



2019 - 2020 Rule Changes
Summary and Interpretive Notes

November 2018

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

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

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

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New Rule / Change #1:

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

Why:

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

What it means:

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

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

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

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

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

Rule References to be amended / added:

1 - 5.c

6 - 4

M6-4

O6-4

8 - 1.c.3

New Rule / Change #2:

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

Why:

Increased safety.

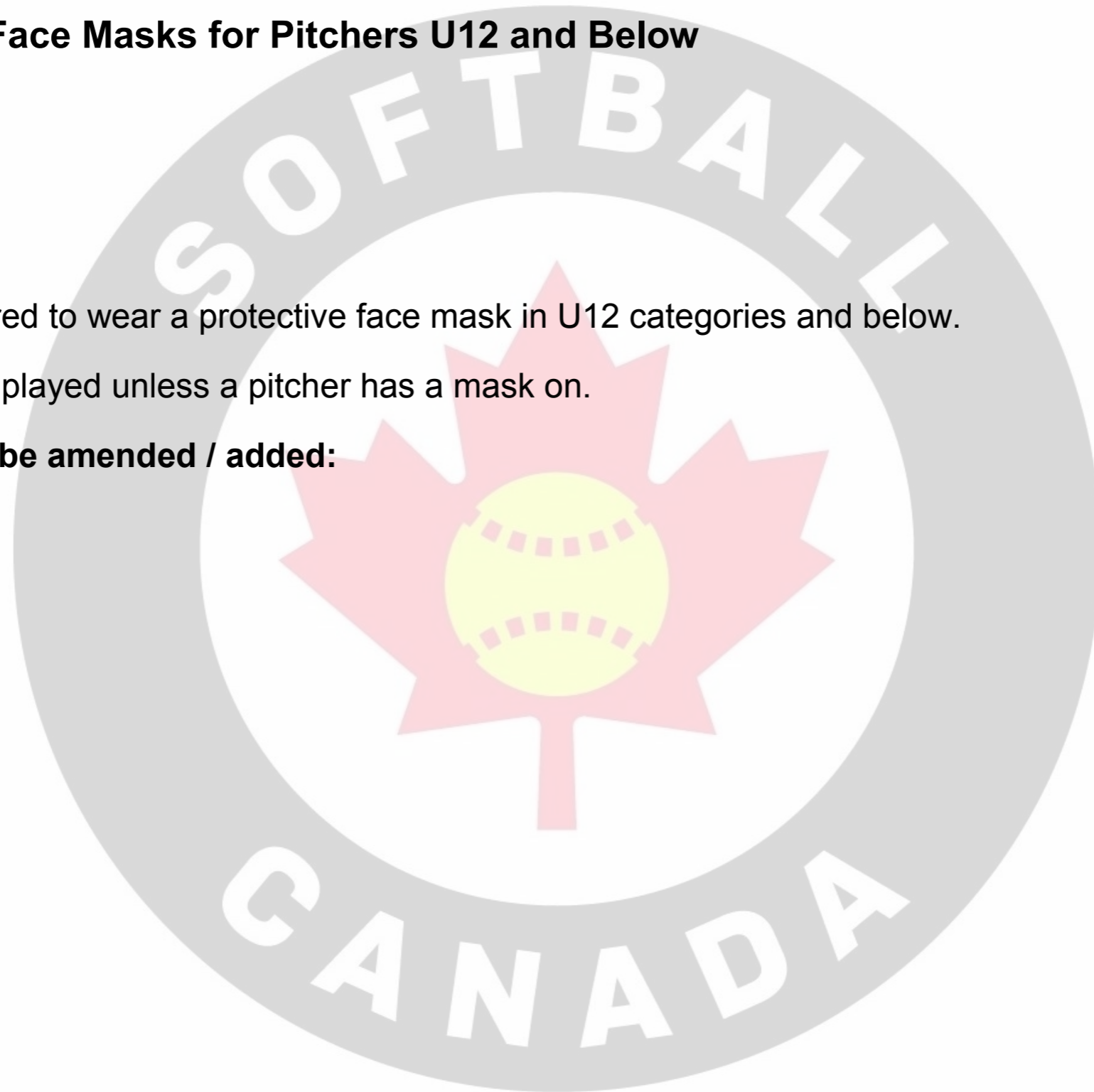
What it means:

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

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

Rule References to be amended / added:

3 - 6 b. 4.



