April 4, 2019

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

**Situation 1:** B1 hits the ball and drops her bat into fair territory as she is heading to first base. The bat is stationary and the ball has backspin and rolls into the stationary bat. **Ruling:** This is a live ball and contacting the bat has no bearing on the play. (Rule 1-8-3)

**Situation 2:** B1 bunts the ball and drops her bat in fair territory as she runs toward first base. The bat rolls into the ball that is stationary a foot into fair territory directly in front of home plate. **Ruling:** Dead ball, B1 is out. Any time the discarded bat hits the ball a second time on or over fair territory the batter is out. (Rule 7-4-13)

**Situation 3:** B1 bunts the ball and drops her bat in fair territory as she runs toward first base. The bat is rolling toward the ball and the ball is rolling toward the bat and they make contact in fair territory. **Ruling:** Dead ball, B1 is out. Any time the discarded bat hits the ball a second time on or over fair territory the batter is out. Even if both the bat and ball are both moving toward each other, if the bat is moving toward the ball when they contact the bat is considered to have hit the ball a second time and is a violation of Rule 7-4-13, resulting in a dead ball and the batter being called out.

**Situation 4:** B1 bunts the ball and drops her bat in foul territory, the bat is rolling toward the ball and the ball is rolling toward the bat and they make contact in foul territory with the bat stopping in foul territory but the ball rolling into fair territory where it is first touched by F5. **Ruling:** Once the ball hits the bat in foul territory it becomes a foul ball since the bat is an object foreign to the natural ground (Rule 2-25-1d), unless the umpire judges the batter dropped the bat in a means that prevented the ball from becoming a fair ball. (Rule 7-4-13)

**Situation 5:** R1 on first base, B2 is at bat with one out and a 1 ball 2 strike count. B2 swings and misses a ball that is in the dirt and F2 does not catch cleanly. B2, thinking it was a dropped third strike runs to first base and F2 throws the ball to first base to make a play on R1 who started to steal second base but was then trying to return to first base. The throw is on target and F3 receives the throw and tags R1 as she is sliding into first base. The base umpire calls R1 safe. The defensive coach wants interference on B2 as they felt she drew the throw continuing to run to first base when the dropped third strike was not in effect. **Ruling:** This is not correct. Rule 8-6-16c has an exception for a batter-runner running on a possible dropped third strike. Since B2 did not interfere with F2’s play on R1 there is no interference on the play.

**Situation 6:** R1 on second base, B2 is at bat with one out and a 1 ball 2 strike count. B2 swings and misses a ball that is low but F2 catches in flight. B2, thinking it was a dropped third strike runs to first base and F2 throws the ball to first base, seeing the throw to first base R1 attempts to steal third base.
The throw is on target and F3 receives the throw at first base, R1 is safe on third base. The defensive coach wants interference on B2 as they felt she drew the throw to first base by continuing to run to first base when the dropped third strike was not in effect. **Ruling:** This is not correct, Rule 8-6-16c has an exception for a batter-runner running on a possible dropped third strike and not being out merely for drawing a throw.

**Situation 7:** R1 on first base, B2 is at bat with one out and a 1 ball 2 strike count. B2 swings and misses a ball that is in the dirt and F2 does not catch cleanly. B2, thinking it was a dropped third strike runs to first base and F2 throws the ball to first base to make a play on R1 who started to steal second base but was then trying to return to first base. The throw hits B2 interfering with the attempted play on R1 returning to first base. **Ruling:** This is interference by a retired runner and the ball is dead and the runner closest to home, in this case R1, is out. Although Rule 8-6-16c has an exception for a batter-runner running on a possible dropped third strike drawing a throw, if they commit an act of interference as was the case in this play they are still guilty of interference.

**Situation 8:** R1 on second base, B2 is at bat with one out and a 1 ball 2 strike count. B2 swings and misses a ball that is low but F2 catches in flight. B2, thinking it was a dropped third strike runs to first base and F2 throws the ball to first base. Seeing the throw to first base R1 attempts to steal third base. The throw contacts B2 who does not do anything intentionally to interfere with the throw, very near first base and R1 is safe on third base. **Ruling:** Rule 8-6-16c has an exception for a batter-runner running on a possible dropped third strike and not being out merely for drawing a throw. Although the throw did hit B2, there was no play at first base for them to interfere with, so they are not guilty of interference in this situation.