



OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
PRESEASON GUIDE FOR SOFTBALL UMPIRES  
“THE WHITE BOOK”

2023 Edition

JERRY FICK - DIRECTOR OF OFFICIALS DEVELOPMENT – SOFTBALL

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# Officials Needed !

## GETTING REGISTERED IS EASY!



- Create a profile on [myOHSAA.org](http://myOHSAA.org)
- Pay course or testing fee
- Complete required coursework
- Attend required local and state educational meetings each year
- Contact a local secretary
- Begin officiating, make your own schedule and have fun!



# Welcome to the 2023 Softball Season

It's time for another softball season and I again look forward to again serving as Director of Officials Development - Softball. There is no doubt that the part of the job I enjoy the most is working with our roughly 3,000 umpires and with the rules interpreters and other leaders in our sixty local associations. Over the past several years I had the pleasure to meet many of you at our clinics, state and local meetings, and during our tournaments. I hope to see you this year.



**Jerry Fick**  
**Director of Officials**  
**Development-Softball**

We have a number of things that are new this year – the first of these is another update of “The White Book”, which 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 will better serve you.

There are no changes to the softball umpire uniform this year. The OHSAA has a new logo but the logo for officials’ uniforms is NOT changing.

## Congratulations

Before further discussing the coming season I would like to congratulate, on behalf of the entire OHSAA family and all of our officials, James Grandey. Jim is from Greenfield in the Southeast District, has been an OHSAA Softball Umpire for 42 years, and was the 2022 recipient of the National Federation OHIO OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR for softball. He has served as an OHSAA tournament umpire and is very active as a member of the Chillicothe, Southern Ohio, West Central, and Wilmington Umpires Associations. In the Wilmington Association he has served in many roles as an instructor, an interpreter and filled in as local

secretary on multiple occasions when needed.

When you see Jim on the field please congratulate him and say thanks for his many contributions to the OHSAA.

Jim was honored at the Officials Hall of Fame Banquet in June. In addition, veteran softball umpire Larry Saxton was inducted into the 33<sup>rd</sup> class of the OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame. Larry is from Defiance and a tournament official in several sports. He has worked seventeen state softball tournaments and was the NFHS Softball Official of the Year in 1997. We also want to recognize officials completing 25 years of service as OHSAA softball umpires. These umpires, along with those who worked our State Tournament in Akron, are listed elsewhere in the White Book. Roughly one third of our state tournament umpires were making their first appearance at this event and that is no doubt a result of many of these umpires attending our Mechanics Clinics and working hard to improve at their craft. **Congratulations to all!**

## Training Opportunities

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the OHSAA’s program to provide officials with additional training and you the opportunity to improve your “game”. The OHSAA Board of Directors has directed resources to enhance training programs for all officials. We need your help as we continue to strengthen officiating in Ohio. We expect your support of our efforts to follow playing rules and the approved umpire mechanics. These cannot be optional – either for individual umpires or local associations. Consistency is something the game, coaches, players, and your fellow umpires all deserve. Our simple goal: ONE RULE/ONE INTERPRETATION/ONE MECHANIC

## Publications Note

In addition to this White Book, the Softball Mailing includes your NFHS publications - Rule Book and Case Book. Note that the Umpire Manual is printed every other year and should be retained for the 2022 and 2023 seasons.

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## 25-Years of Service Umpires

We want to recognize officials completing 25 years of service as OHSAA softball umpires. **Congratulations to all!**

**CHARLES ALGIER**

**GUS BUNNELL**

**KENNETH COWELL**

**JON DERRYBERRY**

**MICHAEL DORBISH**

**KEN GALLO**

**PHILLIP HENZLER SR**

**MARK HETRICK**

**DEAN HORD**

**LINDA LINDEMAN**

**JEFF OVERMYER**

**CALVIN PREDIERI**

**JOHN SABO**

**JEFFERY SAUNDERS**

**JOSEPH SUSTER JR**

**TIMOTHY THOMPSON**

**JAMES TONEY**

**DONALD TRELL**

**ERIC VALENTINE**

**NORMAN WHEELER SR**

**RAYMOND WUERTZ**

### Welcome cont. from page 3

To further increase consistency we continue our enhanced training opportunities for umpires. Details concerning attendance requirements, as well as a schedule of our state meetings, can be found on the back cover of the White Book.

### **Mechanics Clinics**

We will also continue our popular series of one day Softball Umpire Mechanics Clinics. These clinics, designed to help umpires improve their skills and attain their advancement goals, continue to emphasize both plate and base mechanics. We have found that umpires with a strong knowledge of mechanics add greatly to the game of softball. Each clinic is staffed by the OHSAA Softball Umpire Instructional Team and will include OHSAA softball observers.

**Again umpires attending these clinics will receive three points added to their TOURNAMENT SELECTION SCORE.** Details can be found elsewhere in the White Book or at the OHSAA officiating web page using this link: <http://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/DOD>. Go to the softball section and click on Umpire Mechanics Clinics.

In addition we will again offer a pre-tournament clinic covering the three umpire system, plus more, on Sunday, May 7 at Waggoner Road Junior High School in Reynoldsburg. This free clinic is intended for umpires working in postseason play but is open to all OHSAA umpires. No preregistration is needed. Registration will be at

noon with the clinic running from 12:30-4PM.