New Rule / Change #3:

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

Why:

Brings us in line with the WBSC.

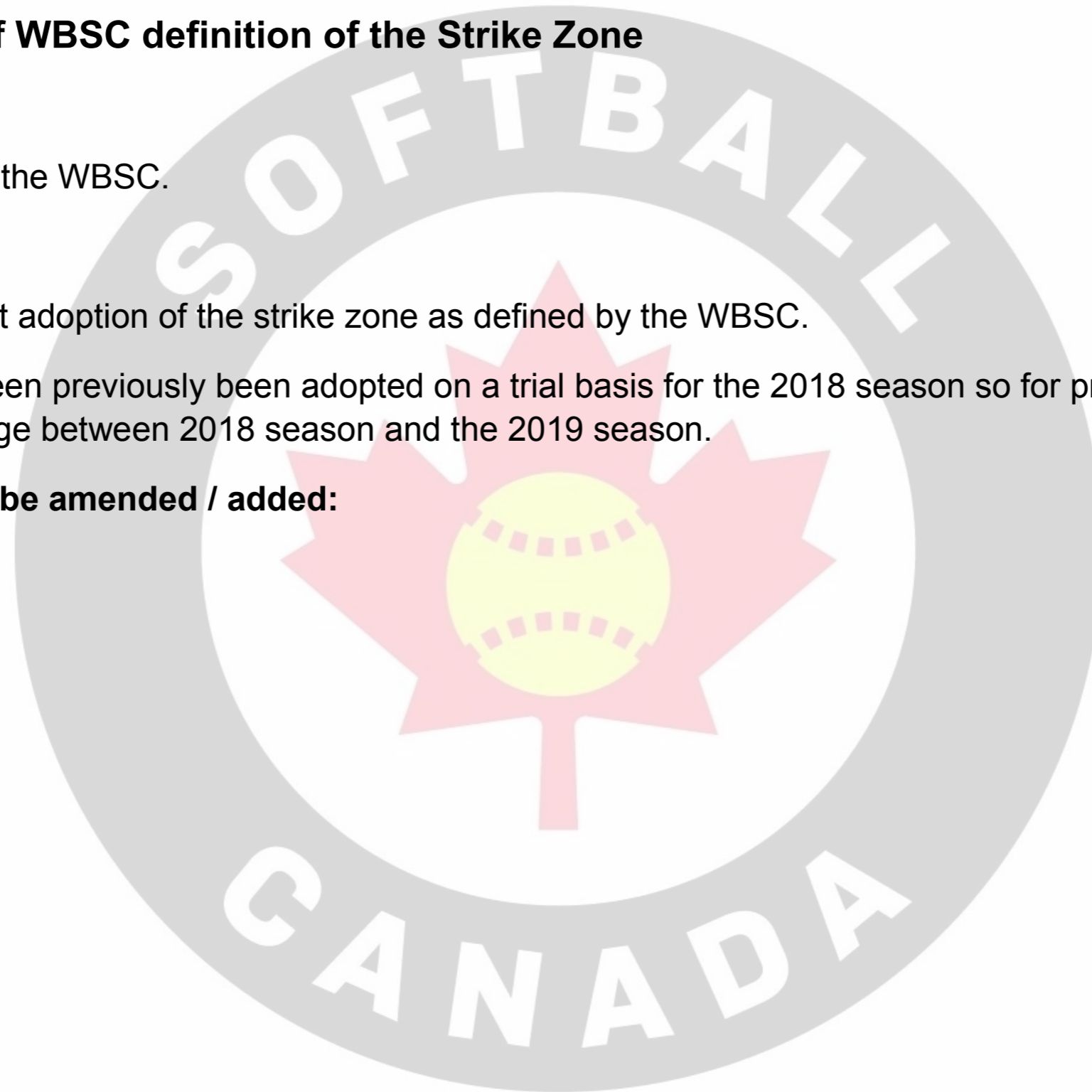
What it means:

