next morning.
4. Additional bats may be added to a team's inventory as long as a BCT machine is on site. In the event BCT is no longer available, additional bats will not be allowed.
5. Post-competition testing will continue under the protocols established in 2010.

Compliance Verification

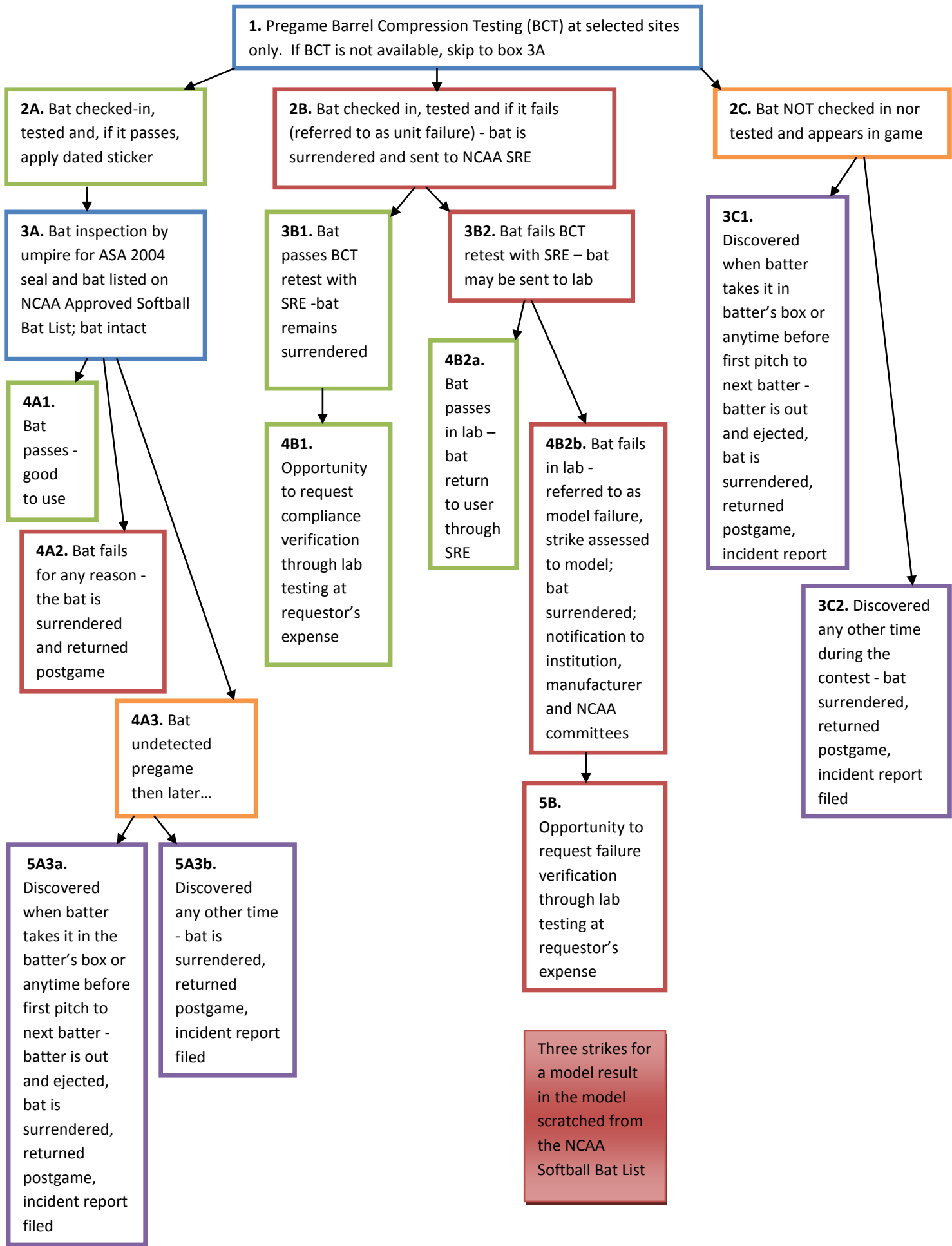
An opportunity shall be available to challenge the BCT result that ends in unit failure. To do so, the requestor must arrange payment for testing with the WSU lab and provide written notification to the NCAA Softball SRE of the request for further testing. The NCAA Softball SRE will ship the bat to WSU for testing under the protocol currently in use for NCAA postcompetition testing. If the lab results indicate the BBS is below 98 mph, the bat will be returned to the institution. If the BBS is 98 mph or higher, the bat will remain surrendered to the NCAA, and will become a model failure. The cost of this testing is approximately \$800 per bat.

