



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin 21-2

Director of Officials Development – Softball

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- This bulletin may contain the most important information of any our past editions. I urge you to read all the information carefully. As our Football DOD and my friend Bruce Maurer likes to say –“ **The rulings found in this bulletin supersede all previous rulings!**” **This information is also found in the email sent to Spring Sports Officials from OHSAA Communications on Friday. This bulletin is intended to offer further clarification to you.**
- As stated in our White Book Supplement (WBS) and state meeting the 2021 Rules Modifications are subject to adjustment at any time prior to or during the season. Our first revision is the elimination of the modification concerning softballs. This modification has been eliminated in its entirety. It’s important that every umpire and coach understand what this change means:
 1. Disregard the modification discussed in the state meeting.
 2. We will return to the standard rule and related procedures for handling game balls.
 3. The home team will provide the game balls.
 4. Each team will use the same softballs.
 5. We will use pre-2019 procedures and the Ball Rotation system found in Rule 6-5.
 6. Under Rule 6-5 the pitcher may request a new ball at the start of a half inning – prior to any of her warm-up pitches. In the bottom of the first inning the pitcher must throw an unused ball if there is one. This ball must be used until it goes out of play or becomes unplayable (example- wet or damaged).
 7. If a ball comes into contact with body fluids it is unplayable, must be removed/replaced and can’t be used until sanitized.
 8. This aligns with our previous statements on Infractions by the Pitcher. The pitcher is not permitted to lick her fingers and wipe them off. Pitchers are not allowed to put their hands to their mouths or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball. This will be a “no pitch.” The ball is dead immediately. Any umpire shall make this call. The ball will be replaced and sanitized and the pitcher must sanitize her hands before play continues.
- We have received many questions asking about umpire responsibilities for enforcing protocols. Here are some things you should be doing –
 1. Enforce book rules on equipment - plastic shields covering the entire face shall not be allowed **unless integrated into the face mask and attached to a helmet (Rule 1-7-1 and 1-8-4)**

2. Equipment/Uniforms or any portion thereof can never display an unsporting message
3. Pregame Conference – Distancing and Masks – Receive Line Up Cards
4. Distance yourself during substitutions and reporting of same
5. Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players scoring or after home runs. This has always been a violation of Rule 3-6-6. This is an important rule to enforce.
6. NFHS rules allow for dugouts/designated warm up areas to be extended to provide for social distancing. If needed, these areas shall be clearly marked and located beyond the end of the dugout furthest from home plate. Depending on available facilities these areas could also be in a dead ball area behind dugout. Never extend the dugout towards home plate and inside the fence. (Rule 10-2-3a)
7. Enforce Infractions by the Pitcher – Item #8 above.
 - Follow the Umpire Mechanics changes in the WBS, other publications and the state meeting –
 1. The plate umpire calling balls and strikes shall allow adequate distance behind the catcher while still being able to perform his or her duty.
 2. Umpire cloth facial coverings are recommended but not required while on the field during play. If worn they shall be of one color, not distracting and have no designs. Prior to and after the game umpires shall wear a face covering. Umpires may wear disposable glove and masks. Facial coverings are generally not required between innings – a properly positioned umpire will not be near anyone else. Umpires should put on their facial covering if having a conversation with any person.
 3. The catcher and batter shall be at a six foot distance when the umpire is dusting the plate. Fielders shall be at a six foot distance as the umpire is dusting off the pitcher’s plate or a base.
 4. Base umpires shall maintain six feet from any player when in a starting/initial position.
 - Here are some examples of items that are **NOT** responsibilities of the umpires –
 1. Sanitizing Equipment or supervising this activity
 2. Face Coverings in Dugout
 3. Distancing in Charged Conferences or other player activity
 4. Enforcing the “No Touch Rule” (other than Rule 3-6-6 enforcement)
 5. We don’t call a runner out for a high five or a coach being too close
 6. Coaches and schools are responsible to insure these safety regulations are followed
 - Some other questions –
 1. When does the umpire have to wear a mask? To and from the field plus during any situation where you must have a conversation with any person at any close distance.
 2. Can players cover their mouth with their glove while talking to others? Yes, we can’t cover and police every possible situation. A coach could deal with this.
 3. Can a player wearing a gaiter lower it and wear around her neck? Yes, there is no rule to prohibit this and we want to make it as easy as possible for a player to both put on a face covering and remove it as needed.
 4. Can a player carry a bottle of hand sanitizer in her pocket? Yes, we want to make it easy for players to clean their hands.

5. Where can I find the White Book Supplement? The White Book and Supplement are on the DOD Page of the Officiating website . The link to the WBS is -
<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Officiating/dod/Softball/SoftballWhiteBook.pdf>
- All of the above will also be covered in an update as part of an upcoming local online meeting. Watch for that coming soon. Note that the local meeting schedule is flexible and there may not be a meeting every week. All meetings will be announced through the Columbus office. If you don't receive credit for one of these meetings don't contact the office or me. You will not be penalized – however they are informational and important.
 - The Rules Test for 2021 has been delayed due to technical issues in our office. We will update everyone as soon as we know more.
 - Also coming in a future bulletin – a reminder on bats and review of those requirements. Remember that was our biggest issue in 2019.