

Weekly Announcements

April
9

ASA Bat List Information

Umpires are no longer required to check bats or equipment prior to the contest. Coaches are responsible for making sure that players are legally equipped and that only legal bats are being used. Coaches can find the legal bat list on the USA softball website - www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/play-usa-softball/certified-usa-softball-equipment The site shows a list of legal bats as well as a list of bats that were at one time approved and had the ASA 2000 or 2004 mark, but have since been found to be illegal. Coaches are responsible to make sure all bats are legal.

DP-Flex

If used the DP/FLEX must be made know to the umpires and opposing coach prior to the start of the game. The DP is listed as one of the 9 hitters in the batting order. The DP is batting for the FLEX and they are placed in the 10th position on the line up card and will not bat. The substitution rule applies to the DP and the FLEX just as it does any other starter. They have one re-entry.

- If the FLEX bats the DP the DP has left the game and may re-enter one time.
- If the DP gets on base and the FLEX runs for them the DP has left the game and may re-enter one time.
- Legal substitutes may replace the DP at any time – but then DP like any starter has left the game and has one re-entry.
- A legal substitute may replace the FLEX at any time – but then the FLEX has left the game and has one re-entry.
- The DP may play defense at any position.
- A team may go from 10 to 9 players any number of times provided they do not violate the substitution rule.
- It is an illegal substitution if the flex goes in to bat for anyone but the DP.
- The DP and FLEX only have one re-entry like other positions if they leave the game.

Jewelry is not permitted

This includes no earrings, no plastic loops can be placed in the holes. It also includes the plastic or rubber wristbands. I have seen several of these being worn during contests. They must be removed. There is no rule prohibiting glitter eye black, but if an umpire feels it is distracting they can request the player remove the glittered eye black.

Identification Cards

Umpires should provide coaches a card with their name and town on it prior to each contest so they know who the umpires are for each game. In many cases this is the only way coaches know who to recommend for post-season. Don't assume they know you – or that they will remember who you were when they submit recommendations.

Bat Warmers/sleeves not permitted

Bat sleeves are not permitted during a contest. Rule 1-5-1b states bats shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Rule 1-5-3 indicates warm up bats used in the on-deck circle shall have all parts permanently and securely attached at the time of manufacture and at the time of use. In addition bat warmers like the PyroFlite Bat warmer are not permitted.

Umpire Mechanics

There is no substitute for hustle. Umpires are reminded they are to use the proper signals and get in the proper position to make calls. Review the proper NFHS softball signals in the Umpires manual page 566. Proper handling of any softball games demands each member of the umpire crew hustle at all times. In addition, the following three factors are essential to the success of any umpire: Judgment, Mechanics and technique, Knowledge of the rules.

Keep Players and Coaches in the Dugout

Players and coaches outside the dugout may not be paying close attention to what is going on during an at bat and even if they are paying attention, outside the dugout is much more dangerous than being within the dugout as the rule requires. Only the on-deck batter and coaches in the coaching box may be outside the dugout during a live ball. This rule applies to both baseball and softball.

Coaches - follow the rule, umpires make sure you enforce the rule and require everyone to be in the dugout, not standing or sitting outside on buckets.

Music Between Batters

It is permissible for a PA person to play music between innings prior to the first batter appearing. However, it is not permissible to play music between batters. Generally this is done only for the home team and is perceived as intimidation tactic or to be a distraction to the pitcher. No music is permitted between batters, only between innings or during a pitching change.

Hit By Pitch

Batters can't intentionally try to get hit with a pitched ball. Rule 8-2 b and c are the rule reference for umpires and coaches.

A batter is awarded first base when:

- b) a pitched ball is entirely within the batter's box and it strikes the batter or her clothing. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required. HOWEVER, the batter may not obviously try to get hit by the pitch.
- c) a pitched ball (not entirely in the batter's box) not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered part of the bat. IF no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter WILL NOT be awarded first base unless it is ball four.

The umpire will use their best judgement to determine if a batter has tried to avoid being hit. Batters should not try to lean into pitches to get hit and hope to be awarded first base.