### **Testing for Success**

This year we again offer rules testing for softball umpires. Umpires who complete the rules test will receive additional point credit for their tournament officials rating as follows:

94% and above – 3 points

86% - 92% - 2 points

80-84% - 1 point

This test will be available mid-February and will have a mid-March deadline. Additional details will be sent to you when the test is available online.

We'll also continue to provide bulletins distributed electronically throughout the season. These bulletins are also posted at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org) (Go to the Officials Page – DOD Section). The direct link is: <http://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/DOD>. The comments we received have been very positive and if umpires have suggestions to improve these further please let me know.

### **Observers**

Also ongoing is the use of observers at our state and regional tournaments. Thanks to the many wonderful volunteers, we had observers last year at our regional and state championship sites. These observers not only help the umpires working these games but their input is very helpful in identifying areas where we need to focus our training efforts. I believe that if umpires working tournament games have areas that consistently show up as improvement items it's likely that these can be

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### **Welcome cont. from page 4**

improvement items for all umpires. It is also important to note that our observers play a key role

in determining future tournament assignments.

Please take the time to review all your NFHS and OHSAA publications including the entire WHITE BOOK. In addition to valuable information being provided regarding rules changes, points of emphasis, and mechanics, the publications provide information especially for our OHSAA umpires. This includes emphasis points on safety issues which must be reviewed by all involved in high school sports. **I also urge** you carefully study the OHSAA REMINDERS FOR 2023 as this sec-

tion contains very important information that we all need to know.

### **We Need More Umpires**

This season let's continue to work on recruiting and retention efforts - especially in regard to females and minorities - we have not had much success in recruiting female and minority umpires and ask for your help with this. In many areas our assigners are having trouble filling games. Our umpires are the best recruiting source we have. If you know of anyone interested give them this address: <http://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/permits>. Here they will find the information they need to join a class. After com-

pleting the online course and testing our local associations will work to help each new umpire with on field mechanics and get the help they need to be successful. **Please encourage your friends and neighbors to get involved!**

As this booklet is printed in time for your rule book mailing, keep in mind that additional information will be provided online and through our Bulletins as the season progresses. Please watch for updates which are shared when available.

Have a great season – I hope to see you on the field!

**Jerry Fick**  
**Director of Officials Development**  
**– Softball**

## **Notes for Assigners and Local Associations**

**A message to all who hold BOTH a baseball and softball permit and also to local association secretaries.** OHSAA requires umpires holding permits in both sports to attend four local meetings for both baseball and softball. Local Associations are not permitted to offer meetings that give credit for both sports. There is one exception as each local association will be able to conduct one meeting that covers OHSAA regulations and other items common to both sports. Officials may attend only one such meeting and will receive credit for a meeting in both baseball and softball. All local associations offering these "dual credit" meetings may offer only one such meeting per year and will be required to follow a program provided by the OHSAA.

All umpires used in varsity games shall be Class 1 officials. If you have not completed the advancement process, this is done through your local officials association. This process can be completed as early as an umpire's first year and then can take effect the following year. Details are on page 17 of

the Handbook for Officials located at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Officiating/OHSAAOfficialsHandbook.pdf> and the application form can be found at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Officiating/forms/upgrade.PDF> Additional details can be obtained through your local association secretary.

Local Associations are strongly encouraged to help umpires through the advancement process – in fact this is a key responsibility of the association. Please work to insure umpires receive the required observations during the season and also are prepared for the advancement test given in May. An umpire who completes the advancement process is eligible to work both regular season varsity and tournament games therefore the testing is a little more challenging than testing for new umpires and can also include some questions on the basics of three umpire mechanics.

# NFHS RULES CHANGES – 2023

**1-4-1** - Removes the number of color restrictions on a glove, including laces and seams, and does not allow any part of the glove to match the color of the ball. Manufacturers are producing more multi-colored gloves, and as long as one of those colors is not the color of the ball, they should be permitted for use. This change allows for NFHS rules to be less restrictive, providing more options. The glove still cannot have an optic-colored marking which gives the appearance of the ball or is judged to be distracting to the umpire.

**2-20-1g (new)** - This allows the definition of a fair ball to reflect what umpires have always enforced as part of the definition of a fair ball. It is intended to mirror the definition of a foul ball. (2-25-1e)

**3-2-12, 3-6-11** - Removes the language prohibiting jewelry, which places the softball rules in line with other NFHS sports that do not have the restriction. These sports have no documented data of an increased risk for injury while wearing jewelry. With this change, medical alert and religious medals are no longer a concern. Umpires still have the authority to rule on anything that is considered a distraction or increases risk to any player.

**4-2-1** – Allows for all runs to be counted when a fair batted ball clears the home run fence to end the game. All runs scored by virtue of the home run will be included in individual and team statistics.

**8-2-7** – This clarifies batter-runner interference on a fly ball over foul territory. This has always been the enforcement but was not listed in the section covering batter-runner. The language is consistent with the rule covering interference on an initial play on a fair-batted ball and aligns with Rule 8-6-10.

## EDITORIAL CHANGES

**2-25-1e** – Clearly defines that any offensive player can commit interference on a batted ball while over foul territory. This has always been the enforcement, but by changing the word from batter to offensive player, it makes the rule more inclusive and easily interpreted.

