REMINDEERS

- Chapter, District and Statewide Interpreters should only answer questions related to playing rules and mechanics.
- Eligibility questions should be directed to the athletic director.
- Chapter interpreters are encouraged to distribute, review and discuss this bulletin with members of your chapter.
- When you receive any bulletins from the PIAA office or the statewide rules interpreter please forward to the Director of Athletics and Softball Head Coaches of the schools your chapter umpires and encourage them to share with their entire softball coaching staff at all levels.
- Rules questions should always follow the process; chapter umpires direct your questions to your chapter interpreter, chapter interpreters to your district interpreter and district interpreter to the statewide interpreter. Encourage your head coaches to do the same. Also remember that chapter, district and statewide interpreters only respond to playing rules and mechanics, not eligibility questions.

SOFTBALL CLINICS

It is not too early to start the process of scheduling a district wide or with neighboring chapters for a field clinic.
- Scheduling a pre– or postseason field clinic is a great way to educate umpires.
- Use indoor gym facilities if the weather won’t cooperate.
- Engage your district or statewide interpreter to assist you.
- Video the sessions to review with umpires. Many umpires do not realize what they could work on until they see it.
NFHS Case Book Corrections

Play 8.4.3 Situation N Rules References 8-4-3 d (Page 60)
Play 8.4.3 Situation O Rules Reference 8-4-3 e (Page 61)

Umpires Manual Corrections

Figure 22, 23, and 32 diagram is incorrect as the (P) Plate umpire should be baseline extended depending on which team is batting. The verbiage that accompanies the diagram is correct. We will be forwarding at a later time diagram updates.

2019 NFHS Softball Rules By Topic Book

Dead Ball: Illegal Pitch – delete “baserunners are awarded on base” (Page 62)
Illegal Position: Penalty – delete “all runners advance one base” (Page 68)

The following is being repeated as a result of many phone calls, e-mails and questions at meetings I have attended.

As it was last season, coaches are now directly responsible for the inspecting the equipment prior to each game. Nothing else changed; the rule enforcement is the same as it has been in the past.

A couple of notes worth reviewing:

Coaches cannot request for the umpires to check their equipment prior to the game.
Umpires must still walk the field before every game; the change only refers to equipment.
2019 COMMENTS ON RULES CHANGES

1-1-7 In an effort to more clearly define where representatives of the media are permitted, game management may designate any area in dead-ball territory. It is no longer acceptable to designate any area in live-ball territory for media to occupy during the game. Game management is still free to designate a media area anywhere in dead-ball territory. The change minimizes risk of participants and others involved in the game. Previously, a ball was declared dead if the media area was occupied, but remained live if it was unoccupied. The possibility that an area is considered a dead-ball area only at certain times during a game could create an unfair advantage for one team.

1-5-2a Added language in reference to the recently approved "adjustable knob device" that is permanently fastened to the bat by the manufacturer. A knob may be adjustable but must be permanently affixed while being used in the game.

1-8-4 Addresses shields attached to face/head protection being constructed of non-tinted and non-glare material. The intent of this change is to make these shields, if worn, consistent with shields on batting helmets (1-6-7) and catchers masks (1-7-1).

6-1-1 PENALTY, Language to address the change in the penalty for an illegal pitch was changed.
6-1-1 EXCEPTION 3, The approved change removes the advancement of base runners.
6-1-1 EXCEPTION 4, Considering that an illegal pitch is designed to hinder the batter, the 2018 NFHS Softball Rules Committee felt that only the batter should receive an advantage from the penalty.

