



# USA SOFTBALL UMPIRE EXAM

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The examination consists of a series of questions covering rules and mechanics of the 2025 USA Softball Official Rule Book. Questions are true or false and multiple choice. Answers should be put on the answer sheet and returned to the grader or test committee. THE ANSWER SHEET SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED TO THE USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL OFFICE.

The abbreviations used in the questions follow the following: B (N) = Batter; R1 = runner closest to home; R2 is the succeeding runner; R3 is the runner on first base when the bases are full; S (N) = substitutes; CR (N) = courtesy runner(s); PC (N) = physically challenged player; and F (N) = fielder by number. F1 is pitcher; F2 is catcher; F3 is first baseman; F4 is second baseman; F5 is third baseman; F6 is shortstop; F7 is left fielder; F8 is center fielder; and F9 is right fielder. If F10 is used it would be the extra fielder in the slow pitch game.

This examination may be given to all USA Softball registered umpires under one of the following methods to be determined by your local state/metro USA Softball commissioner, local umpires association, local parks and recreation department, or military sports officer:

- 1) Under supervision without the use of the USA Softball Official Rule Book.
- 2) Under supervision using the USA Softball Official Rule Book.
- 3) With no supervision and using the USA Softball Official Rule Book.

Retain the question portion of this examination for further study. Use care in marking your answer sheet. PLEASE COMPLETE THE EXAM BEFORE \_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

After completing, mail or return the ANSWER SHEET ONLY to:

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS

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- 1) B1 comes to bat to start the game and lines out to F6. B2 comes up and singles to centerfield. B4 bats next and hits a home run. B3 now comes to bat and takes the first pitch for a strike. The defensive coach appeals that B4 and B3 both batted out of order and should be called out. The correct ruling is:
  - a. Rule B4 out for batting out of order. Both runs should be nullified. B5 should take B3's spot in the batter's box with a 0-1 count, and two outs.
  - b. Rule B5 the legal batter because a pitch has been thrown to B3, which legalizes B4's at bat. B5 will take the batter's position and assume the 0-1 count with one out. All action prior to the appeal is legal.
  - c. Rule B4 out for batting out of order and put B2 back on 1B. Leave B3 up to bat with a 0-1 count, and because B4 batted out of order, B5 will be the next batter.
  - d. Rule B3 out for batting out of order. Both runs count, and there are now two outs. B4 would be the next legal batter, with a 0-1 count.
  
- 2) In the 3rd inning #31 is batting with a 1-1 count and no outs. After #31 singles to right field, the defensive coach protests to the PU that #31 has already batted in the second inning. The offensive coach admits there are two #31s in their line-up, but they are two different players. The umpire should:
  - a. Rule #31 out and remove them from 1B for batting out of order. Ensure their uniform number is changed to remove the duplication.
  - b. Rule #31 out and disqualify them from the game for wearing a duplicate number.
  - c. Rule that #31 must change or alter their uniform number and make corrections on the line-up card, allowing them to remain on 1B.
  - d. Eject the offensive coach and disqualify the player for the remainder of the game. Remove #31 from 1B and record an out.
  
- 3) A runner is obstructed as they round 3B (between 3B and home) and falls to the ground. The third base coach physically assists the runner back to their feet. Which of the following is true?
  - a. The runner is called out for being physically assisted and the ball remains live.
  - b. A dead ball is called as the obstructed runner has been put out between the two bases where they were obstructed. The obstructed runner and all other runners are awarded the base they would have reached had there been no obstruction.
  - c. A dead ball is called and the runner is called out for being physically assisted.
  - d. None of the above.
  
- 4) When can a runner advance on an infield fly that is not caught?
  - a. As soon as the ball reaches home plate or is batted in Slow Pitch, or as soon as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand in Fast Pitch.
  - b. When the umpire declares an infield fly.
  - c. When a defensive player first touches the batted ball.
  - d. Since the ball is not caught, they can leave the base after the ball hits the ground.
  
- 5) Which of the following is true when a batted ball hits a runner while in contact with the base?
  - a. The runner is always ruled out.
  - b. The ball is dead if the closest fielder is behind the base. The runner is not out, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and other runners advanced if forced.
  - c. The ball remains live if the closest fielder is in front of the base.
  - d. Both b. and c. are true.
  - e. None of the above.
  
- 6) Which of the following is true when a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from live ball territory, or a fielder carries a live ball into the team area to tag a player:
  - a. The ball is dead.
  - b. Runners are advanced two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder left live ball territory.
  - c. Runners are advanced one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder left live ball territory.
  - d. Both a. and b.
  - e. Both a. and c.
  
