



Dear FAS Participant,

As you may or may not be aware, athletic programs across the nation have been confronted with the frustration of ensuring safety during games while allowing teams to be as competitive as possible. Bats in recent years have not only changed the games of softball and baseball by enhancing bat performance, they have also increased the risks of safety to participants.

Fairfax Adult Softball purchased a bat compression tester from ASA to help ensure a safe environment for all our participants. The tester will determine the safety of a bat by ensuring that the bat compression is within the safety standards. Anyone wishing to have his/her bats tested to give comfort in knowing that you are swinging a safe bat, may stop by the FAS office any Monday through Friday between the hours of 10 am and 5 pm. If your bat passes the safety compression test, nothing will be done, but please be aware that a bat may pass one week and fail in a subsequent week. If your bat fails the safety compression test, all the details of the test and the failed bat will be recorded on the FAS Results Form which also lists the penalties invoked should this bat fail a random test by FAS in the future. A copy of that Results Form will be provided to the owner/user of the bat, and a copy will be kept on file in the FAS office. A person presenting their bat for testing will be required to sign a testing permission slip acknowledging that if the bat fails, they are aware that any future use of that bat could result in punitive action being taken against them.

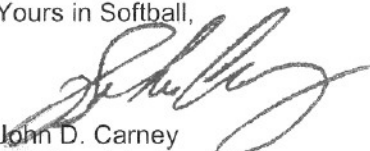
Beginning on/about May 21, FAS will be conducting random team bat testing prior to games at randomly selected fields for each night. An FAS hologram will be placed on all bats passing the compression test; bats which fail will be removed from the game immediately and returned to the player at the end of the game. All the details of the test and the failed bat will be recorded on the FAS Results Form which also lists the penalties invoked should this bat fail a random test by FAS in the future. A copy of that Results Form will be provided to the owner/user of the bat, and a copy will be kept on file in the FAS office. Users/owners of any failed bat will be subjected to non-random bat checks throughout the season to guarantee that the bat is not being used; however, if the bat is used in subsequent games, severe action, such as a year suspension may be meted to both the user and owner of the failed bat.

The ONLY goal for FAS purchasing the bat compression tester and testing bats is to ensure, to the best of our ability, the safety and integrity of all participants at all levels of play within the FAS program. Please know that FAS is not on a mission of finding cheaters -- some of the bats that fail the compression test will be bats that have not been doctored, shaved, rolled, or altered. Unfortunately, many of the composite bats were manufactured so that with extended use, the bat becomes "broken in" resulting in a better trampoline effect of the ball off the bat. This was a great idea initially but the misfortune is the speed with which the ball leaves the bat has caused concern for potential injury to infielders. We are saddened to report that a number of injuries, and even deaths, have been caused by batted softballs being hit into infielders. Everyone has to remember that this is a recreational game and must keep at the fore front of their participation, a desire to play with the safest equipment possible.

FAS is not alone in attempting to ensure a safe playing environment in the composite bat world. Last July, the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee heard numerous concerns voiced by their membership with a request for action regarding composite bats. After a thorough review of compliance testing and a review of the improved performance of composite bats, often exceeding NCAA acceptable limits, these concerns were proven to be valid. The committee decided to put an immediate and indefinite moratorium on the use of composite bats in NCAA competition. They believed that action is needed in order to protect the integrity of the game and to enhance the safety of the student-athletes.

Let's all work together to keep softball a safe and recreational sport, as it was always intended to be! Please don't hesitate to stop by the FAS office to make sure your bats do not have the heightened effect of potential injury to your friends and opponents.

Yours in Softball,



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