

NSAA SOFTBALL NEWSLETTER

A Publication by the Nebraska School Activities Association
For Softball Coaches and Officials Registered With the NSAA
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Umpires Need to Enter Schedules

Softball umpires hoping to be evaluated during the 2010 season need to enter their schedules on their NSAA web page. In order for NSAA evaluators to find assigned umpires in their area, your schedules must be posted. Make sure that your varsity high school schedule is accurate with times and locations. For those umpires who receive games from an assignor, please update your NSAA schedule as soon as you accept the game(s). Also, make sure that you remove any canceled contests so the evaluators have to most update information.

Gorilla Gold is Okay for Pitchers

The NCAA and ASA have approved a product called Gorilla Gold, a resin-based dying agent, for use by pitchers. The NFHS rule have been modified to “permit powdered resin or *any comparable drying agent*” to be used by the pitcher. As long as the particular product “does not transfer any foreign substance to the ball from the hand” and it is permitted to be used by a pitcher on the hands, but not directly applied to the ball.

2010 NFHS Softball Rules Interpretations

Publisher’s Note: The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented. Robert F. Kanaby, Publisher, NFHS Publications © 2010

SITUATION 1: R1 is on second base and R2 is on first base with no outs. B3 hits a high pop up in the vicinity of F4. “Infield fly” was not called by either umpire. The ball drops, rolling into short right field and R1 advances to third base. And R2 heads for second. F4 picks up the ball and throws to F6 covering second base for an apparent force out of R2. There was no tag. After all action stops, the defensive coach appeals to the umpires that the infield-fly rule should have been called and therefore B3 should be declared out. **RULING:** After conferring, the umpires call B3 out on first base for the infield fly; however, R1 and R2 advanced at their own risk. If the defense just touched the base for a force, R2 is safe at second. If she was initially called out for the force, she would be put back at second base. **COMMENT:** There is no “putting the runner(s) in jeopardy” in this situation. The fielders, runners and coaches are expected to know the infield-fly rule and when it is in effect, even if not called by the umpires. (2-30; 8-2-9 Note)

SITUATION 2: R1 is on second base and R2 is on first base with no outs. B3 hits a high pop up in the vicinity of F4. “Infield fly” was not called by either umpire. The ball drops, rolling into short center field. See the ball on the ground in the outfield, R1 advances to third base and R2 starts for second. F4 retrieves the ball, tosses it to F6 who tags R2 before she reaches second base and is declared out by the base umpire. After all action stops, the defensive coach appeals to the umpires that the infield-fly rule should also have been called and therefore B3 should also be declared out. **RULING:** After conferring, the umpires call B3 out for the infield fly, but determine that R1 and R2 were not put in jeopardy by lack of the infield fly call and advanced at their own risk after the ball rolled into the outfield. Since R2 was tagged out before reaching second, she is also out because the ball is alive and the runners can advance at their own risk. **COMMENT:** There is no “putting the runner(s) in jeopardy” in this situation. The fielders, runners and coaches are expected to know the infield-fly rule and when it is in effect, even if not called by the umpires. (2-30; 8-2-9 Note)

Situation 3: With bases loaded and less than two outs, B5 pops up in the infield. The umpires call “Infield Fly.” F6 intentionally drops the ball and then bounds away from her. R1 on third takes off for home, just as the umpire declares the ball dead because F6 intentionally dropped the ball. The umpire then returns R1 to third. The coach of the team at bat claims that the ball should not have been declared dead, since the batter would have been out under the infield-fly rule. **RULING:** The infield-fly rule takes precedence of the intentionally-dropped fly ball. Therefore, the ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk. In this play, the umpire made the mistake when he/she declared the ball dead, which prevents R1 from scoring. Even if the runner was close to scoring she shall be returned to the last base occupied at the time the ball was declared dead.