- 7) Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.
  - a. True.
  - b. False.
  
- 8) When a batted ball hits a runner off the base, it is always a Dead Ball.
  - a. True.
  - b. False.

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- 9) With no runners on base and no outs, B1 hits the ball down the 1B line. The ball comes to rest in fair territory. B1 and F3 reach the location of the ball at the same time and contact is made between the two of them as F3 is fielding the batted ball. The correct ruling is:
- Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball". B1 is guilty of interference and is ruled out.
  - Signal (delayed dead ball) and verbalize "Obstruction". Let play continue, if B1 is put out prior to reaching 1B award them 1B due to the obstruction.
  - Make no call. This is an "incidental collision" or a "train wreck" and neither side should be penalized.
  - None of the above.
- 10) With R1 at 3B, R2 at 1B and no outs. B3 hits a ground ball to F6 who tags 2B for a force out. Before R1 touches home plate, R2 (who is now out) unintentionally runs into F6 and impedes their ability to make a play on B3 at 1B. The correct ruling is:
- Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball". R2 is out for interference, B3 is awarded 1B and R1 is returned to 3B. B4 comes to bat with one out and runners on 1B and 3B.
  - Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball". R2 was out on the force play, B3 is ruled out due to R2 impeding F6's ability to make the play at 1B and R1 is returned to 3B. B4 comes to bat with a runner on 3B and two outs.
  - Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball". R2 was out on the force play, R1, as the runner closest to home, is ruled out due to R2's interference after being declared out, B3 is awarded 1B. B4 comes to bat with a runner on 1B and two outs.
  - Make no call. This is unintentional, incidental contact and neither side should be penalized.
- 11) With R1 on 2B and no outs, B2 hits a ground ball that goes through F6's legs and hits R1 behind F6 as they are running to 3B. In the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out. The correct ruling is:
- The ball remains live there is no penalty.
  - Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball". R1 is ruled out, B2 is awarded 1B.
  - Signal delayed dead ball and verbalize "Obstruction".
  - Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball". B2 is ruled out and R1 is returned to 2B.
- 12) Which of the following results in a delayed dead ball?
- Running outside the three-foot running lane.
  - A batter swings at a pitch and contacts the catcher's glove
  - A runner leaves the base early on the pitch.
  - Interference by a retired runner.
- 13) Which of the following results in a dead ball?
- A runner avoids a tag by running out of the base path.
  - A coach physically assists a runner while the ball is live.
  - Running outside the three-foot running lane and interfering with the fielder taking the throw at 1B.
  - All of the above.
- 14) How many defensive conferences are allowed prior to having to make a pitching change?
- 1 per inning in all innings played.
  - 2 per inning in all innings played.
  - 2 in the first 7 innings, 1 in each extra inning.
  - 3 in the first 7 innings, 1 in each extra inning.
- 15) F1 is wearing a defensive face mask. In order for it to fit properly F1 has their cap on backwards. The umpire does not allow this and makes F1 take the cap off.
- Correct ruling.
  - Incorrect ruling.
- 16) R1 on 1B with 1 out. B3 hits a shot to right field that lands in front of F9, the ball deflects off of F9's glove and enters dead ball territory. R1 has rounded 3B prior to the ball entering dead ball territory and B2 is between 2B and 3B. The correct ruling is:
- Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball".
  - Both runners are awarded two bases from the time the ball enters dead ball territory. R1 and B3 are both awarded home plate.
  - Both runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch. R1 is placed on 3B and B3 is placed on 2B.
  - Both a. and b. are correct.
  - Both a. and c. are correct.