2019 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Pitcher Simulating Taking a Signal

While on the pitcher's plate and prior to bringing her hands together, the pitcher must take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher. A signal may be taken from a coach either by hand signals, verbal call, or by looking up on a wristband with a playbook/playcard. The signal obtained from the coach can be taken while on the pitching plate or while standing behind the pitcher's plate prior to taking a position on the pitcher's plate. By rule, the only requirement is that no matter where or from whom the actual signal is obtained, the pitcher must take a position on the pitcher's plate with the hands separated and simulate taking a signal from the catcher. Requiring the pitcher to take a position on the pitching plate and simulating taking a signal from the catcher prior to bring her hands together allows the batter to prepare for the start of the pitch. If the pitcher does not pause after stepping onto the pitcher's plate to simulate taking a signal from the catcher prior to bringing her hands together, an illegal pitch should be called.

Proper Technique When Sliding

One of a coach's responsibilities is to help reduce risk and injury to players whenever possible. This includes teaching proper sliding techniques as well as educating players on executing a legal slide (2-52). Ensuring that players utilize proper technique when sliding will help reduce the potential injuries seen when a slide is performed. Ensuring that the slide is performed legally will also reduce the risk to the defender when a tag is being applied to a player sliding into a base.
**Head Coach Listed on Lineup Card**

Although not a requirement by rule, it is considered a best practice that the head coach list his/her name on the lineup card submitted at the pre-game conference. By listing his/her name on the lineup card, it assists both the umpire and other team if communications dealing with the game are required.

**Illegal Pitch Penalty**

The NFHS Softball Rules Committee voted to remove the advancement of runners when an illegal pitch is called. Since the intent of an illegal pitch in softball is to deceive the batter, the committee felt that only the batter should receive an award when an illegal pitch occurs. The change to the penalty for an illegal pitch will result in a ball being called on the batter, but runners will only advance if forced as the result of the batter being awarded first base. Exceptions to the penalty for an illegal pitch in Rule 6, Section 1, Article 1 have also been modified in order to be in compliance with the new penalty and ensure that runners are no longer advanced as a result of an illegal pitch.

**NEWS FROM NFHS**

The NFHS will soon be releasing the 4th Unit for UMPIRING SOFTBALL. Unit 4 will be Umpire Mechanics. The cost is $20.00 and it is worth every penny. The chapter can purchase from [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com). This has been developed for all umpires, for the first year and umpires with many years of experience and all in between.

**REMINDER**

Unit 1 is Game Management  
Unit 2 is Obstruction  
Unit 3 is Interference

There are many videos on [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) such as Concussions in Sports, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, Sportsmanship, and many others.
### 2019 USA/ASA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks

The following link is for the 2019 USA Softball ASA Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks.

Coaches need to have this list with them, they may have it in paper form (preferred color) or it acceptable to have it on their Smartphone, iPad or Tablet.

### 2019 NFHS RULES CHANGES

The following link is a video to the 2019 NFHS Rules changes:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOLRzEXZH4o&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOLRzEXZH4o&feature=youtu.be)

### SOFTBALL RULES BY STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTION (Page 83)

Please note beside each rule if it is a PIAA Adoption or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Approval Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1-2</td>
<td>Not Approved since it is Slow Pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-1</td>
<td>Yes Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3-3</td>
<td>Not Approved since it is Slow Pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2-1</td>
<td>Yes Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not if for religious reasons, but must be approved by the PIAA Executive Director. The AD must submit a letter of request to the Executive Director for review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2-4</td>
<td>Yes Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3-7 (S.P.)</td>
<td>Not Approved since it is Slow Pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2-3</td>
<td>Yes Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2-3 Note</td>
<td>Yes Approved – for Sub-Varsity games only unless a run rule is in effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2-6</td>
<td>Yes Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-3-1a</td>
<td>Not Approved – the PIAA does not specify a time frame to declare a forfeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-4</td>
<td>Not Approved – no protest permitted with PIAA contest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-2-1b Note</td>
<td>Yes Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10-1</td>
<td>Yes Approved – at the discretion of the home team.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ILLEGAL PITCH

**SITUATION:** With no outs and a R1 on first base F1 delivers an illegal pitch. The batter takes the 1-1 pitch for a ball but the runner is thrown out stealing.