Failure Verification/Autopsy

Within 72 hours of when model failure notification is sent, the bat manufacturer and the institution from which the bat was taken have the opportunity to request that the bat be cut open and evaluated at WSU by Dr. Lloyd Smith for possible explanation. Expenses for the failure verification/autopsy will be paid by the requestor, even though there is a chance no explanation will be forthcoming or the results come back inconclusive. To arrange for the failure verification/autopsy, payment must be arranged with the WSU lab and written notification provided to the NCAA Softball SRE who will ship the bat to WSU. The results of the failure verification/autopsy will be made known to the requestor and the NCAA Softball Rules Committee through the NCAA Softball SRE.

Rule Book References:

Rules 1.79
Rule 1.63.2
Rule 3.3.1.5 and EFFECT
Rule 3.3.2
Rule 3.3.3
Rule 5.4 EFFECT
Rule 11.8.4
Rule 11.17.4
Rule 11.24.4 and EFFECT
Rule 13.6
Rule 15.6.1 EFFECT
Index



1. Pregame Barrel Compression Testing (BCT) at selected sites only. If BCT is not available, skip to box 3A

2A. Bat checked-in, tested and, if it passes, apply dated sticker

2B. Bat checked in, tested and if it fails (referred to as unit failure) - bat is surrendered and sent to NCAA SRE

2C. Bat NOT checked in nor tested and appears in game

3A. Bat inspection by umpire for ASA 2004 seal and bat listed on NCAA Approved Softball Bat List; bat intact

3B1. Bat passes BCT retest with SRE -bat remains surrendered

3B2. Bat fails BCT retest with SRE – bat may be sent to lab

3C1. Discovered when batter takes it in batter’s box or anytime before first pitch to next batter - batter is out and ejected, bat is surrendered, returned postgame, incident report

3C2. Discovered any other time during the contest - bat surrendered, returned postgame, incident report filed

4A1. Bat passes - good to use

4A2. Bat fails for any reason - the bat is surrendered and returned postgame

4A3. Bat undetected pregame then later...

4B1. Opportunity to request compliance verification through lab testing at requestor’s expense

4B2a. Bat passes in lab – bat return to user through SRE

4B2b. Bat fails in lab - referred to as model failure, strike assessed to model; bat surrendered; notification to institution, manufacturer and NCAA committees

5A3a. Discovered when batter takes it in the batter’s box or anytime before first pitch to next batter - batter is out and ejected, bat is surrendered, returned postgame, incident report filed

5A3b. Discovered any other time - bat is surrendered, returned postgame, incident report filed

5B. Opportunity to request failure verification through lab testing at requestor’s expense

Three strikes for a model result in the model scratched from the NCAA Softball Bat List

ATTACHMENT B

1.63.2 Illegal Batted Ball

A pitch contacted by the batter:

1.63.1 With an inappropriate bat (altered, illegal or nonapproved) bat.

~~1.63.2 With an illegal or nonapproved bat.~~

1.63.23 When any part of either foot is in contact with the plate at the time of bat-ball contact.

1.63.34 When one or both feet are on the ground and entirely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time of bat-ball contact.

1.79 Nonapproved Bat

An inappropriate bat that does not ~~bear~~meet the ASA 2004 certification seal specifications ~~or is not on the NCAA 2011 Softball Bat List, and has been placed on the current nonapproved bat list.~~

3.3.1.5 Bats

Bats shall bear the permanent ASA 2004 certification seal and ~~not~~ be on the NCAA 2011 Softball Bat List as maintained ~~nonapproved bat list~~ on the NCAA (NCAA.org) or SUIP ArbiterSportsASA (softball.org) web sites indicating ~~non~~compliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.

EFFECT (3.3.1.1 to 3.3.1.8) If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal ~~or nonapproved~~ bat, the bat shall be removed from the game (not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters the batter's box with an altered bat or a nonapproved bat or has completed her turn at bat using a nonapproved bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed in addition to the batter being ejected from the game. If a nonapproved bat is detected at any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire.