**7-4-11** – This better defines spectator interference on a fair or foul fly ball. The previous rule language was confusing on a fly ball when spectator interference prevented the defense from catching the ball.

## OHSAA Reminders

**Noisemakers** - The use of any item to create additional noise is a violation of the unsporting conduct regulation. Noisemaking devices are not permitted in the dugout. This would include musical instruments, whistles and horns. It is also not permissible to bang items such as ball buckets or bang bats on dugouts, benches or fences. Note that the penalty for violations of this rule permits a “warning,” but for repeated violations the umpire may “restrict to the bench” or eject either the coach or offender(s). Umpires should first use warnings to enforce this rule.

**Rule 3-2-1** allows state associations to permit players to wear sweat-

shirts and jackets when there is inclement weather.

**Rule Books**—We must have rule books available and consult those publications when needed during the course of a game. We continue to have a few unfortunate situations each year where rules are misapplied and not corrected. The OHSAA does not recognize protests so it is imperative that we refer to the books when needed and make corrections if necessary. I think that we can all agree that when the umpires in a game disagree on a rules application that this is one of the judgment call can't be changed by replay or a challenge flag there is no reason

not to check a rule before we award the wrong base, fail to count a run that should have scored or make some other rules misapplication.

**Head Decorations/Headwear/ Religious Apparel** – Regardless of NFHS Playing rules, state law requires that officials/contest administrators not prohibit or create any obstruction to wearing religious apparel when competing or participating in interscholastic athletics, unless a legitimate danger to participants is identified due to wearing religious apparel. If such a danger is identified, the administrator or official of the event or activity shall offer all reasonable accommodations to the participant wearing religious apparel.



# NFHS POINTS OF EMPHASIS – 2023

## SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sporting behavior is one of the fundamental ingredients to the continued success and enjoyment of education-based high school sports and activities. In fact, in the 103-year history of organized high school sports in the United States, good sportsmanship has been one of the most important outcomes of high school activity programs. NFHS playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship. Participation in these programs should promote respect, integrity, and sportsmanship. However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved in these programs must be doing their part. The NFHS is concerned that unsporting behavior in education-based athletics has increased across all sports. As a result, the NFHS has made sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis for the 2022-23 school year.

Sportsmanship, or good sporting behavior, is about treating one another with respect and exhibiting appropriate behavior. It is about being fair, honest, and caring. When these types of appropriate behavior occur, competitive play is more enjoyable for everyone. Coaches set the tone at athletic contests with their display of sportsmanship. If these individuals act in a sportsmanlike manner, their behavior sets the tone for players, spectators and others. If coaches, however, are complaining constantly about the decision of contest officials, spectators are more likely to do the same. There must be a collaborative, working relationship between contest officials and game administration to promote good sportsmanship and safely conduct the contest. Everyone has their role to play in creating a positive, sportsmanlike atmosphere at contests. Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches and other bench/sideline personnel. A



positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved. Contest officials, however, should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Once the contest begins, school administration is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators. A proactive approach by school administration includes monitoring the behavior of spectators and intervening as needed. If spectators are using demeaning or profane language at officials – or at others in the stands – those individuals should be removed from the contest by school administration. In recent years, a heightened level of unsportsmanlike behavior has been occurring by spectators at high school sporting events, and it must be stopped. The use of demeaning language, or hate speech, by students, parents, and other fans must cease. High school sports and other activities exist to lift people up, not demean or tear people down. The goal is to treat everyone fairly and treat each other with respect. Any speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning, or hurtful will not be tolerated. High schools must establish a culture that values the worth of every single person – both players on the school's team and players on the opposing team. There must be a no-tolerance policy regarding behavior that shows disrespect for another individual. Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity. It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in edu-

cation-based activity programs.

## TIME BETWEEN INNINGS

As a point of emphasis, umpires and coaches should pay strict attention to the 60-second time limit between half-innings. In accordance with Rule 6-2-5, at the beginning of each half-inning, no more than one minute may be used to deliver no more than five pitches to the catcher or other teammate. The one-minute time limit begins from the third out of the previous half-inning. A pitcher returning to the pitching position in the same half-inning will not be granted any warm-up pitches. Umpires may authorize more pitches during inclement weather or if a pitcher was removed due to injury or by rule.

## JEWELRY AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The rule prohibiting jewelry has been removed, allowing team personnel to now wear jewelry; however, the rule regarding the use of electronics is still in place. The use of electronic devices by team personnel to transmit or record information pertaining to their players or team's performance is only permitted within the dugout. Items such as smartwatches are permitted to be utilized as a watch but cannot be used to transmit or receive data outside of the dugout.

## COMPARABLE DRYING AGENTS

Pitchers are not permitted to use any substance on the ball or on contact points of the pitching hand or fingers; also, no foreign substances may be applied to the ball. If a pitcher licks the fingers, the player must wipe the fingers prior to touching the ball. Comparable drying agents listed on the USA website ([USAsoftball.org](http://USAsoftball.org)) are permitted, and powdered rosin is also permitted. It is not necessary to wipe off the drying agent before making contact with the ball.