Situation 4: With bases loaded and one out, B5 pops up in the infield. The umpires fail to call “Infield Fly.” F6 settles under the ball with ordinary effort before intentionally dropping the fly ball. Seeing the ball on the ground and no infield-fly call from the umpires, all three runners begin to advance to the next base. F6 picks up the ball and throws to F4, who is standing on second. She then throws to F3 at first base for an apparent double play. The coach of the team at-bat claims that since the umpires failed to call the infield-fly rule properly and there should be no double play. **RULING:** The umpires failed to recognize the infield fly and then they failed to recognize an intentionally dropped ball. (Rule 8-2-10). The purpose of calling an "intentionally-dropped ball" dead is to prevent the defense from trying to turn a double play. Now at the end of all this action the umpires confer with each other and realize the error of their ways. The umpires put the runners who were put in jeopardy by not recognizing the initial infield fly and then by not then not by declaring the ball dead on the intentional drop. The umpires should rule infield fly, call the batter out, and return the runners to the bases. (2-30; 8-2-9; 8-2-10; 10-2-3g; 10-2-3m)

Situation 5: With bases loaded and one out, B5 pops up in the infield. The umpires fail to call “Infield Fly.” F6, who settles under the ball with ordinary effort, fails to secure the ball and it pops out of her glove and it falls to the ground a few feet away. Seeing the ball on the ground and no infield-fly call from the umpires, all three runners begin to advance to the next base. F6 picks up the ball and tags R2 who is running from second to third. She then throws to F3 at first base for an apparent double play to end the inning. The coach of the team at-bat claims that since the umpires failed to call the infield-fly rule properly, his runners were forced to advance. Meanwhile, the defensive coach wants B5 called out on the infield fly and R2, who was tagged, called out for advancing when she was not required because of the infield fly situation. **RULING:** After conferring, the umpires agree that the infield-fly rule should have been called. Since the umpires put the runners in jeopardy by not recognizing the initial infield fly, the umpires should rule infield fly, call the batter out, and return the runners to the bases. **COMMENT:** The fielders, runners and coaches are expected to know the infield-fly rule and when it is in effect, even if not called by the umpires. (2-30; 8-2-9 Note)

SITUATION 6: The home team is supporting a charitable cause and has purchased pink softballs with the NFHS Authenticating Mark for use in a contest. **RULING:** Not permitted. The rules require the ball to be white or optic yellow. Use of any other color fundamentally changes the game and could increase liability exposure to the organization that permitted its use. There are numerous other “pink” items that can be used in a game without fundamentally changing how the game is played (shoes, socks, shoelaces, wristbands, headbands, uniforms and bats). **COMMENT:** Manufacturers are required to only put the NFHS Authenticating Mark on softballs that meet all NFHS specifications. The NFHS should be notified when a pink softball has an NFHS Authenticating Mark. (1-3-1; 1-3-8)

SITUATION 7: The home team provides game balls to the umpire that are labeled with identical COR and compression, but not labeled with dynamic stiffness. **RULING:** Proper procedure; COR and compression are required labels on softballs used in competition. Those are separate and different specifications and measurements from dynamic stiffness. The dynamic stiffness of 12-inch softballs shall not exceed 7,500 pounds/inch. Manufacturers are expected to adhere to this requirement during the manufacturing process in order to stamp the ball with the NFHS Authenticating Mark. As a result, all softballs used in competition with the appropriate NFHS Authenticating Mark are assumed to meet the requirement. No new mark indicating compliance is required to be stamped on the ball. (1-3-3; 1-3-4; 1-3-8)

SITUATION 8: The home team has a box in its dugout designed to hold and heat numerous bats. The box has an artificial heat source and heats the bats up to 75 to 80 degrees. **RULING:** Heating bats alters the bat specifications, enhances performance and renders the bats illegal. Therefore, the bats are not permitted to be heated and the box shall be removed from the dugout. (1-5-1c, 7-4-2)

SITUATION 9: B1 comes to bat in the first inning with a “stinger” on the grip of her bat. **RULING:** Legal; this type of attachment does not change the properties of the bat, nor does it enhance the bat’s performance. (1-5-2a)

SITUATION 10: A player has an eyebrow piercing and has a rubber piece inserted into the piercing to maintain the opening. **RULING:** This item is considered jewelry and players in the game are prohibited from wearing jewelry. (3-2-12)

SITUATION 11: The field includes an elevated cement step in front of each dugout. F3 catches a foul fly with her right foot on the ground completely in live-ball territory and her left foot on the elevated cement step with half the foot on the step and the other half over live-ball territory but completely off the ground. **RULING:** F3 is out of play and no-catch is declared. The foot that is on the cement step is out of play since no part of that foot is touching the ground in playable territory. (5-1-1i Note b)

