SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

SITUATION: Umpires arrive at the field for a softball game and notice there are pitching lane lines painted in the turf. a) they are playing on a collegiate field and it is turf and the pitching lane lines are permanent painted or a part of the turf and cannot be removed, or b) they are playing on a collegiate turf field but the pitching circle is dirt, c) the field is a high school field and it is a dirt field, or d) it is a high school field but the pitching lane lines are painted or in the turf.

RULING: a) play ball but the umpires ignore the pitching lane lines, b) remove the lines, c) remove the pitching lane lines, d) play the game and report the violation to the host athletic director. NFHS 1-2 d and Diagram Figure 1-1, 6-2 b Note, Diagram Figures Reference Chart.

COMMENT 1: There is no where in the NFHS rules book that states pitching lane lines are a part of the NFHS Softball game. In a) above there is nothing we can do to remove the pitching lane lines, but the umpires need to ignore the lines when it comes to enforcement of the NFHS Pitching lane.

COMMENT 2: The Diagram Figures Reference Chart shows dotted lines indicated the 24” pitching lane. The dotted lines indicate the 24” and does not indicate a permanent line as a part of the field.

SITUATION: R1 at 3rd base, 2 outs, B2 successfully bunts a pitch as R1 is advancing to home. B2 in an attempt to not interfere with an opportunity for a play at the plate, backs up in the batters box to avoid any interference at the plate on R1. No play being made on the B2 she then proceeds towards 1st base. When B2 backed up to avoid a collision, is she out for moving backwards?

RULING: B2 is not out, B2’s movement backward was an attempt to avoid a collision. NFHS Rule 8-2-5
NFHS CASE BOOK CORRECTION

Play 8.2.10 SITUATION A: Change in first line F9 to F6 (page 54) Should read as follows:

With no outs, R1 is on first. F9 F6 intentionally drops a fair fly ball hit by B2. R1 advances and is (a) tagged out, or (b) reaches second or third base.

RULING: In both (a) and (b), when the ball is intentionally dropped, it is dead immediately, B2 is out and R1 is returned to base occupied (first) at the time of the pitch. (5-1-11, 8-2-10)

Play 8.4.1 SITUATION D: With no outs, B1’s third strike is missed by F2 and the ball lodges between her body and the chest protector. While F2 hunts for the ball which eventually rolls out from under her chest protector and falls to the ground, B1 continues to second.

RULING: The ball remains live and B1 is entitled to advance since the third strike was not caught. (7-4-7, 8-4-1g).

CLARIFICATION ON EASTON GHOST BATS

The Easton Ghost Dark Gray with Blue lettering FP18GH10 has ASA Certification Mark on it and is legal.

The Easton Ghost Dark Gray with Gold lettering FP19GHU10 does not have a ASA Certification Mark on it and is NOT legal.
REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The correct pitching distance in NFHS female fast pitch softball is:
   A. 38 feet.
   B. 40 feet.
   C. 43 feet.
   D. 45 feet.

2. Which statement about bats is correct?
   A. Bats should be free of rattles, dents, burrs, cracks and sharp edges.
   B. Materials inside the bat or treatment/devices used to alter bat specifications and/or enhance performances are prohibited and render the bat illegal.
   C. A nick or paint chip in the bat from metal cleats that does not extend into the laminations of the bat should not render a bat illegal.
   D. All of the above.

3. A small hole has naturally occurred in front of the pitching plate during the course of the game. On the pitch, the pitcher pushes off the plate with her pivot foot and loses contact with the ground as she drags across the hole. Her pivot foot, however, is no higher than the level plane of the ground around the hole as she delivers the pitch. What is the correct call?
   A. No call. The pitch is legal because in the umpire's judgment, the foot would have been in contact with the ground had the hole not been present.
   B. No pitch, and the game is delayed until the hole can be repaired.
   C. Illegal pitch because the pivot foot is not touching the ground in the bottom of the hole.
   D. No pitch and the pitcher receives a warning. If the pivot foot fails to touch the ground in the bottom of the hole on future pitches, an illegal pitch will be called.