# OHSAA SOFTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS 2023

**Pitching Rules Enforcement** – The OHSAA continues to have expectations concerning the enforcement of all rules including the pitching rules. These expectations have not changed and are straightforward and reasonable but still require our attention:

- Study the pitching rules
- Learn to recognize infractions
- Use proper positioning & mechanics
- When an illegal pitch is there call it
- Never guess an illegal pitch
- Get these calls made early in the game
- Let the pitcher adjust to your proper enforcement of the rule

We will discuss these during our state and local meetings and also discuss key provisions of the pitching rules at that time. Very important - please note that “leaping”, defined as both feet airborne prior to delivering the pitch is still not legal in high school play. Although this is now permitted under some codes, the results of the annual NFHS rules survey did not show sufficient support from coaches *or* umpires to make this change.

Of special note is the NFHS 2022 POE, which we will repeat for 2023, concerning the requirement for the pitcher to take a position in contact with the pitching plate and then simulate taking a signal from the catcher prior to bringing the hands together. This allows the batter to prepare for the start of the pitch. If the pitcher does not pause after stepping onto the pitcher’s plate to simulate taking a signal from the catcher prior to bring their hands together, an illegal pitch needs to be called.

**Substitution Rules and Line Up Card Management** – This is an area where softball rules provide some complexities. In an effort to assist umpires, Tom Hathaway of Cincinnati, a long time instructor and member of our Softball Umpire Improvement Team has developed a DP Flex Chart which includes various actions and results for the DP/Flex rule. Tom has also authored an article covering Lineups, Substitutions and Penalty Enforcement. Each of these items are found elsewhere in this White Book and I’m sure they will be helpful to all of us. I also remind you that Appendix H (page 98) of the NFHS 2023 Softball Rules Book is a valuable DP/Flex resource. These are great topics for local meetings as well. It is important to note the substitution and batting order rules for Junior High/Middle School (grades 7 & 8) games are the same as the high school rules (the only rules difference for grades 7 & 8 is the pitching distance). There is no “roster batting” for JH/MS.

**Dugout Personnel** must remain in the dugout. This includes coaches, players, and other team personnel. Rule 3

-6-6 offers limited exceptions such as bat/ball shaggers (wearing helmets) who are retrieving discarded bats or foul balls that may be hit well off the field and down the foul lines. This exception does not cover foul balls or other loose balls near a fielder or behind home plate. Defensive coaches are not permitted to take a position outside the dugout for the purpose of signaling pitches. Offensive coaches on the field must take **positions** within the coach’s box.

**Game Management** – Umpires know that **their** responsibility is for what happens on the field. Game Administration and Site Management is a school responsibility. This is important for a number of reasons – weather issues, the rare case of spectators causing problems that need attention, or other emergencies. Prior to the game, no later than the pregame conference with the coaches, find out if game management is available or if the head coach is filling that role. In the spring there are often many events going on at a school and this forces the coach to take this responsibility. In any event, umpires need to know who to go to should assistance become necessary. See our updates to our weather regulations elsewhere in this White Book and note this excerpt from the OHSAA By-Laws:

## ***School’s Responsibility When Hosting A Contest 3-2-1.***

*The host school has the responsibility to ensure that a contest or event is administered in a manner which emphasizes the educational values inherent in interscholastic athletics. It is the host school’s responsibility to remove any individual(s) who disrupts the educational goals of the contest or event. Likewise, the host school is ultimately responsible for the safety of all participants (players, coaches, officials, spectators, etc.) in the interscholastic contest immediately before, during and immediately after each contest or event.*

*Therefore, the host school shall appoint a site director/manager or administrator-in-charge for every contest or event. The host school shall ensure that the site director/manager or administrator-in-charge is aware of the school’s emergency action plan and how to adjust it to meet the needs of the particular contest or event. Included in the emergency action plan shall be procedures to deal with emergencies, crowd management and health and safety protections. The plan shall also include procedures to ensure that unauthorized personnel are kept from the playing field; to provide safety and security for the visiting team(s), their spectators and the contest officials, and to provide safety and security for parking areas related to the contest or event.*



# A Look Back at the 2022 Rules Changes and POEs

As we prepare for the 2023 softball season, it might be helpful to take a look back at some of the NFHS rules changes that were enacted in 2022.

Rules governing player attire were altered: In **Rule 3-2-5b**, language was removed limiting the size of clips and fasteners to control hair—there is no longer a maximum size for these items. Also, **Rule 3-2-5c** eliminated the need for state authorization for the wearing of religious headwear—these are legal as long as they are of soft, non-abrasive materials and are unlikely to come off during play. Head coverings worn for medical reasons still require OHSAA approval.

**Rule 3-5-3 – Coach’s Attire** was altered to allow for slacks, shorts or other leg coverings in school colors or in khaki, black, white or gray.

If a damaged bat previously removed from the game was brought back into play, **Rule 3-6-21** and its Penalty specified that the player would be called out and the player and coach shall be restricted to the dugout. Reminder: the first time the bat is determined to be a damaged bat, the bat is removed from the game without penalty. If the bat is reintroduced into the game, the penalty is applied.

An editorial change to **Rule 6-2-2 and Note** made the wearing an item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm and thighs by the pitcher detected to be distracting consistent with **Rule 3-3-9**. In enforcing the rule, the umpire will ask that the distracting items be removed. The assessment of the illegal pitch pen-

alty is not part of the enforcement of this rule.