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

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

Rule References to be amended / added:

1 - 89



New Rule / Change #4:

SP: USSSA added as an accepted standard for bat certification. USA Softball (ASA) 2013 standard removed. (Slo-Pitch ONLY)

Why:

Adds USSSA as an accepted certification mark, removes USA 2013 as an accepted standard and changes prior references to ISF and ASA certification marks to WBSC and USA Softball marks

What it means:

In order for the a bat to be used in a game, it must meet at least one of the following:

1. Be listed on the USA Softball Approved bat list (2000 or 2004 certification stamps only)* or;
2. Be listed on the WBSC Approved Bat list or;
3. Have a new USSSA certification stamp and not be on the USSSA withdrawn/non compliant list In addition, all bats must meet all standards set out in Rule 3 -1 b-k

In addition to the above, all bats must meet all standards set out in Rule 3 -1 b-k

***The USA Softball (ASA) 2013 Stamp is now NOT PERMITTED - This is for SLO PITCH ONLY**

****Fast Pitch bat standards remain unchanged. USSSA Certification remains NOT PERMITTED in Fast Pitch -Fast Pitch bats must meet the appropriate USA Softball or WBSC certification standards.**

Rule References to be amended / added:

3 -1 a.

New Rule / Change #5:

SP: Helmets strongly recommended for Adults in 2019 and will be required in 2020

Why:

Increased safety for participants as it will help players avoid serious injuries like concussions, broken bones, and - in some cases - possible fatal injuries.

What it means:

Continuing in 2019, all Youth / Minor players must wear an approved batting helmet with two ear flaps while batting, base running and in the on-deck circle.

If the batter, base runner or on deck batter is observed not wearing a helmet, the umpire will request that the player put on a helmet and if they refuse, they will be removed from the game.

Note: It is very strongly recommended that all adult players wear a helmet in the 2019 season while they are batting, base running or in the on-deck circle.

In 2020, all players, whether youth or adult, will be required to wear a helmet.

Rule References to be amended / added:

3 - 6 d.

New Rule / Change #6:

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

Why:

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

What it means:

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

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

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

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

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

A defensive player that places the ball in the pitcher's glove but does not speak with the pitcher will not be considered a defensive delay.

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

Rule References to be amended / added:

- 1 - 17
- 5 - 10
- 7 - 5.f

New Rule / Change #7:

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

Why:

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

What it means:

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

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

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

Rule References to be amended / added:

4 - 10 a & b

New Rule / Change #8:

SP: The Temporary Runner for the Pitcher rule is only applicable in Canadian Championship play.

Why:

This change allows leagues to determine on their own accord whether they wish to use this rule. The rule has also been re-written from its previous version in order to make it clearer and easier to follow.

What it means:

In Canadian Championship play, this rule applies for pitchers who get on base:

- a. it is mandatory regardless of the number of outs.
- b. The temporary runner may be any player in the lineup who is not on base at the time of application (even if they have already been in the game and cannot legally re-enter the game) but cannot be a player who has been ejected or removed from the game for a violation of the rules.
- c. The player who finishes the previous defensive inning in the pitching position (or is listed in the pitching position at the start of the game for the home team's first inning at bat) is the only person eligible to have a temporary runner.
- d. Re-entry and substitution rules are waived for the temporary runner
- e. If the temporary runner is on base and due to bat, they shall be replaced by another eligible player without penalty

Rule References to be amended / added:

New Rule / Change #9:

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

Why:

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

What it means:

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

Rule References to be amended / added:

6-6 c.(FP - pg. 168)

6-6 c.(M - pg. 173)

6-6 c.(O -pg. 178)

6-5 d. & e. (SP - Page 75)



New Rule / Change #10:

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

Why:

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

What it means:

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

No changes will be made to the Orthodox pitching rules.

