

EMASS SENIOR SOFTBALL PLAYING RULES
Abbreviated version for USA Softball Umpires
[ADOPTED BY EMASS BOARD, FEBRUARY 22, 2021 – Revised August 11, 2021]

[NOTE: Unless a Rule is specifically identified as only pertaining to the American or National Division, the 2020 EMASS Rules shall apply to both divisions.]

[Numbering is based on the complete version of EMass Softball rules. Therefore, some rules are omitted from this version since some of the EMASS rules do not differ from USA Slow Pitch Softball Rules and, if appearing here, would be redundant.]

RULE 1: GENERAL

1-1 Wherever USA Softball and EMass rules differ, the EMass rules shall govern.

RULE 2: THE PLAYING FIELD

2-1 An alternate first base ("ALTERNATE FIRST BASE") shall be placed 34" (1 bat length) from first base in foul territory at the same distance as the regular first base ("REGULAR FIRST BASE") from home plate.

RULE 3: EQUIPMENT

3-1 Bats used in EMASS must be in compliance with USA Softball (formerly ASA) rules pertaining to official certified/approved bats, and bear ASA or USA Softball certification marks or hologram.

3-1.A No bats used in EMASS can exceed BPF 1.20. Therefore, Senior Bats are not allowed.

Exception: In National Division games only, players 75 or older are allowed to use "Senior Bats." These bats must read "Senior Bats" and 1.21 BPF. The bats will have a marker (red duct tape) to easily identify bats authorized for players who have reached the age criterion. National Division managers are expected to police the authorized use of Senior Bats, not the umpire.)

3-2 If an umpire discovers a player using an Unauthorized Bat, even in batting practice, the owner of the bat (if identifiable) and the player using the bat shall be ejected and unable to play for the entire day. **Exception:** In the National Division, the owner of a Senior bat is not penalized / ejected if an unauthorized player used his/her bat.

3-2.A If a non-eligible player is discovered using a Senior bat in batting practice and bats a ball with that bat, it is expected that the manager witnessing this infraction shall notify both the player and his/her manager (if necessary) that such player is disqualified for the day's scheduled games. A player disqualified before the game does not have a spot in the batting order, so no out shall be declared for that player's spot in the batting order.

3-2.B. If an Unauthorized Bat is discovered to have been used during an at-bat and PRIOR to the 1st pitch to the next batter, the following shall apply (stepping into the batter's box with an unauthorized bat is deemed use of the unauthorized bat):

- a. The bat shall be removed from the game;
- b. The player using the bat shall be declared "out" and all runners shall return to their bases prior to the at-bat;
- d. The player using the bat shall be ejected from the game.

3-2.C. In the event an Unauthorized Bat was used but not discovered until after a pitch has been made to the next batter, the bat is removed from the game and the player who used the bat shall be ejected, and if the batter reached base safely, the player stands and a courtesy runner replaces the ejected player.

3-2.D. All violations of USA Softball Bat Regulations must be documented by the umpire by completing an USA Incident Report Form, reporting the nature of the incident as an "Illegal Equipment Issue."

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3-3 Balls used in EMASS softball activities must have the Certified ASA (or USA) Softball stamp and not appear on the list of ASA Non-Approved Ball List with Certification Mark. The official EMASS ball is a 12-inch composite cover poly -core ball with a maximum compression of 300 lbs. and the ball COR is .520.

RULE 4: PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES

4-1 Any time a team has fewer than 11 players able to play, the team at bat IS PERMITTED to provide a non-defensive catcher to the short-handed team, provided both managers are in agreement.

- A non-defensive catcher receives pitches and returns the ball to the pitcher
- A non-defensive catcher is prohibited from making any defensive play, so if he/she inadvertently catches a foul tip (for example), the batter is not out unless it occurred with 2 strikes already on the batter.
- A non-defensive catcher must get out of the way and avoid interfering with any players in the field making a play on any ball or throw.

RULE 5: THE GAME

5-1 In the event that the Division Coordinator has not elected to cancel games due to weather, upon arriving at the field, fitness of the grounds is decided solely by the assigned plate umpire throughout the course of the game(s).