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- 17) Which of the following are examples of a fair ball? A batted ball that:
- Bounds or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory then next touches in fair territory.
  - First hits the ground over foul territory beyond first or third base but rolls fair prior to being touched.
  - Hits the pitcher's plate and rolls untouched to foul territory before reaching first or third base.
  - Touches first or third base and lands foul beyond the base.
- 18) Which of the following is NOT true about the pitcher's plate?
- Shall be made of rubber or wood.
  - Shall be 24 inches long and 6 inches wide.
  - The back of the pitcher's plate shall be the prescribed pitching distance from the back point of home plate.
  - The top shall be level with the ground.
  - It shall be permanently attached to the ground.
- 19) To start a game under the SHORTHANDED RULE which of the following apply?
- A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start.
  - The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order.
  - An out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.
  - All of the above.
- 20) With R1 on 3B, R2 on 2B and 1 out, B4 hits a fly ball that is caught by F7. Both R1 and R2 advance and score but R1 left 3B prior to F7 touching the batted ball. An appeal is made at 3B and the Plate Umpire declares R1 out for leaving early. What is the proper ruling?
- This is the third out but R2 scores because this is a timing play.
  - This is the third out and the defense has the option of making a fourth out appeal to nullify R2's run.
  - This is the third out and no runs score.
  - None of the above.
- 21) Jones, listed ninth in the batting order, is replaced by a substitute after reaching 1B safely. Later in the game, Jones re-enters as a pinch runner for a teammate listed third in the batting order. What is the correct ruling on the play?
- This is an illegal re-entry and Jones is declared out and disqualified.
  - This is an illegal re-entry and Jones is called out.
  - This is an illegal re-entry and Jones is disqualified and replaced by a legal substitute.
  - This is legal.
- 22) An exception to the statement that "an obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where obstructed" is.
- If they missed a base and it was properly appealed.
  - If they passed another runner.
  - If they committed an act of interference.
  - All of the above.
- 23) Which of the following actions do not meet the definition of an appeal play?
- A batter batting out of order.
  - A runner missing a base.
  - A batter swinging at a pitch, that the plate umpire rules a ball.
  - A runner leaving a base early on a caught fly ball.
  - Overrunning first base and attempts to advance to second base.
- 24) B1 comes to the plate and strikes out. B3 then comes up to bat and strikes out. Now B2 comes to the plate and hits a double. The defense then properly appeals before the next pitch that B2 is batting out of order. The umpire should rule:
- B2 should have batted after B1; B3's at bat is ignored. B2 remains on 2B with 1 out and B3 comes up to bat.
  - Once a pitch was thrown to B2 it made B3's at bat legal, so the proper batter would be B4. Since B2 completed a turn at bat B4, the person who should have batted, is called out for the third out of the inning, B5 would lead off the next inning.
  - Once a pitch was thrown to B2 it made them the legal batter so there is no violation, B2 remains at 2B with 2 outs and B3 is the next batter.
  - Once a pitch was thrown to B2 it made them the legal batter so there is no violation, B2 remains at 2B with 2 outs and since B3 has already batted, B4 is the next batter.
- 25) A runner is ruled out if they run more than three feet from the base line.
- True.
  - False.

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- 26) With R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B and 1 out, B4 hits a pop-up to F6. F6 drops the ball and both runners advance and B4 is safe at 1B. The defensive manager asks the plate umpire if that was an infield fly. The umpires confer and decide that in their judgment the ball was not able to be caught with ordinary effort. The defensive coach wants to protest this ruling. Can this ruling be protested?
- Yes.
  - No.
- 27) An ejected participant must leave the grounds and have no contact with the umpires or participants in the game. The ejected participant is restricted from having contact with the team and is suspended for one additional game. The ejected participant is not permitted to sit in the stands, dugout or general locality of the next game. The ejected participant may appeal the one game suspension to the Championship Protest Committee.
- True.
  - False.
- 28) No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of:
- A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching 1B or any runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
  - A runner being put out by a tag, called out for passing a runner or a live ball appeal prior to the lead runner touching home plate.
  - A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.
  - All of the above.
- 29) When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and goes out of play the proper award is:
- One base from the time of the pitch.
  - One base from the time the ball enters dead ball territory.
  - Two bases from the time of the pitch.
  - Two bases from the time the ball enters dead ball territory.
- 30) Which of the following statements are true when discussing the warm-up bat:
- Stamped with 1/4 inch letters WB on either end of the bat or marked in one-inch letters the words WARM-UP BAT only on the barrel end of the bat.
  - The warm-up bat shall comply with the safety grip and the safety knob requirements of the official bat.
  - Be of one-piece construction or a one-piece permanently assembled bat that clearly distinguishes itself as a warm-up bat and is approved by USA Softball.
  - The knob shall have a diameter of at least 1.6 inches with no sharp edges. The knob will be permanently attached to the bat and may be covered with grip tape.
  - All the above.
- 31) An EP may be utilized in the following games:
- Modified Pitch.
  - JO Fast Pitch, both pool play and elimination play.
  - Slow Pitch.
  - All of the above.
  - Allowed in both b. and c. above.
- 32) With no runners on base, B1 hits a long fly ball over F7's head; F7 throws their mitt and contacts the ball knocking it down so they can retrieve the ball more quickly. What is the proper ruling?
- Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball" award B1 3B.
  - Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball" award B1 home plate as the umpire judges they would have obtained home had F7 not contacted the ball with their mitt.
  - Signal delayed dead ball and allow play to continue. If B1 does not obtain 3B, they will be awarded 3B at the completion of play.
  - None of the above.
- 33) With R1 on 1B and no outs, B2 hits a ground ball to F6 who makes a wild throw toward F3 that goes out of play. At the time of the throw R1 is almost to 2B and B1 is one step from reaching 1B. At the time the ball enters dead ball territory, R1 has passed second base and B1 has passed 1B on their way to 2B. What is the proper ruling?
- The award is two bases from the time the ball enters dead ball territory. R1 is awarded home and B1 is awarded 3B.
  - The award is two bases from the time of the throw. R1 is awarded 3B and B1 is awarded 2B.
  - The award is umpire judgment. The umpire awards R1 home and B1 2B.
  - None of the above.

