

NHSOA Softball Home Plate Newsletter

www.nhsoahome.org

Renee Williams – NHSOA Softball Chair

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Welcome to the High School Softball Season:

Just because you have completed your test and games have begun, do not abandon your rule book. It is extremely important to review your rule book, case book and umpire manual on at least a weekly basis. It is also a good idea to review your test several times during the year as well. By reading these publications along with your test, you are keeping your mind fresh in the rules. We can all learn from plays and experiences and no better way to learn than to read, that light bulb just might come on.

Do you wish to improve as an umpire, then listen and learn from any all evaluations that come your way? If you wish to be evaluated, you **MUST** enter your schedule into your NSAA log in page. Evaluators can only work with what they have in front of them.

Important items to remember:

Do not double book. Keep your calendars up to date.

Enter schedules on the NSAA website.

Wear **ONLY** the approved NSAA uniform (listed below).

Enforce rules as printed in the NSAA rule book.

Call the illegal pitch or leaving early when they happen.

Signal obstruction when it happens.

Work hard in all games. Players in all games deserve the best we can give them.

Don't make up rules.

Be sure to listen to the coach when they have a question.

2015 Rule Changes:

1-6-1 - The batting helmet shall not have a glare or mirror-like surface.

1-7-1 - The catcher's helmet shall not have a glare or mirror-like surface.

Batting and Catcher's Helmets surfaces manufactured with a glare (mirror-like) surface are illegal.

Rationale: This rule change was made due to some of helmets being manufactured with a glare (mirror-like) surface which is distracting and potentially dangerous to players.

2015 Major Editorial Changes:

1-6-1 - The exterior warning label may be affixed...or embossed (at the time of manufacture).

1-6-6 - The phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture"...

1-7-1 - The catcher shall wear a catcher's helmet...that meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.

5-1-4 - After a dead-ball situation, the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher on the pitcher's plate and the umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball."

7-1-1 & 2 Pen 2 - When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the next pitch (legal or illegal), or prior to an intentional base on balls (S.P.), or before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates her normal fielding position if a half-inning is

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ending. The umpire shall declare the batter who should have batted out (not the improper batter). The improper batter's time at bat is negated and she is returned to the dugout/bench area. All outs stand and runners who were not declared out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If a runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch, passed ball (F.P.) or an illegal pitch (F.P.) while the improper batter is at bat, such advance is legal.

NOTE: If any situation arises which could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should not leave the field until all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has vacated her normal fielding position. If teams line up to shake hands there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line and umpires can leave the game at this point. No appeal can be made once the umpires have left the field.

2015 Points of Emphasis (POE):

For the 2015 high school softball season, attention is being called to: Electronic Devices, Interference & Obstruction. **When a topic is included in the Points of Emphasis, these topics are important enough to reinforce throughout the academic year because they are not being given the proper attention.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES - An electronic device is defined as any device that accomplishes its purpose electronically. Technology has presented coaches and players with a wide variety of devices that can be used for their improvement. Rule 1-8-6 allows for team personnel to utilize technology to transmit or record information pertaining **ONLY** to their players or team's performance within their team dugout or bench area. The information obtained from an electronic device may be used for coaching purposes during the game, but only in the team's dugout or bench area. During the game no electronic devices are allowed on the field to video record. Rule 3-6-10 allows for stopwatches and electronic score keeping devices in the coaching box. Rule 3-6-11 prohibits the use of any information obtained from an electronic device to review a decision made by an umpire. Any video recording solely targeting the actions of the opponent is prohibited.

INTERFERENCE - Interference is defined by Rule 2-32 as an act (physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who illegally impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder; or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline. The NFHS Softball Rules Committee strongly emphasizes that coaches instruct their players of this definition, and what they need to do. As stated these acts may be physical or verbal and intentional or unintentional. Batters and runners must be taught to be aware of where the ball is and where the opposing team fielders are in relationship to the ball.

OBSTRUCTION - Obstruction is defined by Rule 2-36 as the act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes the progress of a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is making the initial play on a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal. The NFHS Softball Rules Committee strongly emphasizes that coaches must instruct their players of this definition. Players need to be instructed that they cannot hinder or impede any runner when they are not making a play on a ball or have the ball in their possession. Players need to be made aware of where they are on the field in relationship to opposing team members who are running the bases.

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Approved NSAA Uniform:

Officials have an obligation to the profession to dress appropriately. The first impression of an official's uniform should be impeccable. The uniform shall be clean, free of wrinkles, not faded, torn or have holes and fit properly.

Powder blue pullover polo (collar and sleeve trim shall be navy and white) - **NO** navy polo.

Powder blue long sleeve pullover polo (collar trim shall be navy and white) is acceptable.

Heather gray slacks - **NO** dark gray.

Jackets shall be all navy blue **OR** navy blue with the shoulder inset being powder blue and white. **Both umpires MUST wear the same jacket on the field at the same time. We are phasing out the all blue jacket.**

A navy blue turtleneck may be substituted for a shirt when wearing jacket.

Hat is to be navy blue and a sized hat is recommended.

Ball bag shall be either navy blue **OR** heather gray.

Patches - NSAA patch is worn on the shirt where a pocket is or would be and the NHSOA patch is to be worn on the left sleeve (of both the short and long sleeve shirt) **OR** the new shirt with both patches already on the shirt already.

News From Around the Diamond

Pitching (6.1.1) - Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

- a. Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, and with the hands separated.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.
- c. After completing "b" above, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.

(6.1.2) . . . About the Pitch:

- a. The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.
- b. Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. **Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.**

EXCEPTION: See Rule 6-1-1f2 - When removing self from the pitcher's position.

NOTE: "Toward" is interpreted as within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. (See "Figure" - Rule Book, Page 49)

- c. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, **as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground and within the 24-inch length. If a hole has been created in front of the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may be no higher than the level plane of the ground. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.**

NOTES:

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- 1: It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.
- 2: Techniques such as the "crow hop" and "the leap" are illegal. (See 2-16; 2-33)

Gloves/Mitts (1.4.1) - Gloves/mitts shall:

- a. Be a maximum of two colors excluding lacing and manufacturer's logo colors. Lacing shall not be the color of the ball.
- b. Not be entirely optic in color.
- c. Not have an optic-colored marking on the outside or inside that gives the appearance of the ball.
- d. Be permitted to have one American flag not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches.
- e. Not be judged as distracting by the umpire.

Gloves with optic yellow markings can be made legal by coloring in the optic yellow with a black marker or black shoe polish. Tell the coach so they can make the glove legal for play.

Substituting (3.3.3) - The plate umpire shall record ALL substitutions on the lineup card and then announce immediately any changes(s) to the opposing team's head coach. Projected substitutions ARE NOT permitted.

If there is no announcement of substitutions, a substitute has entered the game when:

- a. A runner takes the place of a runner she has replaced.
- b. A pitcher takes her place on the pitcher's plate.
- c. A fielder reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder she has replaced.
- d. A batter takes her place in the batter's box.
- e. and, in each of the above situations, when the ball is declared live by the plate umpire.

ART. 4...A substitute or courtesy runner shall not enter the contest unreported. (3-6-7 Penalty, 8-9-7)

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions with the above material or any unusual plays or circumstances. We are all in this together and together we will strive for consistency. Have a great softball season.