Umpire Professionalism

How an umpire looks and the way they communicate with players and coaches makes a big impression on how well coaches, players and fans feel the umpire does during a game. The appearance of umpires is most important, for both the respect of players, coaches and spectators, as well as comfort and safety. Softball umpires are to wear a powder blue pullover shirt, heather gray slacks and a navy blue fitted cap. If an undershirt is worn under the powder blue shirt, it shall be white and SHORT sleeved. If it is cold, and I know much of the spring it has been, then a navy blue jacket is permitted. Sweatshirts are not to be worn, unless underneath the navy blue jacket. Make sure you have the proper equipment available. If umpires want to earn the respect of coaches, players and fans, we need to look the part and be professional in our communication.

Use of the DP/Flex

We still seem to be having misinterpretation and misapplication of the DP/FLEX by coaches and umpires. Below are a few reminders.

If used the DP/Flex must be made know to the umpires and opposing coach prior to the start of the game. The DP is listed as one of the 9 hitters in the batting order. The DP is batting for the FLEX and they are placed in the 10th position in the lineup and will not bat. The substitution rule applies to the DP and FLEX just as it does any other starter. They have one re-entry.

DP/Flex basics:

- DP is listed in first 9 and bats.
- FLEX is listed 10th and plays defense.
- DP can also play defense for any of the batting players who remain in the game as batters.
- If the DP plays defense for the FLEX that FLEX player has left the game but may re-enter one time.
- After re-entry if the DP plays defense for the FLEX again that FLEX player is done and cannot re-enter.
- A substitute could enter as a new FLEX player.
- If the FLEX ever bats or runs bases it must be for the DP who has left the game but may re-enter one time.
- If the DP re-enters and the FLEX again bats or runs for that DP that DP player is done and cannot re-enter.
- A substitute could enter as a new DP player.
- REMEMBER DP AND FLEX **MAY** PLAY DEFENSE AT THE SAME TEIM – BUT **CAN NEVER** PLAY OFFENSE AT THE SAME TIME.

Sweatshirts/Jackets

Cold weather during the softball season is common in Kansas. It is permissible for defenders to wear sweatshirts on the field of play unless the umpire were to deem the extra clothing dangerous to play. A number is not required on the sweatshirt or jacket. A legal uniform is required under the jacket. (NFHS Rule 3-2-1)

Coaches must report substitutes

Coaches are to report all substitutes including courtesy runners to the plate umpire. Rule 3-6-7 indicates players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported. The umpires shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on

that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.

Check the Non-Approved Bat List

The ASA approved and non-approved bat list has moved to the teamusa.org website. The following is the link to the page where coaches can get the approved and non-approved bat list. <http://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/play-usa-softball/certified-usa-softball-equipment> Coaches should check all bats being used by their players and make sure they are on the approved bat list.

Catchers Box is to be Marked

A reminder to those marking softball fields that the catcher's box is to be marked in addition to the batters boxes. The catcher's box extends 10 feet behind the back edge of the batter's box and is 8 feet 5 inches wide. The catcher must be in the box when the pitcher assumes their position on the pitching plate.

Maximum Games

Softball players are permitted to play in 26 games during the season. Any amount of time in a contest as a pinch runner, courtesy runner or position player constitutes participation in that game. Teams at any level may only schedule 20 games, but a player can participate in 26.

Situation of the Week

There is a two-ball, one-strike count on the batter. The next pitch is called a strike. Now the umpire calls two balls and two strikes. The catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher in the 16-foot circle, but the batter goes to her dugout thinking it was strike three. The plate umpire calls her out for leaving home plate and entering the dugout.

RULING: Incorrect procedure. (2-5-2, 8-1-1, 8-2-4) **COMMENT:** Rule 8-2-4 specifies that the batter-runner is called out if she fails to advance to first base and enters the dugout/bench area. However, the batter does not become a batter-runner until she has completed her turn at bat (2-5-2, 8-1-1). In this case, the batter would be brought back to the plate to complete her turn at bat with a two-ball, two-strike count.