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- 34) What is the proper ruling when a runner passes a preceding runner before that runner has been called out?
- Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball" the runner that passed the preceding runner is out.
  - The ball remains live; the runner that passed the preceding runner is out.
  - Signal and verbalize "Dead Ball" the runner that was passed is out.
  - Signal delayed dead ball, the ball remains live; the runner that was passed is out.
- 35) Which of the following are true about a batter's feet?
- Prior to the pitch, both of the batter's feet must be completely within the batter's box with no part of their foot outside the batter's box lines.
  - They are called out when the ball makes contact with the bat and either foot is touching the ground completely outside of the lines of the batter's box.
  - They are called out when the ball makes contact with the bat and any part of either foot is touching home plate.
  - All of the above are true.
- 36) Which of the following actions around home plate result in the batter being ruled out?
- When hindering the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.
  - When actively hindering the catcher while in the batter's box.
  - When intentionally interfering with a thrown ball, in or out of the batter's box.
  - All of the above.

### **SLOW PITCH QUESTIONS**

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- 37) With 1 out and R1 on 3B a Slow Pitch team desires to intentionally walk two consecutive batters to increase their likelihood of obtaining a force out. The umpire administers both intentional walks at the same time. B3 jogs directly to 2B not touching 1B and B4 goes to 1B. The defensive coach then appeals that B3 did not touch 1B. What is the proper ruling?
- The appeal is honored and B3 is ruled out for failing to touch 1B.
  - The umpire should not have administered the second walk to B4 until B3 had reached first base. Since the umpire mistakenly allowed two walks at one time, the appeal of B3 is not honored.
- 38) In a Slow Pitch game, the pitcher can only have one courtesy runner per half inning. If the pitcher has a second courtesy runner, the pitcher will be called out.
- True.
  - False.
- 39) In a Slow Pitch game, after one warning, the pitcher again delivers a pitch with excessive speed. The umpire should:
- Eject the pitcher.
  - Give the pitcher another warning and on the next violation eject the pitcher.
  - Disqualify the pitcher.
  - Remove the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- 40) During a Slow Pitch game, the on-deck batter decides to take their warmup swings from the other team's on-deck circle. The umpire advises the on-deck batter that this is not allowed and advises them to return to the on-deck circle nearest their team area. This the correct ruling.
- True.
  - False.
- 41) Which statement(s) is/are correct concerning a legal delivery in the Slow Pitch game?
- The pitcher shall not continue any pitching motion after the ball is released.
  - The pitcher has five seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball".
  - The speed of the pitch is left entirely up to the judgement of the umpire; the pitch shall be released at a moderate speed.
  - The ball shall be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 10 feet from the ground (excluding Senior Slow Pitch).
  - All of the above.
- 42) The Batter's Box dimensions for Slow Pitch game is 6" from home plate, 3 feet wide by 7 feet long: with 3 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate.
- True.
  - False.
- 43) In all divisions of Slow Pitch, the half inning is ended if a batter hits an over-the-fence home run in excess of the home run limit for the division being played.
- True.
  - False.