SITUATION 12: In the first inning, one of the new softballs is fouled out of play. The plate umpire hands a new ball to the catcher. She immediately drops the ball to the ground, scuffs up the surface, returns it to the pitcher and the next pitch is thrown. **RULING:** Illegal pitch; no player is permitted to apply a foreign substance to the ball. **COMMENT:** If possible, preventative umpiring should be used by stopping the catcher from rubbing the ball on the ground, taking it away and giving her a different ball. (6-2-2 Penalty)

SITUATION 13: With one out, R1 on first base and B3 in the batter's box with a 3-2 count, the plate umpire calls the next pitch a strike for the second out. The plate umpire then turns toward the backstop to talk to the scorekeeper while B3 stays in the batter's box thinking she only has two strikes. When play resumes, (a) B3 swings and misses the next pitch for what she believes to be strike three, or (b) B3 hits the next pitch for a triple, scoring R1 from first base. B4 steps into the box when time is called for a defensive appeal that B3 batted twice. **RULING:** When B3 remains in the batter’s box after she struck out for the second out, she becomes an improper batter. In (a), B3 is removed from the batter’s box and B4, the proper batter comes to bat with a 0-1 count and two outs. In (b), B4, the proper batter, is declared out for the third out and the inning is over. R1’s run is negated since she would have been returned to first base had the inning not been over. (7-1-2 Penalties 1 and 2)

SITUATION 14: With one out, R1 on first base and B3 in the batter's box with a 3-2 count, the plate umpire calls the next pitch a strike for the second out. The plate umpire then turns toward the backstop to talk to the scorekeeper while B3 stays in the batter's box thinking she only has two strikes. When play resumes, B3 hits the next pitch for a triple, scoring R1 from first base. B4 now steps in the batter's box and (a) takes the first pitch for a called ball, or (b) grounds to first for the third out. At this point the defense appeals that B3 batted twice. **RULING:** Even though B3 batted twice, it is too late to appeal batting out of order. When a pitch was thrown to B4 in both (a) and (b), B3 became the proper batter and all play stands. (7-1-2 Penalty 5)

SITUATION 15: B1 swings at and misses a pitch but has time to reset and swing again, making contact the second time. The ball is hit either fair or foul. **RULING:** When B1 attempts to contact the ball a second time, the umpire should call an immediate “dead ball” and a strike on B1. Any runners on base are returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. Each batter is only permitted one swing at each pitch. (5-1-1b; 7-2-1b)

SITUATION 16: With first base unoccupied, F2 drops strike three to B1, a right-handed batter, and the ball rolls into fair territory in front of home plate when (a) B1, in her attempt to run to first base, unintentionally

kicks the ball away from F2, or (b) B1 and F2 collide as F2 tries to retrieve the ball. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), interference is called on B1; the ball is dead and B1 is out. (8-2-6)

SITUATION 17: Ball four is called and B1 is awarded first base. B1 begins to advance to first base and F2 throws the ball to F3. B1 touches first base and overruns it while the ball remains live. After overrunning first, she (a) returns immediately to first base, or (b) makes an attempt toward second base before returning. In both situations, F3 then tags B1 with the ball while she is off the base. **RULING:** In (a), B1 is permitted to return to first base, and in (b), she is declared out. (8-6-8)

SITUATION 18: With no outs and R1 on first base, B2 hits an over-the-fence home run. R1 scores and as B2 rounds third base, her teammates line up on the third base foul line and give her "high fives" as she heads for home. One teammate reaches out and pushes her toward home plate. **RULING:** Even though this is during a dead ball, the teammate who pushed B2 toward home is in violation of assisting a runner. R1's run counts and B2 is called out for being physically assisted. (8-3-11; 8-6-5)

SITUATION 19: With one out and R1 on first base, B3 bunts the ball down the third base line toward F5 who fields the ball. F5 rushes her throw to F3 at first base and the ball hits the first base dugout. F2, who has trailed up the line, picks up the ball and throws to F3 who has moved to the colored portion of first base. R1 seeing F3 change to the colored portion of the base runs inside the base path in fair territory heading for the white portion of the bag. The throw hits B3 in the shoulder before reaching first base. **RULING:** The ball remains live and play continues. When the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, the defensive player uses the colored portion of the double base and the batter-runner is permitted to run in fair territory. If the batter-runner is then hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference unless she intentionally interferes. (8-10-2c)

Coaches

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