5-1.A. Even if the umpire judged the grounds fit to play, if both Managers disagree and believe it would be unsafe to play the scheduled game(s), they shall inform the umpire that they are declaring the game(s) for the day at that field cancelled. However, if only one Manager, in good faith, believes that it would be unsafe to play, the Manager may elect to not play. The other Manager, in this example, may file a written Protest with the Rules Coordinator for a final determination.

5-2 If, at the scheduled starting time of a game, a team has fewer than 9 players available, the 1st game shall be declared a forfeit in favor of the team that is not shorthanded. If neither team has 9 players available, the game shall be declared a double forfeit.

5-2.A. If a team has forfeited the 1st game due to insufficient players, the 2nd game shall begin 10 minutes after the original starting time for the 1st game (i.e. the shorthanded team will have 10 minutes to reach the required number of players to avoid a forfeit of the 2nd game).

5-3 Every player who is available to play shall be in the batting order for the entire game(s).

5-4 If a player arrives after the start of game, they shall be placed at the end of the batting order as soon as he/she confirms to their manager or the umpire that they are ready to play. In addition, at their Manager's discretion, the player may be inserted immediately on defense.

5-5 Any player or manager using language at a level which might be heard beyond the boundaries of the playing field and judged by the umpire as foul or obscene will be warned by the umpire upon a first offense. If it occurs a second time, the umpire shall eject the player. There is no requirement that the obscenity be heard by anyone other than the umpire.

5-6 Unsportsmanlike conduct of any type could mean ejection from the game. Infractions such as threats or physical force directed towards any game official, other player(s), or spectators shall result in ejection.

5-7 If a player is forced to leave a game as a result of an acute injury, illness, or emergency, "NO OUT" shall be declared for the vacated spot in the batting order.

5-7.A. If a player leaves a game for any other reason (e.g. work, appointments, etc.) an "OUT" will be recorded each time the vacated position in the batting order comes up UNLESS (x) the Manager has disclosed this fact to the Umpire and the opposing Manager PRIOR TO THE START OF THE GAME IN QUESTION, or (y) the game has continued beyond noon,

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in which case “NO OUT” shall be declared for the vacated spot in the batting order. Such player shall not be permitted to return to play in any game that day. IT IS INCUMBENT UPON THE MANAGERS TO DISCLOSE THIS INFORMATION TO THE UMPIRE AND THE OPPOSING MANAGERS.

5-8 An “OUT” is recorded for any unexcused vacated position in the batting order. Rule 5-7 and 5-7.A explain situations in which a vacated position would be excused. An ejection is not excused and every time an unexcused vacated position in the batting order comes up during a particular game, an “OUT” will be recorded. The game may end on an automatic out. EXCEPTION: No automatic out shall be declared on the missing batter if the batter immediately prior in the batting order is walked, whether intentional or not. No out will be declared and the batting position will be skipped and the following batter shall take his/her turn at bat.

5-9 A defensive player may not record an out by touching the “ALTERNATE FIRST BASE.”

5-10 There are no tag plays at home plate. In order to record an “OUT” at home plate, a defensive player must touch the Strike Mat with the ball in his/her possession before the base runner touches the Alternate Home Plate. No defensive player (including the catcher) may tag the base runner once the base runner has crossed the Commitment Line (20 feet up the third base line from home plate). If the runner is tagged after crossing the Commitment Line, the base runner shall be declared “SAFE.”

5-11 During innings 1 - 6, the batting team may score a maximum of 5 runs. In the 7th inning and any subsequent extra innings, there is no limitation. The 7th inning and extra innings are considered “Open Innings.”

5-12 If either team is trailing by 12 runs or more at any time after the 5th inning is complete and/or the 6th inning is complete (4.5 or 5.5 innings if the home team is ahead), the umpire shall declare the game over (Mercy Rule). The score at the time stands as the final score of the game.

5-13 Mandatory Flip-Flop Rule - If the HOME team is trailing by 10 or more runs after the bottom of the 6th inning, the HOME team will stay at bat for its 7th inning. If the HOME team ties the game or goes ahead, the VISITING team will come up for their open inning. That is, the teams flip-flop positions.