**RULING:** The offensive team will have the option of taking the resultant penalty, illegal pitch, and the count being 2-1 and F1 returns to 1st base, or the result of the play, F1 out.

**SITUATION:** With the bases loaded and no outs F1 delivers an illegal pitch. The B4 has a 3-2 count and hits the pitch to the outfield and all runners score. The batter-runner is thrown out at third base. The runs crossed home plate prior to the batter-runner being put out at third base.

**RULING:** Since all runners, including the batter-runner advanced at least one base safely, there is no option and the play stands. The illegal pitch is ignored. Rule 6-1-1 Penalty Exception 1

**SITUATION:** With no outs and R1 on 3rd base and R2 on 1st base F1 delivers an illegal pitch. B5 hits the 1-1 pitch into a double play as R1 scores.

**RULING:** Since the batter-runner did not advance one base safely the offense coach may take the result of the play, two outs and one run, or have the runners return and B5 comes back to bat with a 2-1 count. Rule 6-1-1 Penalty Exception 2

**SITUATION:** With no outs and a R1 on first base F1 delivers an illegal pitch. B4 swings and misses on the 1-1 pitch as the R1 steals 2nd base.

**RULING:** The offense may accept the result of the play which leaves R1 at second base and B4 with 1-2 count or R1 will be returned to first base with the penalty and a ball on the batter being enforced. B4 would then have a 2-1 count. Rule 6-1-1 Penalty Exception 2

**SITUATION:** An illegal pitch is called and a runner is also called out for leaving early on the pitch.

**RULING 1:** If the runner leaving early occurs prior to the illegal pitch the ball is dead and the illegal pitch is ignored. Rule 8-6-18

**RULING 2:** If the illegal pitch happens first both violations are penalized. The batter is awarded a ball and the runner is out. Any other runners remain at the same base. Rule 8-6-18
ILLEGAL PITCH CONT’D

**SITUATION:** With no outs, R1 on third base and R2 on first base, B3 is at bat with a 3-1 strike count. On an illegal pitch B3 swings and misses. R2 was stealing second base on the pitch and is out there but R1 is safe stealing home.

**RULING 1:** Since the batter was not safe at first base and all runners did not advance at least one base on an illegal pitch the offense has a choice of the play or the penalty  Rule 6-1-1 Penalty Exception 2

**RULING 2:** In this case the result of the play would be R1 scores, R2 is out and B3 remains at bat with a 3-2 count and 1 out. If the coach chooses to take the penalty, a ball is awarded to B3 which would result in ball 4, placing B3 on first base forcing R2 to advance and R1 would return to third base. There would still be no outs.  Rule 6-1-1 Penalty Exception 2 and 4

INTENTIONAL BASE ON BALLS

**SITUATION:** With R3 on third base, the defensive coach comes to the plate umpire and says; a) I would like the next two (2) batters to be put on base. B4 goes directly to 2nd base and B5 goes to 1st base. Legal?

**RULING:** No, awarded bases must be touched in order. Rule 8-3-11

**COMMENT:** Should this occur, umpires need good to use umpiring technique, the plate umpire calls time and award BR4 1st base and once she reaches 1st, then award B5 1st base, thus forcing B4 to 2nd base.

**SITUATION:** B4 hits a double; a) the defensive coach request B5 receive a base-on-balls b) after B4 hits a double, the defensive coach request an appeal the runner on 2nd base, missed first base while running the bases.

**RULING:** a) the appeal is denied, b) time is called and the umpire responsible for the base-runner will rule on the appeal request. Rule 2-65-2, a, b
The following are SITUATIONS that are True, False or Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following are appealable plays?

A. Missing a base.
B. Batting out of order.
C. Leaving a base early on a caught fly ball.
D. All of the above.

2. All of the following statements about sliding are true EXCEPT:

A. If a runner slides, it may be feet first or head first.
B. In order to complete a legal slide, a runner must be able to touch the base with either her hand or foot.
C. In order for a runner to avoid unnecessary contact, she is required to slide if a fielder has possession of the ball and is waiting to make a tag.
D. On an overslide, a runner may be tagged out if she does not remain in contact with the base.