Situation of the Week #2

There are two outs with R1 at first base. B2 hits a single to left field. F7 throws the ball to F5, who, along with F3, runs to the pitcher's plate to calm F1 down. F5 hands the ball to F1 who has the ball in her hand as she is talking to her teammates. The third base coach tells R1 to run to third base as there is no defensive player at third. She runs to third base and the plate umpire calls her out.

RULING: Correct ruling. Provided F1 has control of the ball within the circle, the look-back rule is in effect. Also, the batter-runner would have to have reached first base – or been ruled out – for the look-back rule to be in effect. If F5 has control of the ball in the circle, the look-back rule is NOT in effect. **COMMENT:** In order for the look-back rule to be in effect, the pitcher must have the ball in her possession and be within the 16-foot circle, and the batter-runner must have reached first base or have been declared out before the rule is in effect. (8-7-1)

NFHS Softball Survey

All umpires and head coaches were sent a link to the NFHS survey for softball. Please complete the survey by the May 14 deadline. Your input is important to the NFHS as they look at potential new rules.

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Umpires – Provide Cards for Coaches

Umpires are reminded to give each coach a card with your name and hometown on it prior to each contest. This helps coaches remember who their umpires were and also will help as they begin deciding who to recommend for post-season. This is a great way to get your name in front of coaches for recommendations and future game assignments.

Length of Games

Several questions concerning the length of JV games have come to our office. The KSHSAA does not determine the length of JV contests other than they cannot be scheduled longer than allowed by NFHS rules. If a league chooses to have a time limit of 2 hours or limit the JV (sub-level) games to 5 innings that is not a KSHSAA rule but a league rule. Umpires should be made aware prior to the start of the contest what specific league rules there may be for ending a sub-level/JV game.

Varsity games can have no time limit. They must be completed by NFHS rules. The 10 run rule after five innings is in effect for all games. Leagues and or schools may agree to use the 15 after three innings run rule.

Interference

Umpires – remember if you have a play in which you feel a runner interfered with a fielder's initial attempt to make a play on a fair batted ball – you need to call interference IMMEDIATELY. Don't let the play continue. If there is interference it is a dead ball the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. When a runner is called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base and is credited with a fielder's choice. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out. (Rule 8-6-10)

Post Season Applications Due

A reminder to umpires that applications for state tournament assignment are due by May 4, 2018 and can be completed on-line or mailed or faxed to the KSHSAA. To complete the application on-line log in as an official and click on softball – the application is on the right hand side of the page. Any umpire who has attended a rule meeting and area supervisor meeting and scored 90% on the test should complete an application.

Line up Cards – Must have First Initial and Last Name

Coaches are reminded that line up cards must include both a first name initial and last name on the line-up card. Providing umpires with only last names and numbers is incorrect procedure. The line-up card must also include the jersey number, position and batting order. All eligible substitutes should also be listed with first name initial and last name.

Situation of the Week

R3 is on third base and R2 is on second base with no outs when B3 ops a fair, looping fly ball toward F3. As F3 is about to catch the ball, B3 unintentionally bumps F3, causing her to drop the ball.

RULING: The ball is dead and B3 is out. Play resumes with one out, R3 on third and R2 on second. (Rule 8-2-6 Penalty)

Coaches - Umpire Recommendations due May 2-9

Coaches you should meet with your school Athletic Director and submit your recommendations of 8 umpires you feel should be considered for State tournament selection. This is an on-line form and must be submitted by the school administrator by May 9. Recommend umpires you have observed during the past two years. Only umpires who have made themselves post-season eligible will be listed for schools to choose from.

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Music Between Batters

It is permissible for a PA person to play music between innings prior to the first batter appearing. However, it is not permissible to play music between batters. Generally this is done only for the home team and is perceived as intimidation tactic or to be a distraction to the pitcher. No music is permitted between batters, only between innings or during a pitching change.

Keep players back on home runs

Over the fence home runs are very exciting, but coaches need to remind players to stay back behind the plate until the runner has crossed home plate. Rule 3-6-6 states only the batter, runner(s), on-deck batter, coaches in the coach's box, bat/ball shaggers or one of the nine players on defense are permitted to be outside the designated dugout/bench.