5-13.A. If, after the teams flipped the order in which they batted in the 7th inning, the game is tied at the end of that inning, the teams will once again flip the order in which they bat in the 8th inning. That is, the team that started the game as the home team and batting last in innings 1-6 will again bat last for the remainder of the game.

5-14 In any game tied after the 7th inning of play, the USA tie-breaker shall be used and a Courtesy Runner can immediately replace the base runner starting the inning placed on second base.

5-15.A. Courtesy fouls are never awarded when a batter has 2 strikes on them and hits a foul ball. The first foul after the batter has 2 strikes is always considered a 3rd strike and the batter is “OUT,” even in the unlikely event managers mutually agree to start the count on each batter at 1 + 1.

RULE 6: PITCHING REGULATIONS

6-1 The strike mat is 19 inches wide and 34 1/2 inches long. Any pitch that is not a batted ball shall be called a strike by the umpire if, in the umpire’s judgment, the pitch reached a height of between 6 and 12 feet off the ground and made first contact on any portion of the mat. A ball that strikes the ground just outside the mat but in which the ball is over the edge of the mat shall be called a ball if the batter did not strike the ball or swing and miss.

6-2 Every player in EMASS is required to always wear a protective mask while pitching.

6-3 In EMASS divisions in which use of the Pitching Screen is allowed, the personal safety of the pitcher is the

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responsibility of the player assuming the position of pitcher.

6-3.A. There is no Pitching Screen in American Division games. In the pre-game conference, the umpire must verify in which EMASS division the teams play.

6-3.C. In the National Division, if one or both starting pitchers decide they want the Pitching Screen to be on the field for their protection, both teams must use the screen for the entire game. In the pre-game conference, upon being informed the teams are National Division teams, the umpire shall first ask first visiting team manager and then, only if the visiting pitcher does not require the Pitching Screen, ask the home team manager whether their pitcher requests the Pitching Screen. Only after being told neither starting pitcher requires the Pitching Screen, the umpire shall instruct the home team manager to have members of their team remove the Pitching Screen from the field.

6-3.D. In the National Division, if neither starting pitcher requires the Pitching Screen to be on the field but a relief pitcher enters the game and requests the Pitching Screen, the Pitching Screen is to be set up without delay by the team at bat, and the screen shall be used by both teams for the remainder of the game.

6-3.E. If the Pitching Screen is in use, there is no penalty for a pitcher intentionally or inadvertently contacting a batted ball without being fully behind the screen at the point the pitch is batted.

6-3.F. If the Pitching Screen is in use during the game, its location and position shall be as follows:

- The Pitching Screen may be placed on either side of the pitcher's plate (rubber). However, once the pitcher establishes his/her preference, the Pitching Screen must remain on that side of the rubber for the remainder of the game.
- The Pitching Screen will be no less than three (3') nor more than five (5') feet forward of the front edge of the pitching rubber.
- While the Pitching Screen can be placed to whichever side is most consistent with the pitcher's individual style, it must be placed in front of the pitching rubber or in line with either of its edges. In addition, the pitching screen should be positioned so the ball is in full view of the batter at the beginning of the pitching motion through the release of the ball. Therefore, the ball cannot be pitched over the top of the pitching screen. Once the pitcher positions the Pitching Screen at the beginning of an inning, it may not be moved on a batter by batter basis unless a batter informs the umpire that the ball is blocked from his/her view and requests the umpire instruct the pitcher to move the Pitching Screen by as much as two feet.

6-3.G. Any batted ball hit into the Pitching Screen netting or striking any part of the Pitching Screen structure is a DEAD BALL (NO PITCH).

6-3.H. Any ball thrown by a defensive player which strikes the Pitching Screen or any part thereof will be a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.