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## MECHANIC QUESTIONS

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- 44) In a three-umpire system with R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B, B3 hits a deep fly ball to right-centerfield. Which of the following describes the correct mechanics for this play?
- U3 will chase the fly ball. U1 will buttonhook inside the diamond and take R1 to 3B. P will move to the holding zone and watch R2 at 3B and home plate.
  - U1 will chase the fly ball. U3 will buttonhook inside the diamond at 3B, P will trail B3 to 1B and move back to home plate for any play at the plate.
  - U3 will chase the fly ball. U1 will buttonhook inside the diamond, make sure that B3 touches 1B, and then rotate to home plate for any play at the plate.
  - U1 will chase the fly ball. U3 will come across the diamond and pick up runners at 2B and 1B and the last runner into 3B. P will move to the holding zone and cover R1 or R2 coming to 3B and any play at the plate.
- 45) The base umpire must strive to maintain an unobstructed view of what elements of a play?
- Ball.
  - Base.
  - Offense.
  - Defense.
  - All of the above.
- 46) In a two-umpire system with R1 at 2B, B2 hits a base hit to the outfield. Which of the following are the proper mechanics for the umpires?
- B should button hook inside the diamond, is responsible for R1 going into 3B and B2 at 1B. P is responsible for any play at the plate.
  - B should pick up the ball and glance at the runner as they hustle inside the diamond about halfway between 2B and 1B. Responsible for any play at 1B, 2B and the last runner to 3B (B2). P is responsible for any play on R1 at 3B and any play at the plate.
  - B should hustle inside the diamond between the pitching plate and 2B. B is responsible for any play at 2B, P is responsible for any throwback to 1B and any play at the plate.
  - B should hustle inside the diamond between the pitching plate and 2B, is responsible for any play at 2B or 1B. P is responsible for any play at the plate.
- 47) With no runners on base the ball is hit to the infield and a play is made at first base, the base umpire should do all of the following EXCEPT:
- Obtain a position no closer than 15 feet.
  - Without taking your eyes off the ball, move into fair territory.
  - Obtain a position at an angle 90 degrees to the path of the throw.
  - Ensure the position is no more than a 45-degree angle from the foul line.
  - Let the ball take you to the play.
- 48) On a close call at 1B, the base umpire is blocked from seeing the entire play. The base umpire should:
- Make a call based on the information they have.
  - When the play is over go to their partner(s) for information to get the call correct.
  - Only go to their partner(s) when requested to do so by a coach.
  - Both a. and b. are correct.
  - Both a. and c. are correct.
- 49) With R1 on 2B in a two-umpire system, B2 hits a fly ball to the outfield that is not chased, which of the following mechanics are correct?
- Plate umpire has R1 tagging up at 2B. The base umpire is responsible for any play on B2.
  - Base umpire has R1 tagging up at 2B and if the ball is caught any play on R1 at 3B. Plate umpire is responsible for any play at the plate.
  - Base umpire has R1 tagging up at 2B and if the ball is not caught, they have any play on B2. Plate umpire has any play on R1 at 3B and any play at the plate.
  - Base umpire has R1 tagging up at 2B and any play on B2. Whether the ball is caught or dropped, the plate umpire has any play on R1 at 3B and any play at the plate.
  - Both b. and c. are correct.
- 50) Which of the following are true about the plate umpire in the set position:
- The umpire must be in the slot, slightly inside the inside corner of the plate with the ear closest to the catcher lined up with the inside corner of the plate.
  - Must have Good Pelvic Alignment (GPA), where the pelvis is aligned with the front outside corner of the plate.
  - Go set to the top of the strike zone.
  - Go set at the start of the pitch.
  - All of the above.

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## ALTERNATIVE FAST PITCH QUESTIONS

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- 51) In a Fast Pitch game, the pitcher is in the circle when at least one foot is within the lines of the circle when applying the Lookback Rule.
- True.
  - False.
- 52) In the game of Fast Pitch, the first time any defensive player places a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected from the game.
- True.
  - False.
- 53) In a Fast Pitch game in the top of the 1st inning, Adams, the leadoff batter is listed as F1. After getting on base, they are replaced by a courtesy runner. In the bottom of the 1st inning, prior to any pitches being thrown, the coach informs the umpire that Baker will now be F1. What is the proper ruling?
- This is legal.
  - Adams must pitch one legal or illegal pitch before being replaced.
  - Adams must pitch to one complete batter before being replaced
  - Adams must pitch a complete inning before being replaced.
- 54) At the pre-game conference of a Fast Pitch game, after the line-ups are announced to be official by the umpire, a coach states that their FLEX will bat for their DP. This is legal and should be allowed by the umpire.
- True.
  - False.
- 55) In a Fast Pitch game, the catcher, B1, reaches 1B on a base hit. Time is called and the catcher is replaced with a legal courtesy runner, S1. B2 gets injured and cannot continue play. The only substitute available is the courtesy runner on 1B. Can S1 be removed from 1B and become a substitute for the injured B2?
- Yes.
  - No.
- 56) In a JO Fast Pitch game, the team at bat is using an EP, batting 10 players and using the DP/FLEX. In the 3rd inning, the DP goes in to play defense instead of the FLEX player. The plate umpire reminds the coach that this is a substitution and their line-up went from 11 to 10 active players with the FLEX player having left the game.
- True.
  - False.
- 57) In Fast Pitch, an on-deck batter may occupy the opposing team's on-deck circle provided it is behind the batter.
- True.
  - False.



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