**Rule 8-2-6** was amended to clarify when the batter-runner’s location in relationship to the running lane when either foot is in the air. Under this change, the batter-runner is considered to be out of the running lane if either foot last contacted the ground completely outside of the running lane. Further interpretations specified that the running lane began with the outside edge of the foul line; that is that a foot on the foul line with no part in the running lane was in fact outside of the running lane. A reminder for that a violation to occur on a running lane violation, a play must be made on the batter-runner attempting to reach first base and interference must occur.

Among the 2022 NFHS Points of Emphasis that merit review in 2023:

**Huddles between innings** should take place in safe locations and not occur on the field after the other team has taken the field and is making warm-up throw. This is a particular danger for a team huddle that takes place in an area where an overthrow can occur.

**Pitchers simulating taking signs** should occur after the pitcher takes position on the pitcher’s plate and before bringing the hands together. While a pitcher may take a sign before stepping onto the pitcher’s plate, the pitcher is required to step on to the plate with hands separated, pause long enough to take a sign or simulate taking a sign before bringing the hands together. Stepping onto the pitcher’s plate with the hands together, or stepping on and immediately bringing the hands together without a discernible pause, is an illegal pitch.

## HELP WANTED

We still need your help – please join us in our efforts to recruit new people as softball umpires. We’d like you to encourage others – your friends, neighbors, relatives, and co-workers to join you as an OHSAA umpire. For information on becoming an OHSAA official go to our website, [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org) and click on the Officiating tab then select – “Become an Official” or use this link - <https://ohsaa.org/Officiating/permits>. Remember that officials working other OHSAA sports and non-school sports are great candidates to join our team!

We also want to encourage umpires to follow our advancement process and move to Class 1. Local Associations are strongly encouraged to help umpires through this process –this is a key responsibility of the association. Please work to insure umpires receive the required observations and are prepared for the advancement test. A Class 1 umpire is eligible to work both regular season varsity and tournament games therefore the testing is a little more challenging and includes some questions on the basics of three umpire mechanics.

## Professionalism

In addition to the focus on the student, this year we reprint our Code of Ethics, remind everyone of the importance of honoring our commitments and contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss, and also discuss the importance of being careful about what we say both verbally and in social media.

The OHSAA's Mission Statement is simple and to the point but also speaks volumes:

***To serve our member schools and enrich interscholastic opportunities for students.***

The OHSAA's Officiating Program Mission does the same:

***Creating a competent community of sports officials who play a key role in developing Ohio student athletes into good citizens of tomorrow.***

As officials it's pretty easy for us to get caught up in what we do on a daily basis and forget the function that we really need to play in each and every contest and in all that we do as OHSAA officials. With this mind we are taking this opportunity to remind ourselves of our role as part of interscholastic athletics and the importance of professionalism. Each of the statements above properly create the focus that is appropriately placed on the student.

## OHSAA Officiating Code of Ethics

Schools have entrusted the OHSAA and sports officials to assist them in the education and development of their youth through athletics. The proper operation of such a process requires that officials be independent, impartial and responsible to people they serve. In recognition of these expectations there is hereby established a Code of Ethics for all officials. The purpose of the code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all officials.

An Official must devote time, thought and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to carry out these rules so that one may render effective and creditable service in a fair and unbiased manner.

An Official must work with fellow officials and the state association in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate of issues.

An Official must resist every temptation and outside pressure to use one's position as an official to benefit oneself. Under all circumstances, officials must avoid promoting the special interest of any person or group of persons other than the athletes we serve.

An Official must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the officiating industry in all personal conduct and relations with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public, to be a worthy example to the athletes under one's jurisdiction.

An Official will be prepared both physically and mentally, dress according to expectations of sport standards, and maintain a proper appearance that is befitting the importance of the game.

An Official shall avoid the use of tobacco and tobacco products at the contest site.

An Official shall not consume alcohol (or any illegal/illicit drug or controlled substance) prior to or during the contest.

An Official must remember and recognize that it is important to honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss. Every member of the officiating profession carries a responsibility to act in a manner becoming a professional person. The conduct of any official influences the attitude of the public toward the profession in general as well as toward the official in particular.

An Official shall not delay the process of completing and returning paperwork provided by a site needed to process the game payments and will provide a W-9 when requested.

Note – The OHSAA Officiating Code of Ethics, along with OHSAA regulations relating to officials is found in Handbook for Officials. It may be accessed at this link: <https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Officiating/OHSAAOfficialsHandbook.pdf>

# Lineups, Substitutions and Penalty Enforcement

Proper lineup card management and proper enforcement of the substitution rules is an important duty of the plate umpire. Below is a summary of the lineup and substitution rules that are contained in NFHS Rule 3, as well as a recap outlining the penalties that are applied in each situation.

## Lineups

- Teams must have 9 players to start the game – NO EXCEPTIONS
- When using DP/Flex, lineup consists of 10 players but only 9 batters
- Roster Batting is prohibited—all levels
- Once the game has started, teams may drop to 8 players should a player leave the game for any reason and no sub is available.
- An out is charged each time the vacant position comes to bat.
- If a team drops below 8 players, the game cannot continue and is a forfeit.