Rule References to be amended / added:

6

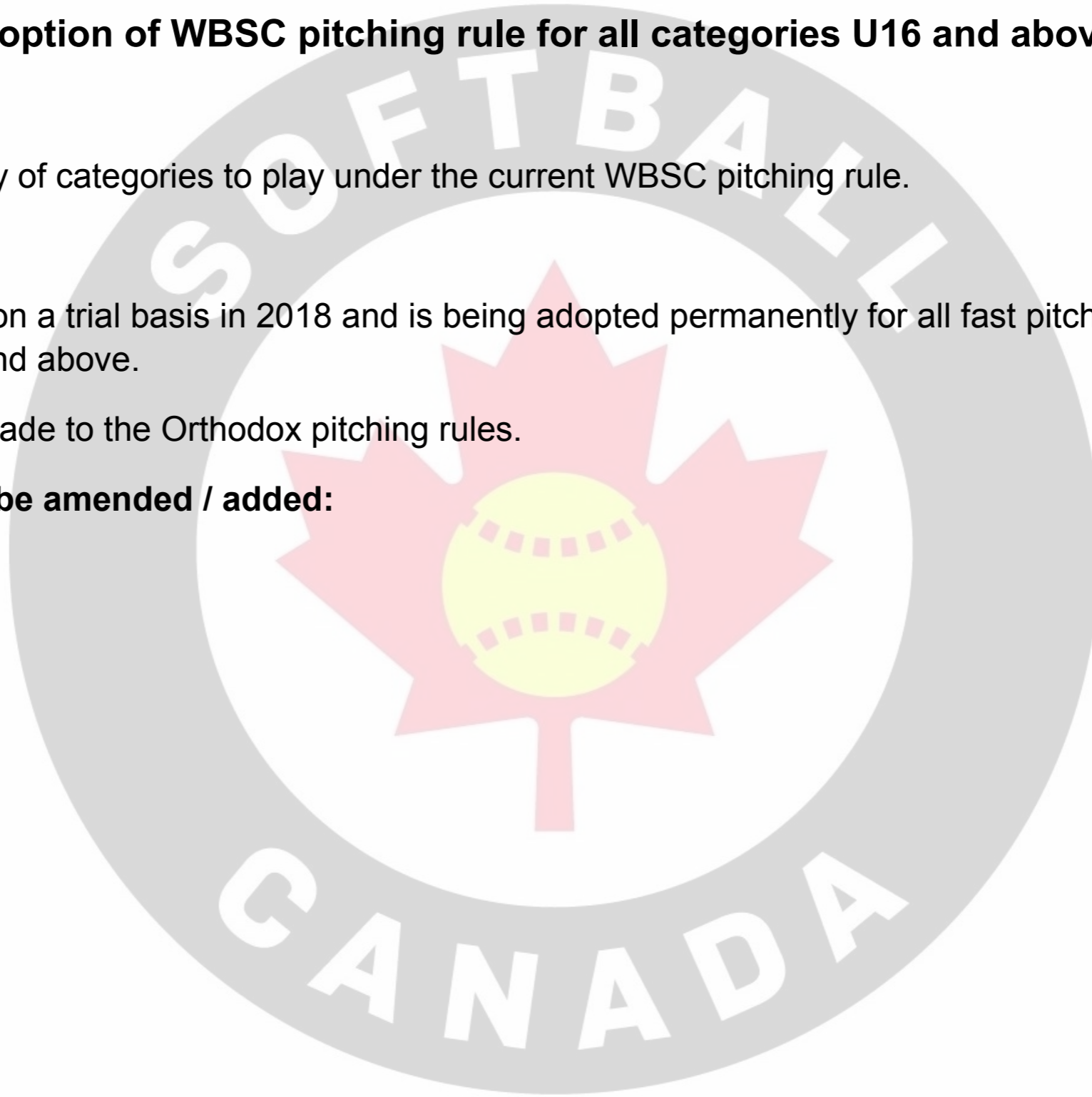
M6

M6 - 1.c

M6 - 1.e

M6 - 3.g

6 - 1.e



New Rule / Change #11:

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

Why:

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

What it means:

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

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

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



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

Rule References to be amended / added:

3 - 6 f. 4.