



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin

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THIS ISSUE OF THE SOFTBALL BULLETIN OPENS WITH SOME REMINDERS AND THEN CONTINUES WITH SOME ADDITIONAL UPDATES INCLUDING PLAY SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

- **Online Local Meetings** – as previously announced there will be two of these with one scheduled late March and one late April. Details and login instructions will be emailed to all umpires when these are published. Watch for the first meeting coming from the OHSAA Central Office!
- The online state meeting is still available. To access, log in to your myOHSAA profile, click the “Rules Meetings” icon in the top right, click “Find a State Meeting” from the left side menu, then select “Softball” from the “Sports” dropdown menu, “Official” from “Meeting Type” dropdown menu, and then click “Search”. You may view the online meeting on any device except for a Google Chromebook. A Google Chromebook is a type of laptop computer, entirely different from the popular internet browser Google Chrome. You may view the online meetings using the internet browser Google Chrome. **PLEASE NOTE THIS MEETING MUST BE COMPLETED BY MIDNIGHT ON MARCH 25. AFTER THAT TIME A \$50 PENALTY FEE APPLIES – THIS IS BECAUSE UMPIRES ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE THE MEETING PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SEASON.**
- **Rules Test** - The OHSAA is offering an optional exam for umpires who wish to improve their rules study and knowledge. This will also provide umpires with an opportunity to earn extra points for their tournament composite rating for the 2024 season. Information concerning this exam, along with instructions, will be coming from the OHSAA Central Office. Please note the exam must be completed in this time frame listed in the instructions as it will not be extended. Umpires who complete the optional rules test will receive additional point credit for their tournament officials rating based on their score as follows:

94% and above - 3 points

86% - 92% - 2 points

80-84% - 1 point

- Hold the date – Our Pre-Tournament Clinic will be held Sunday, May 7 at Waggoner Rd. Junior High School in Reynoldsburg. Registration will begin at noon and the clinic will conclude around 4PM. All OHSAA umpires are welcome. In addition to other information we will highlight the three umpire system used in our Regional and District games.
- We've had a number of questions, mostly from umpires who work both baseball and softball asking why our Softball White Book does not include all umpire mechanics as found in the Baseball Blue Book. Obviously, we need to do a better job of both telling umpires about the purpose of the White Book and the use of the NFHS Softball Umpires Manual as our official mechanics publication for Ohio. To borrow from the White Book – *“The White Book” provides highlights of NFHS rules and mechanics along with the OHSAA information that you'll need for the coming season. The goal is to put all this information in one place and make it easily accessible for our umpires. It's important to note that unlike the OHSAA books provided in some other sports this is NOT a replacement for the NFHS Softball Umpires Manual which you will continue to receive every other year (even numbered years). We continue to use NFHS Mechanics, the same as used in USA Softball. We are confident that the customized content of the White Book will better serve you both preseason and in season.*

Let's look at some questions received in meetings and emails so far this year -

- Question – If teams are playing doubleheaders of 5-inning games is there a change to the run-ahead rule? Ruling – No, the run rule is after five innings so in this case there is no such rule that would apply. In the event of a wide margin in the score coaches can still agree to end a game at any time.
- Question - If the pitcher is taking her signal from her father or someone in the stands, does that make that person a coach and should that person then be asked to relocate to the dugout? Ruling – No, the pitcher can take the signal from anyone and that does not have to be a coach. Plus, why would we want more “dads in the dugout”?
- It would appear, from the questions asked about the elimination of the jewelry rule and the specification banning the on-field communication use of smart watches needs further explanation. A smart watch can be worn by a player on the field but it can not be used as a communication device (Rule 1-8-6) The penalty for a violation is in Rule 3-6-11 which states that the umpire shall eject the offender, unless the umpire deems the offense to be minor in nature. If minor, the umpire may warn the offender and eject for a repeated offense. Continuing on the topic of jewelry, umpires do not need to worry about standards as to what to allow regarding jewelry. The only consideration is whether an item would be, for example, sharp or reflective and in that situation could it cause an injury to a player or other person on the field.
- We continue to get questions concerning powdered rosin and comparable drying agents. For this reason we are reprinting a situation from one year ago (22-5). **PLAY**

SITUATION : In the first inning, the offensive coach notices that the other team's pitcher is placing a hand into a back pocket before a number of pitches and then going directly to the ball. In (a), the plate umpire asks the pitcher and is informed that the pitcher is using a drying agent that is comparable to powdered rosin. The umpire inspects the ball and finds no discoloration and that no material has been transferred to the ball. In (b), later in the third inning a foul ball has been returned to the plate umpire who notices that the ball is discolored, and a tacky substance has been transferred to the ball.

RULING: Legal in (a), drying agents comparable to powdered rosin and designed for use in softball are permissible and by rule do not require the player to wipe off the hand before making contact with the ball. In (b), comparable drying agents are allowable unless they discolor and/or transfer material to the ball. Once the umpire notices discoloration or material that has been transferred to the ball from the drying agent being used, this material is no longer permitted (6-2-2). Since this is a violation of Rule 6-2-2 an illegal pitch is called if a pitch has been thrown when the ball has such a substance on it. This is also a violation of Rule 1-3-6 and in turn Rule 3-6-1 for the failure to use legal equipment. The penalty for 3-6-1 includes a team warning for the first equipment violation with the offender and the head coach being restricted to the dugout on any subsequent violation. **COMMENT:** These products are designed to dry the player's hand without transferring material that would result in the ball becoming discolored or making it "tacky". It is impossible for an umpire on the field to determine the exact makeup of drying agents being used by the pitcher during a softball game, or for them to determine if the product has been altered from its original design or chemical makeup. Drying agents are allowed to be used unless/until it is noted that they have discolored the ball or transferred material onto the ball. If either of these conditions are noted at any point during the game, their use will no longer be permitted. If the player has another drying agent (a different towel with the product) that new product can be utilized provided there is no discoloration or material transferred to the ball while using that new item.

- Question – A couple years ago the softball rules were changed to allow players to wear hair beads. In some other NFHS sports these beads must be kept close to the head and not waving around – does this rule apply in softball? Ruling – No, there is no such provision and we must be careful not to apply rules from other sports in softball games.
- The season starts for real this Saturday, March 25. Let's play ball and all have a great season!