Exception: In all both cases, advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

Any bat discovered through NCAA bat compliance testing to exceed the ASA bat performance standard shall be excluded from use, and the player/team may be subject to penalties imposed by the NCAA (not umpire).

In all cases regarding possession or use of an inappropriate bat, the plate umpire shall file an incident report (See Appendix C), with the NCAA softball secretary-rules editor.

3.3.2 Bats

Upon arrival to the field, the host coach or school shall provide a printed copy of the NCAA 2011 Softball nonapproved B ~~at~~ list as made available on the NCAA (NCAA.org) or SUIP ArbiterSports web sites the preceding Monday or as amended through communications by the NCAA relating to bats scratched from competition. ~~ASA Web site the preceding Monday. It is highly recommended that the bat list with color pictures be provided.~~

3.3.3 Bats

The umpires shall inspect all bats for legal specifications and an ASA 2004 certification seal. Bats with the seal are legal if ~~not~~ listed on the NCAA 2011 Softball Bat List ~~or ASA nonapproved bat list~~ provided by the host. Bats without the ASA 2004 seal or not on the approved list shall not be legal for use.

3.3.4 Bats

Bats deemed inappropriate (altered, illegal or nonapproved) (pregame or during play) shall be removed from the team's possession and secured from either team for the duration of the game.

Note-this rule has not changed but the definition of nonapproved bat has...see rule 1.79.

3.4 Bats-Warm-Up EFFECT

The presence of an inappropriate (illegal, nonapproved or altered) bat in the on-deck circle shall result in the equipment's removal from the game (not returned to the dugout), and the player shall be warned. Should the illegal, nonapproved or altered bat reappear in the on-deck circle, the on-deck batter shall be ejected.

Note-this rule has not changed but the definition of nonapproved bat has...see rule 1.79.

5.4.1 EFFECT

See Rule 3.3 for illegal, altered on nonapproved bats.

Note-this rule has not changed but the definition of nonapproved bat has...see rule 1.79.

11.8.3 Illegal Bat.

A batter shall not take an illegal bat into the batter's box. (See Rules 1.79 and 3.3)

EFFECT-The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (not returned to the dugout).

Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

11.8.4 Nonapproved bat.

A batter shall not take a nonapproved bat into the batter's box. (See Rules 1.79 and 3.3.)

EFFECT (~~11.8.3 to 11.8.4~~)—The ball is dead. If the batter is in the batter's box or has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and base runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch. The bat shall be removed from the game (not returned to the dugout). Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four. If the nonapproved bat is discovered at any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire.

11.17.3 Illegally Batted Ball

An altered or nonapproved bat is used.

EFFECT—The batter shall be declared out and ejected from the game for use of an altered bat or if a nonapproved bat is detected in the batter's box or after the batter has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter. Base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game. Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four. If the nonapproved bat is discovered at any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire.

11.17.4 Illegally Batted Ball

An illegal or nonapproved bat is used.

EFFECT—The batter shall be declared out. Base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game. Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

11.24.3 Batter is Out

The batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an illegal bat.

EFFECT--The ball is dead. If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat, the bat shall be removed from the game (not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out, and base runners shall not advance. Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four.

11.24.4 Batter is Out

The batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using a nonapproved bat.

EFFECT (~~11.24.3 to 11.24.4~~)—The ball is dead. If a batter is in enters the batter's box or has completed her turn at bat and before the first pitch to the next batter with an illegal or nonapproved bat, the bat shall be removed from the game (not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out and ejected, and base runners shall not advance. Exception: Advance is legal on a noncontacted pitch or ball four. If the nonapproved bat is discovered at any other time during the contest, the bat shall be surrendered to the plate umpire.

15.6.1 Pregame Responsibilities

Before the start of the game, the umpires shall...Inspect the bats for grip, size, the ASA 2004 certification seal, inclusion on the NCAA 2011 Softball Bat List and any obvious damage. Umpires should make certain that damaged or inappropriate#legal bats are not available for use during the game (that is, not allowed in the dugout).

EFFECT—See Rule 3.3 for illegal, altered and nonapproved bat violations.