RULE 7: BATTING

7-1 WALKS -- WITHOUT A STRIKE BEING THROWN OR INTENTIONAL: When a batter is walked without a swinging or called strike, a foul ball, or a batted ball hitting the pitching screen, the batter's Manager may choose a) to have the batter proceed to first base as a batter would after any base on balls or b) remain at bat with a new ball and strike count. If the Manager elects to have the batter continue at bat, a Courtesy Runner (see Rule 8-1) will be inserted at first base in the batter's place and be governed by all aspects of the Courtesy Runner Rule. If the batter is walked a second or subsequent time without a swinging or called strike, foul ball, or batted ball hitting the pitching screen, the same process will apply. This rule also applies in games played with a 1-1 count. A batter whose manager elects to insert a Courtesy Runner for him/her remains eligible to be used as a Courtesy Runner later in the inning.

7-2 Any player who intentionally, in the judgment of the umpire, throws his/her bat in anger or frustration shall be ejected

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from the game, not be permitted to play the remainder of that day, and must leave the premises.

7-3 Any player who inadvertently throws his/her bat in a manner which could result in the catcher, umpire or any other player being struck shall be declared out, the ball shall be declared a “dead ball” and all runners shall return to the base previously occupied, and be given a warning. Any player who inadvertently throws his/her bat as above a second time shall be ejected from the game and shall not be permitted to play the remainder of that day.

7-5 When an entire foot is touching the ground completely **behind or in front** of the batter’s box (batter’s mat) at the time the ball makes contact with the bat, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. There is no penalty for a foot being fully outside **the sides** of the batter’s box at the time the ball contacts the bat unless some portion of the foot is in contact with the strike mat.

RULE 8: BATTER-RUNNER & RUNNER

8-1 Both the American and National Divisions allow the use of Courtesy Runners. Any player in the batting order may serve as a Courtesy Runner.

8-1.A. A courtesy runner is in the game when announced by the Manager or Designated Team Representative (DTR), not if and when another player has touched the base. Provided the umpire realizes that the announced runner is ineligible prior to the first pitch to the next batter, the umpire can instruct the Manager or DTR to select a different runner without penalty.

8-1.B. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be called out. The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat. A second courtesy runner is not permitted at this time.

8-1.C. A player may not serve as a courtesy runner more than once per inning. A violation results in an illegal courtesy runner, is an out, and the runner is removed from the base.

8-1.D A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury. A violation results in an illegal courtesy runner, is an out, and the runner is removed from the base.

8-1.E. A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner cannot be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning. A player violating this provision is an illegal courtesy runner, and results in an out, and the runner is removed from the base.

8-1.F. An illegal courtesy runner is committing a continuing violation. Therefore, if the umpire failed to realize an illegal Courtesy Runner has entered the game and called him/her out, this may be appealed to the umpire by the Manager of the defensive team at any time while the illegal runner is on base or, if the illegal runner scores, PRIOR to the first pitch to the next batter.

8-2 **SAFETY FIRST BASE:** Since the play is in front of the batter-runner after they have hit the ball, safety at first base is primarily controlled by them. **IF NO THROW IS MADE TO FIRST BASE, THE BATTER-RUNNER MAY TOUCH EITHER BASE.**

8-2.A. Balls hit to any infielder including the middle fielder, even if the infielder is positioned on the outfield grass: If the infielder throws to first base, the batter-runner **MUST** run to the alternate first base. In the event the batter-runner, instead, touches the regular first base, he/she interfered with the first baseman (contact is not necessary), the batter-runner is out, and any base runner(s) are returned to the base(s) they occupied prior to the interference.

8-2.A.1. If a ball hit to an infielder is not fielded cleanly and the ball is **CLEARLY BEHIND** the fielder and in the outfield and no other fielder has a remote chance of throwing the runner out at first base, the batter-runner may run to either the regular or alternate first base.

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8-2.A.2 Balls hit to an outfielder, particularly ones hit to the right fielder, can result in a throw to first base that has a reasonable chance of throwing out the batter-runner at first base. The batter-runner must remain alert to this possibility. If a throw to first base from an outfielder, in the judgment of the umpire, has a reasonable chance of resulting in an out, the batter-runner shall be called out for interference if he/she continued to run to the regular first base.