3. B1 bats out of order and reaches first base. F1 then steps onto the pitcher’s plate and commits an illegal pitch. The defense then appeals that B1 has batted out of order. What is the correct ruling?

A. B1 is declared out and the next batter comes to the plate.
B. B1 is replaced by the legal batter at first base.
C. The defense can no longer appeal batting out of order since the infraction was not discovered prior to the next pitch.
D. The defense is allowed to appeal since the pitch was illegal and the player that B1 batted in place of is called out.

4. B1 fails to promptly take her position in the batter’s box within the 10 seconds after the ball is returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch. What is the correct ruling?

A. The umpire awards an additional five seconds and play continues.
B. The umpire grants the batter time until she is ready for play to resume.
C. The umpire declares the batter out for delaying the game.
D. The umpire calls a strike on the batter.

5. The batter is standing in the batter’s box when an inside pitch hits her in the knee completely in the batter's box. The proper call is:

A. Dead ball and the batter is awarded first base.
B. Strike on the batter because she needs to make an effort to get out of the way of the pitch.
C. Strike on the batter because the pitcher is entitled to throw over the inner part of the batter’s box.
D. None of the above.
6. A coach cannot have which of the following items in the coaches box on the field?

A. A stopwatch.
B. A cell phone recording video.
C. A tablet device being used as a scorebook.
D. A scorebook.

7. Each team, when on defense, is allowed how many charged conferences without penalty during a seven-inning game?

A. One.
B. Two.
C. Three.
D. Four.

8. Which action is not legal for a courtesy runner?

A. She has not participated in the game.
B. She runs for the pitcher only.
C. She runs for the catcher only.
D. She becomes a substitute in the same half inning she was a courtesy runner.

9. After reaching base legally, a team has the option to use a courtesy runner for:

A. The pitcher only.
B. The catcher only.
C. The pitcher and/or catcher.
D. The team’s slowest player as designated by the coach during the pre-game meeting.

10. A head coach who intends to utilize the DP/Flex option must alert the umpires and opposing team:

A. Before that coach’s team bats for the first time.
B. Before that coach’s team throws its first pitch on defense.
C. During the exchange of lineup cards at home plate during the pregame conference.
D. Before the DP’s first at-bat.

ANSWERS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE
ANSWERS

1. D All of the above. 2-1-2

2. C In order for a runner to avoid unnecessary contact, she is required to slide if a fielder has possession of the ball and is waiting to make a tag. 2-52, 8-6-13

3. C The defense can no longer appeal batting out of order since the infraction was not discovered prior to the next pitch. 7-1-2 PENALTY 3

4. D The umpire calls a strike on the batter. 7-3-1

5. A Dead ball and the batter is awarded first base. 8-1-2b

6. B A cell phone recording video. 3-6-10

7. C Three. 3-7-1

8. D She becomes a substitute in the same half inning she was a courtesy runner. 8-9-4

9. C The pitcher and/or catcher. 8-9-1

10. C During the exchange of lineup cards at home plate during the pregame conference. 3-3-6

I am encouraging you all to submit situations that you have seen, had happen to you, or a coach or another umpire has asked. Please no “what if” plays, nor plays to attempt to stump the interpreter.

NFHS INTERPRETATION FOR MULTI COLOR GLOVE

Case Book Play 1.4.1 Situation – Team B player F3 on defense has a glove that is gray with a dark blue web and red piping on the outside of the glove between each finger. Team A head coach has asked the plate umpire if that is illegal glove/equipment since it is 3 colors; gray, dark blue and red?

RULING – Legal since it is only 2 colors, gray and bark blue. Piping on a glove is not considered a part of the glove. NFHS Interpretation

NOTE: Unless the piping is optic and matches the color of the ball.

NOTE: This is not the only manufacturer that makes this style of glove. This is just an illustration.