## Lineup Card requirements:

- First initial, last name, jersey number and defensive position of all starters, listed in the order in which they will bat.
- First initial, last name, jersey number of all substitutes (a player does not need to be present in order to be listed as a sub).

## Lineup Card violations and penalties:

- Incorrect name, jersey number—make the correction (name supersedes jersey number). PENALTY: 1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=head coach is restricted
- Substitute not listed on lineup card—add sub to lineup card and allow her to play. PENALTY: 1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=head coach is restricted

## Substitutes

- Substitutes may play even if not listed on the lineup card  
PENALTY: 1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=head coach is restricted
- Substitutes must be reported to the plate umpire  
PENALTY: 1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=head coach and substitute are restricted
- Projected substitute: The coach informs the um-

pire that No. 12 will bat for No. 7 but No. 7 will return to the game when the team goes on defense. The umpire accepts the No. 12 for No. 7 change. The second part is a *projected substitute* and is not accepted.

- Re-entry: Each starter may be removed from the game and returned to the game once, provided she returns to the same position in the batting order that she originally occupied. Each substitute may be removed from the game and returned to the game once provided she returns to the same position in the batting order that she originally entered.

PENALTY: If a starter or sub re-enters the game in a position in the lineup other than the position she originally occupied or after being removed a second time, she is an ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTE.

- If she is discovered while batting or on base, she is called out and restricted to the bench. When discovered after completing her turn at bat and before the next pitch, the offensive play is negated
- If discovered while she is on defense, the player is removed from the game and restricted; if she was involved in a play immediately prior to discovery, the offense is given the option of negating the play.

## Defensive positions:

- There is no requirement for coaches to report defensive position changes that do not involve substitution. However, changes to the pitcher and catcher positions should be reported and recorded so that the courtesy runner rule can be properly applied.
- Any change involving the DP or Flex is considered a substitution and must be reported and recorded.
- Pitchers may be removed and returned to the pitching position once per inning, regardless of whether they are removed from the lineup. A pitcher returning to the pitching position in the same inning is not allowed any warmup pitches. The second time the pitcher is removed from the pitching position, she may not return *that inning*.

Continued on page 12

### Courtesy Runners:

- All courtesy runners must be reported.
- **PENALTY:** An unreported courtesy runner is an UNREPORTED SUBSTITUTE; the unreported substitute penalty (1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=restriction of head coach and substitute) is applied and the substitute and re-entry rules are applied to this lineup change.

### Summary of Lineup and Substitution Penalties

- **Lineup Card Error** (incorrect name or number, substitute not listed)  
**PENALTY:** 1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=head coach restricted
- **Unreported Substitute**  
**PENALTY:** 1<sup>st</sup> offense=team warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense=head coach and player restricted
- **Illegal Substitute** (improper re-entry, no longer eligible to re-enter, illegal courtesy runner, Flex entering on offense for a player other than the DP)  
**PENALTY:** Player removed from the game and restricted. If at bat or immediately after at-bat=player declared out and play negated. If on defense, preceding play negated if offender was involved.

Special thanks to Tom Hathaway of Cincinnati, a long time instructor and member of our Softball Umpire Improvement Team, for preparing this article.

## DP/Flex Quick Reference Chart

Managing the DP/Flex is a major challenge of lineup card management. The chart below presents a number of basic situations and resulting rulings that umpires may encounter. This chart could be a good quick reference while helping develop a deeper understanding of the DP/Flex rule (Rule 3-3-4).

ACTION	RESULT
DP/Flex must be included in starting lineup card submitted in pregame	DP/Flex cannot be implemented if not part of original starting lineup.
DP or Flex may be removed from lineup after lineups become "official"	Team goes from 10 to 9 players but may reinstitute DP/Flex during game. Player (DP or Flex) has been removed and may re-enter once.
DP plays defense for any of the other 8 batters	Player for whom DP is playing continues to bat and has not left the game. No effect to DP/Flex.
DP plays defense and Flex comes out of game	DP is playing defense for the Flex. Flex has left the game but may re-enter once. Flex may be reinstated by inserting an eligible sub into Flex position.
Flex bats or runs for DP	DP left the game but may re-enter once. DP may be reinstated by inserting an eligible sub into the DP position.
Flex bats or runs for one of the other 8 players in the lineup	Not allowed. Illegal sub penalty enforced.
Flex is withdrawn from game	Team continues with 9 players but may reinstitute the Flex by returning that player or an eligible substitute to the Flex position.
DP is withdrawn from the game	The Flex is inserted into the batting order in the DP's position. Team continues with 9 players but may reinstitute the DP by inserting that player or an eligible sub into that position in the batting order and returning the Flex player to defense only.

## Check Your Uniforms

There are no changes to the OHSAA softball uniform this year. Some reminders as to uniforms:

- Pants are to be either Heather Gray or Charcoal Gray. All umpires for any regular or postseason game are to be dressed alike. In the event that umpires do not agree to all wear charcoal gray pants then heather gray pants shall be worn.
- A navy shirt with the OHSAA embroidered or sublimated logo. It is not permissible to wear a long sleeve garment under a short sleeve shirt.
- A jacket shall be the red shoulder stripe model—Navy with red/white trim on the shoulder. The OHSAA logo shall be embroidered on the jacket.
- A navy cap with the OHSAA logo is required. The OHSAA **embroidered or sublimated** logo is the only logo permitted on shirts, jackets and hats.
- Undershirts or T-shirts are to be red.
- Dark blue or gray ball bags for the Plate Umpire. If two ball bags are worn, they shall be the same color.
- Wrist watches shall not be worn.