8-2.A.3 Exception to Rule 8-3.A.2: A base runner must make every reasonable effort to avoid colliding or making contact with defensive players while running the bases and this is true even at first base where an overthrow could pull the first baseman into foul ground and into the potential path of the batter-runner. In the event of such an overthrow and in this instance only, in an attempt to avoid a collision, the batter-runner is allowed to touch the regular first base if that is the best route to avoid a collision. Provided the first baseman has not touched the regular first base with the ball in time to record an out and the risk of collision causes the batter-runner to miss both the alternate or regular first base, the umpire should use his/her discretion and rule the batter-runner safe, no appeal allowed.

8-3. If a fielder not in possession of the ball impedes the runner and blocks access to a base, that is illegal (obstruction). Provided the fielder has not obstructed the base runner, the base runner is in the best position to avoid collisions with defensive players while running the bases. When running to second or third base or returning to any base, if the umpire judged the runner failed to veer off or slide to avoid a collision with a defensive player involved in the play, the runner is guilty of interference.

8-3.A. Contact is not necessary to impede the progress of a runner. If the umpire calls "obstruction," the ball remains live until all action has ceased. Therefore, the runner can be put out if he/she attempts going past the base that the runner would have reached had there been no obstruction. Provided the runner was out due to the obstruction and/or did not attempt to advance beyond the base where he/she was obstructed, once the ball is dead the umpire shall award the base which would have been reached had there been no obstruction.

8-3.B. If the umpire rules "interference" on the runner for failing to veer off or slide to avoid colliding with the fielder, the umpire will immediately call "dead ball," the runner will be called out, and all base runners except the batter will be returned to their previous base unless forced to advance. Take out slides or sliding through a base and making contact with a fielder also constitutes interference. If, in the umpire's judgement, the runner's contact with the defensive player involved in the play possibly negated a double play, the umpire may award a second out at the appropriate base.

8-3.C. A runner who has veered off but, in the opinion of the umpire, would have been safe had he/she continued to run directly to the base shall be ruled safe.

8-4 SAFETY AT HOME PLATE: A runner attempting to score from third base must, by the time they have reached the 20 foot commitment line, have veered directly toward the alternate home plate. If the runner, instead, continues to run toward the strike mat once they have crossed the commitment line or mistakenly touches the strike mat, the runner is declared "OUT" and play continues. This is an automatic out, not an appeal play.

8-4.A. Once the base runner crosses the Commitment Line, the base runner may not return to third base and must proceed directly to the Alternate Home Plate. If the base runner attempts to return to third base, the base runner shall be declared "OUT."

8-4.B. The offense will not be credited with scoring a run unless base runner(s) and/or the batter-runner step on the Alternate Home Plate which shall be placed eight feet (8') from the back tip of home plate (in foul territory) on an extended line from first base. **EXCEPTION:** Any time a batter is credited with a 4 base award, the batter-runner and all runners are credited with run(s) and are not required to run the bases and touch the Alternate Home Plate.

8-5 Sliding is only prohibited while running into first base. A batter-runner sliding into first base shall be declared "OUT." Sliding while returning to first base IS allowed.

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APPENDIX: GROUND RULES

WAYLAND CORNER FIELD:

A-1 Any fair ball leaving the grassy area in left field and reaching asphalt (touched or untouched by a defensive player), whether on the fly or otherwise, shall be declared a 4 base award (home run).

A-1.A. Any fair ball to right field reaching the asphalt sidewalk (touched or untouched by a defensive player), whether on the fly or otherwise or passes over the sidewalk on the fly, shall be declared a 4 base award (home run). Please note: The foul pole is approximately 30 feet beyond the edge of the sidewalk so a fair ball that reaches the sidewalk in fair territory but passes to the right of the foul pole is a home run.

A-2 The "Dead Ball Area" on the first base side shall be a straight line drawn from the end of the protective fence directly to the far end of the cement pad upon which the bleachers are located; and from that point on, the sidewalk.

A-3 The "Dead Ball Area" on the third base side shall be a straight line drawn from the end of the protective fence directly to the far end of the cement pad upon which the bleachers are located; and from that point on, the sidewalk.

A-4 Any batted ball that strikes a tree or tree branch (in foul territory) without first having been touched by a defensive player or without first having touched the ground, shall be a "Dead Ball" Strike. If, in the judgement of the umpire, a batted ball struck a tree branch that is over fair territory, the umpire shall declare it a "Dead Ball"(No Pitch) and the count on the batter remains the same.