Role of Assistant Coaches

We have had several incidents when assistant coaches are coming out to argue calls made by umpires. Head coaches are the only personnel who should be addressing umpires about a call made. Head coaches are the person who attends the pre-game meeting. Other coaches are there to assist players, not argue with umpires. Rule 3-6-15 states arguing ball and strike calls or other umpire judgment calls is prohibited. The penalty is ejection. Head coaches need to remind assistant coaches that all comments made to umpires should be made by the head coach.

Batters Wiping Out Lines

Rule 3-6-17 is very clear batters intentionally removing any lines of a batters box or field of play is prohibited. The penalty is a strike shall be called on the batter if a member of the offense intentionally removes the line and a ball awarded to the batter if a member of the defense intentionally erases a line. A team warning shall be issued, with the next offense resulting in a strike/ball, the offender and the head coach being restricted to the dugout. Umpires should remind coaches at the pre-game meeting and then ENFORCE the rule during the game. This appears to be an issue particularly with batters in the left batters box – who want to slap hit and may be out of the box. Be aware and enforce the rule correctly.

Coaches May NOT sit outside dugout

Coaches may not sit on a bucket or stand outside the dugout while their team is at bat. For several years a point of emphasis has been that coaches are not permitted to sit outside of the dugout, this is a safety issue. Coaches and players are to be in the dugout during play. Rule 3-6-6 states "Only the batter, runner(s), on-deck batter, coaches in the coaches box, bat/ball shaggers or one of the nine players on defense are permitted to be outside the designated dugout/bench or designated warm-up areas." NOTE: Bench personnel are permitted to engage in throwing and running activities during the one minute designated for the pitcher to throw her five warm-up pitches at the beginning of each half inning.

Situation of the Week

While F1 is taking her warm-up pitchers, B1 moves near the batter's box and takes practice swings to prepare for her upcoming time at bat.

RULING: B1 is prohibited from being any closer to home plate than her team's on deck circle. Therefore, the umpire shall instruct her to return to the on-deck circle. (2-5-3) The on-deck batter is a player of the offensive team entitled to occupy the on-deck circle

closest to her dugout. A single on-deck batter shall remain in her team's on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up. (7-5) The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle: a) when she becomes a batter; b) when directing a runner advancing from third base to home plate.

Regional Seeding Regional seeding day for Classes 2-1A, 3A, 4A-D2, 4A-DI is Wednesday, May 9. Schools should report their record as of 10:00 AM on Wednesday to their regional manager. Class 5A and 6A will have regional seeding meetings on Saturday, May 12. A coach or administrator should plan to attend these meetings if you will be hosting. Games played after the seeding day will be included on the record if a team qualifies for the state tournament.

Win-Loss Record Form Due

This form is completed online by the school administrator or coaches and lists all the games played and the final score for each game. All schools, must complete this form and make sure it is accurate for seeding purposes for regionals and state. All games and scores must be recorded by May 14.

Pace of Play

I have observed several games in the past two weeks and notice that we are taking too long between innings and between pitches. There is to be 1 minute between innings. In the games I kept time it was 90 seconds to two minutes between games. Added together that could mean an extra 10-15 minutes per game. The next issue is the time between pitches – once the ball has been returned to the pitcher, they have 20 seconds to deliver the next pitch. The batter must be in the batters box within 10 seconds after the ball is returned to the pitcher. Coaches, if you are giving signals, you need to do so quicker as most of the time this was taking 30 seconds or more. Umpires, I would warn once, then if a batter isn't ready – it is a strike, if the pitcher isn't getting the pitch off in 20 seconds it is a ball. Hustle in and out between innings and keep the game moving.

Coaches - Umpire Recommendations due May 2-9 Coaches you should meet with your school Athletic Director and submit your recommendations of 8 umpires you feel should be considered for State tournament selection. This is an on-line form and must be submitted by the school administrator by May 9. Recommend umpires you have observed during the past two years. Only umpires who have made themselves post-season eligible will be listed for schools to choose from.