**Umpires must remember that appearance and “looking the part” are important. When we take the field we have only one opportunity to make a first impression. All umpires have an equal opportunity to dress well – your uniform should be neat, clean and of course in accordance with OHSAA standards. Let’s make the extra effort to look great. Shine the shoes, clean the hats, and take time to see what needs to be replaced this year.**

## Brushing up on Mechanics

George Gulas, our state interpreter from Medina, has again put together a list of observations from our observers and others who have watched many, many games over the past seasons. These items will be the basis for much of our Mechanics Clinics, content at our state meetings, and of course will be passed on to interpreters for discussion at local meetings. Here is a preview of some of the items we will be working on this winter and spring:

- **Plate Umpires** – Proper Position including Slot and Distance – Reporting Changes – Handling Intentional Walks – Fair/Foul Position, Priorities, Signals - Selling the tough calls vs. making unnecessary calls
- **Base Umpires** – Proper Initial Positions getting set and square to the plate – Tighter Pivots when coming inside diamond – Chasing Balls to the outfield including when to chase, proper angles, and signals
- **General Mechanics** – Between Inning responsibilities - Communication through good signals – Don’t take the easy way out – Keys to Good Judgment - Getting good angles, Timing, and STOP, SET, SEE THE PLAY, MAKE THE CALL

Working the final play of every game – communication with partners and expect the unexpected – it’s not always over when you think it is

**Now is the time to plan to take advantage of both our Mechanics Clinics and Face to Face State Rules Meetings with the second hour (local meeting credit) devoted to items such as those mentioned above. Work in these areas will help improve the capabilities of all of our umpires.**

## 2023 Umpire Education Opportunities

- **The White Book has been updated** – your OHSAA Preseason Guide replaces the NFHS Preseason Guide – ALL INFORMATION IN ONE PLACE
- **Six Mechanics Clinics – One in each OHSAA District** - Attendees will also receive three points added to their TOURNAMENT SELECTION SCORE.
- **Optional Rules Test** - Umpires who complete the optional rules test will receive additional point credit for their tournament officials rating as follows: 94% and above – 3 points /// 86% - 92% - 2 points /// 80-84% - 1 point

**The BEST WAY to start your preparation for the coming season is to attend a “face-to-face” State Rules Interpretation Meeting. There will be eight in person meetings. Each meeting will feature sessions of about two hours and in addition to the state meeting will review the most important items that we want to cover prior to the season. By attending the entire session, you will receive credit for a local meeting in addition to the state softball meeting. There is no need to “pre-register” for any State meeting.. Information concerning attendance requirements is on the back cover of this booklet.**

## Social Media Miscues

Umpires need to take great care not only in performing all their duties but in controlling what is said on Social Media and for that matter what is said verbally. It is inappropriate for any registered OHSAA official assigner, instructor, or local association executive to connect with a student via social media. This does not include athletes that are part of your family or officials that communicate to students as part of their job responsibilities (coaches, administrators, or teachers). It's also not appropriate to pose for photos with student athletes – "here is our favorite umpire." These examples, from past years, are designed to give us something to think about – not only in what we say and post but in how we enforce the rules we are responsible for –

■ *Well that was a first – team gives up 16 runs in the first, 3 more in the second, with three of those outs manufactured by me behind the plate.*

■ *Yesterday I had a doubleheader and did the plate the first game. Second pitch of the first game I realized the batter had an unapproved bat. I don't know if what I did was right or wrong (I assume wrong since I did not enforce the rule). The penalty for this is an out, the ejection of the player, and the coach. I simply chose to play dumb and not start this day or year off like that. If the other team questioned it I would have enforced the rule. This player was not a factor and her team lost both games. Between games, I never told the other umpire because I didn't want to influence him. In the past, I have told the coach after that half inning of the situation and they corrected it going forward. For whatever reason, yesterday I did not do that. And I probably should have because eventually it will catch up to them and then I will be known as "the last umpire."*

## Bats—Definitions & Penalties

### Rules 1-5-1, 2-4,7-4-2

■ **An illegal bat** does not meet the specifications of Rule 1-5. **Altered bats** and **non-approved bats** are both types of illegal bats. There are other types of illegal bats – a bat without a sufficient safety grip or a bat that has pine tar on the barrel are just two examples.

■ **An altered bat** was once legal but has been structurally changed by rolling, shaving, warming, or some other intentional act. When an altered bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are also ejected from the game.

■ **A non-approved bat** is one that does not meet USA Softball specifications OR has been placed on USA Softball list of non approved bats with the USA Softball certification mark. When a non-approved bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are ejected from the game (same penalty as for an altered bat).

When a penalty includes ejection of the batter and head coach (altered or non-approved bat) the umpire is required to complete the online ejection report to inform the OHSAA and the school administration which is responsible for enforcing the additional penalties that apply when an ejection occurs.