A-4.A. A batted ball passing on the fair side of the left field foul pole shall be ruled a home run if, in the judgement of the umpire, the ball has passed an imaginary line from the parking lot extended towards the foul pole. A batted ball hitting any part of the tree in that area shall be declared a 4-base award (home run) provided the ball was judged to be a fair ball when it passed the foul pole.

A-5 A batted ball passing on the fair side of the left field foul pole shall be ruled a home run if, in the judgement of the umpire, the ball has passed an imaginary line from the edge of the asphalt extended towards the foul pole. A batted ball hitting any part of the tree in that area shall be declared a 4-base award (home run) provided the ball was judged to be a fair ball when it passed the foul pole.

WAYLAND BASKETBALL COURT FIELD:

A-6 Any fair ball reaching the sidewalk or street (touched or untouched by a defensive player), whether on the fly or otherwise, shall be declared a 4 base award (home run). The foul pole in left field is on the far side of the sidewalk so, if in the judgment of the umpire, the ball left the playing field in fair territory but passes to the left of the left field foul pole, it shall be ruled a home run.

A-6.A. A batted ball to the right of the left field foul pole that strikes a leaf or branch of a tree shall be declared a 4-base award (home run).

A-7 The "Dead Ball Area" on the first base side shall be a straight line at roughly a 45 degree angle drawn from the end of the protective fence to the end of the tall portion of the basketball court fence; and from that point on, the sidewalk.

A-8 The "Dead Ball Area" on the third base side shall be a straight line drawn from the end of the protective fence directly to the far end of the bleachers. From the cement at the far end of the bleachers, the dead ball area is a straight line directly to the corner of the parking lot closest to home plate; and from that point on, the parking lot.

A-9 Any batted ball that strikes a tree or tree branch (in fair or foul territory) without first having been touched by a

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defensive player or without first having touched the ground, shall be a "Dead Ball" Strike. Exception: The trees in left field along the sidewalk. If a batted ball hits those trees in fair territory on the fly, on the bounce, or rolls against the tree, the hit shall be declared a 4 base award (home run).

GALVANI 1:

A-10 Any batted ball judged by the umpire to have hit any part of the tree in left field shall be ruled a dead ball. If the ball carries over the fence on the fly, it is a 4 base award (home run). Otherwise, it is a ground rule double.

MEDFIELD Polumbo Field #1 at McCarthy Park:

A-11 Home Runs over the fence shall be limited to 4 per team per game. After the fourth over the fence home run, any subsequent batted balls over the fence on the fly shall be deemed "dead ball" outs with no advancement of base runners. Any batted ball touched by a defensive player on either side of the fence that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, shall be declared a four-base award and shall not be included in either team's total of over-the fence home runs.

A-12 The "Dead Ball Area" on the first base side shall be a straight line extending from the backstop to the dugout fence and from the end of the dugout fence to the large tree approximately 25 feet to the right of the end of the fence in right field.

A-13 The "Dead Ball Area" on the third base side shall be a straight line from the backstop to the dugout fence and from the end of the dugout fence to the tree nearest to the back of the infield, and then extending all the way down the tree line.

MEDFIELD Polumbo Field #2 at McCarthy Park:

A-14 Home Runs over the fence shall be limited to 4 per team per game. After the fourth over the fence home run, any subsequent batted balls over the fence on the fly shall be deemed "dead ball" outs with no advancement of base runners. Any batted ball touched by a defensive player on either side of the fence that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, shall be declared a four-base award and shall not be included in either team's total of over-the fence home runs.

A-15 The "Dead Ball Area" on the first base side shall be a straight line extending from the backstop to the dugout fence and from the end of the dugout fence on a straight line. This straight line from the end of the fence lines up with a very tall tree to the right of the foul line. This tree is slightly bent towards the foul pole.

A-16 The "Dead Ball Area" on the third base side shall be a straight line from the backstop to the dugout fence and from the end of the dugout fence to the outside pole in left field (not the foul pole).