Pitching Position

Even this late in the year we still have misunderstanding about NFHS pitching rules and confuse them with other levels. When games are using NFHS rules pitchers may start with one or both feet on the pitching plate. Here are a few reminders:

- A pitcher cannot take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without having possession of the ball.
- A pitcher's shoulders must be in line with 1st and 3rd bases.
- The starting position for the pitcher requires the pivot foot be on or partially on the top of the pitcher's plate; and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate.
- Pitchers must take (or simulate taking) signals from the catcher with their hands separated. The pivot foot must be on or partially on the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate.
- The pitcher must bring the hands together in front of the body (one time only) for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball.
- The pitcher can remove herself from the pitching position before bringing her hands together by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet.
- The pitcher can also remove herself from the pitching position when the hands are together and no part of the windup has been made by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet.
- Either foot can be removed first from the pitcher's plate.
- Both feet must start within or partially within the 24 inch length of the pitching plate. As the pitcher winds up and delivers the pitch, the stride foot and the pivot foot must remain in or partially within the pitching plate.

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Situation of the Week

Number 11 has served as the courtesy runner for the pitcher for several innings. In the seventh inning, the pitcher hits for a single.

Number 11 again courtesy runs for the pitcher. After #11 safely reaches third base, the head coach requests that substitute, S1 who has not previously been in the game, replace #11 (the courtesy runner).

RULING: An eligible substitute may enter the game to “pinch run” for the courtesy runner. In this situation S1, the pinch runner, is entering the game in the pitcher’s position in the batting order; the pitcher has left the game (3-3-2)

Regional Tournaments

Regional tournaments start for all classes today. Hopefully the weather will cooperate. Every team starts a new season today, and the winner of the regional will qualify for the state tournament

May 24 & 25. State sites:

Class 2-1A- Pratt- Green Sports Complex

Class 3A - Manhattan - Twin Oaks Complex

Class 4A-DII - Salina - Bill Burke Complex

Class 4A-DI - Emporia - Trusler Sports Complex

Class 5A - Maize - Maize High School playing on one turf field

Class 6A - Lawrence - Arrocha Ballpark - Rock Chalk Park

Summer Coaching and Player Restrictions

Once a player has completed membership (no longer on the roster and not practicing) on a school team they may begin practicing/playing with a non-school team. Until May 26, 2018 players are limited to no more than five (5) from the same school squad playing or practicing together on the same non-school (club) team. A school employed coach (head, assistant or Rule 10) may not work with any of their players after the school season is over until May 26, 2018.

Beginning May 26, 2018 (Saturday before Memorial Day) through September 3, 2018 (Tuesday after Labor Day) there are no restrictions on the number of players that may play together on a non-school team. The school coaches can coach these non-school teams during the summer. Summer is defined as the Saturday before Memorial Day until the Tuesday after Labor Day.

If a coach wants to have a "coach's one week team camp" it must take place between the dates of May 27, 2018 and July 15, 2018. Beginning July 16, 2018 a school coach may not have a "coach's one week team camp" for their potential players. Only players that can be on the school team (are enrolled or pre-enrolled at the school) can attend the coach's one week team camp. KSHSAA catastrophic and liability insurance does not cover the coach's one week team camp.

Beginning September 4, 2018 school softball coaches cannot coach their potential players (anyone enrolled grades 9-12 for HS) in fall leagues. School employed softball coaches are also not permitted to give private instruction to any player that could potentially be on their team the next school season. During the school year, school employed coaches may not have contact with their players for sport specific instruction.

Beginning September 4, 2018 players are limited to no more than five (5) from the same school squad the previous season (spring 2018) on their non-school (club) team. Any amount of time played on a school squad constitutes team membership. Squad is defined as Varsity, JV, 9th, A-team, B-team, etc.

Players may receive private instruction at any time, but the person giving the instruction cannot be a school employed coach during the school year outside the season of sport. Private instruction is defined as one student receiving instruction from one person during a period of instruction. There may be up to two support persons at the lesson, but they are not receiving instruction. For example a pitcher could have a catcher and a person acting as a batter at the lesson.

Please check with your school administration if you have additional questions. Further information can be found on the KSHSAA website at this [link](#).