4. It is an illegal pitch if:
   A. F1 is behind the pitcher's plate, takes her signal, steps on the pitcher's plate and immediately brings her hands together.
   B. F1 is on the pitcher's plate, looks to the coach for a signal and then looks to F2 and simulates taking a signal before bringing her hands together.
   C. F1 stands behind the pitcher's plate, takes a signal from the coach, steps on the pitcher's plate and simulates taking a signal from F2 before bringing her hands together.
   D. F1's shoulders are in line with first and third base, the ball is in her glove or hand and the hands are separated.

5. The game begins when the:
   A. Pre-game conference ends.
   B. Home team takes the field for warm-ups.
   C. Umpire calls “Play Ball.”
   D. First pitch is thrown.
6. When a coach makes a substitution during a game, the home plate umpire should report the substitution to:
   A. The opposing team’s scorekeeper.
   B. The opposing team’s head coach.
   C. The opposing team’s captain.
   D. The opposing team’s base coaches.

7. B1 hits a high fly ball down the line to right field. F9, with both feet clearly in fair territory, reaches across the foul line in an attempt to catch the ball. While the ball is still in the air, completely over foul ground, the ball deflects off of F9's glove and lands in fair territory. The correct call is:
   A. Foul ball since the ball was over foul territory when first touched.
   B. Fair ball since both feet were clearly in fair territory when she touched the ball.
   C. Fair ball because after she touched the ball it landed in fair territory.
   D. Fair ball. Any ball touched by a fielder is automatically fair.

8. R1 is caught in a rundown between third base and home. As R1 is attempting to return to third base, she is obstructed by F5 and subsequently tagged while off the base by F6. The correct call is:
   A. The call is always an immediate dead ball when a runner is obstructed.
   B. When a fielder obstructs a runner the initial call is always a delayed dead ball. Once the obstructed runner is put out, it becomes a dead ball and the umpires shall award R1 the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction.
   C. R1 is awarded home.
   D. The umpire will issue a warning to F5 and notify her coach.

9. Which of the following situations involving a bunt occurring on a third strike is correct?
   A. A batter whose third strike bunt attempt ends up a foul ball will be called out.
   B. An attempted bunt can never be ruled an infield fly.
   C. A batter whose foot is touching home plate when the bat makes contact with a pitched ball will always be called out (whether the ball is hit fair or foul).
   D. All of the above.

10. State associations may, on an individual basis, permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for the following reasons:
    A. Inclement weather.
    B. Religious reasons.
    C. Different styles and colors due to budget restrictions.
    D. A and B.
ANSWERS

1. C 43 feet. 1-1-2b
2. D All of the above. 1-5
3. A No call. The pitch is legal because in the umpire's judgment, the foot would have been in contact with the ground had the hole not been present. 6-1-2c
4. A F1 is behind the pitcher's plate, takes her signal, steps on the pitcher's plate and immediately brings her hands together. 6-1-1
5. C Umpire calls “Play Ball.” 4-1-5
6. B The opposing team’s head coach. 3-3-3
7. A Foul ball since the ball was over foul territory when first touched. 2-20-2
8. B When a fielder obstructs a runner the initial call is always a delayed dead ball. Once the obstructed runner is put out, it becomes a dead ball and the umpires shall award R1 the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction. 2-36
9. D All of the above. 2-30, 7-4-9
10. D A and B. 3-2-1

Official’s Convention
25th Anniversary
August 9th & 10th, 2019
Hilton Harrisburg
BULLETIN I REVIEW

The following is a review from Bulletin I containing some helpful links to informative sites and reminders.

REMINDERS

- 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.

SOFBALL 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.

2019 NFHS RULES CHANGES

The following link is a video to the 2019 NFHS Rules changes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOLrEXZH4o&feature=youtu.be
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.

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.

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)

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. http://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp

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.