■ **Illegal Bat Penalty:** A batter using an illegal bat may be discovered, either by the umpire or the opposing team, once she enters the batter's box and until a pitch to the next batter after she completes her turn at bat. The batter is declared out. If the ball was put into play, runners are returned to the base occupied at the time of pitch; however, runners who were put out on the play remain out. The batter and the head coach are ejected.

■ **Damaged bat,** a new definition added in 2020 is defined as a bat that was once legal but is now broken, cracked, dented, rattles, or has sharp edges that could cut the ball. Note that a bat that has developed instability in the handle or taper (often called a wobble) is considered a damaged bat. Damaged bats are not considered illegal and when discovered are immediately removed from the game without penalty.

The only time the use of a damaged bat results in a penalty is when, after being removed from the game, it is reintroduced into the contest. In this case, the batter is declared out. If the batter put the ball into play, all runners who were not put out on the play are returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. However, the enforcement of Rule 3-6-21 requires that the player and head coach are both restricted to the bench and not ejected.



## Bat Certification Marks

It is important to know what Certification Marks are required for NFHS softball competition. Rule 1-5-1d and Figure 1-6 have now been updated to include USA Softball's newest certification mark shown which are also provided below – there are now three marks which are the only approved marks for bats used in high school play, which are pictured on the right:

NFHS rules require that bats meet the USA Softball bat performance standards. Thus, bats that only bear approval marks from other softball organizations without one of the above certification marks do not meet the requirements for use in high school play. Note that USA Softball also publishes a listing of Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks. This was created to provide a listing of bats that had once been approved for use but are no longer deemed approved for use. This listing can be found on the USA Softball website at this link - <https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>

Here is an excerpt from the 2020 NFHS Softball Points of Emphasis –

Bat manufacturers produce several models of bats for multiple organizations. These different models are often custom designed to meet the specific organizations' individual certification requirements. Bats that are custom designed for one organization may only bear that organization's certification mark. Conversely, a large number of these bats are designed to meet several organizations' requirements and will bear multiple organizations' certifications marks – making them legal to use in multiple codes. What is important to know is that NFHS softball recognizes and utilizes USA Softball's certification process. In order for a bat to be legal for use in NFHS softball it must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark. Additionally, any bat with one of these certification marks must not appear on the list of the USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks. This list was created as a way to alert players and coaches that a bat that was once approved for use has now been deemed no longer approved for use. All bats that are approved by USA Softball, formally ASA, for use in fast pitch play shall bear one of the markings shown below. Once these bats have entered the market and possible issues arise, there is a process for revoking the approval of these bats. When it has been determined



that a bat should have its approval revoked, either through the re-testing process or for a voluntary removal from the manufacturer, the bat is added to the Non-Approved Bats list with Certification Marks. These bats were approved when originally manufactured and were legal for play at that time, but due to some unforeseen issues no longer pass the approval requirements.

## Equipment Inspection

High school rules no longer require the umpires to inspect equipment prior to every game. Umpires are expected to remain vigilant throughout the game and when illegal or altered equipment is identified the existing penalties, which remain unchanged, will need to be assessed. Certainly be prepared to answer a question from a coach about legality of equipment whether it's asked before or during a game. We remind both coaches and umpires that penalties prescribed in Rule 3-6-1 and in Rule 7-4-2 will need to be enforced should violations occur. While most equipment violations result in a team warning for the first offense and a bench restriction for the offender and coach on the next offense it's important to again note that the penalty for bringing an altered or non-approved bat into the batter's box includes ejection of both the batter and head coach. This ejection includes the additional penalties that come with any ejection of a student-athlete or coach.

*Continued on page 16*

### Equipment continued from page 15

Here is another excerpt from a previous NFHS Softball Point of Emphasis –

It is the head coach's responsibility to make certain all players are legally and properly equipped, which includes checking bats, helmets and catcher's gear prior to every contest. Equipment wears during use. Bats can become damaged, or a player may purchase a new bat that does not meet requirements. Catchers' helmets and batter's helmets have screws that hold face guards in place. These screws loosen and will eventually fall out rendering the equipment illegal and potentially causing a safety risk if not detected. Coaches must remain vigilant in inspecting equipment before every contest to ensure no damage has occurred or new noncompliant equipment has been purchased since their last inspection.

## Concussion Regulations

Ohio law and OHSAA rules spell out our concussion regulations. Every three years all OHSAA officials must complete concussion training. Some reminders:

Review often the list of common symptoms of a concussion. This list is found in the Rule Book.

A player who is removed because of signs or symptoms of a concussion may not return to play that day.

If you send a player out with signs or symptoms of a concussion, you must complete the concussion form from the OHSAA website and send it to the OHSAA office.



## 2022 State Tournament Umpires

We congratulate the following umpires who were selected to umpire at the 2022 OHSAA State Championships. Roughly one third of our state tournament umpires were making their first appearance at this event and that is no doubt a result of many of these umpires attending our Mechanics Clinics and working hard to improve at their craft.

Mike Abbuhl ..... Navarre  
Richard Annen..... Canton  
LeighAnn Baer ..... Loveland  
Donald Barazak ..... Kinsman  
Brian Beeksma..... Tipp City  
Raymond Bess ..... Zanesville

Michael Blazeovich III..... Northwood  
Eric Bond.....Benton Ridge  
Terry Bowshier.....Grove City  
William Combs III..... N. Baltimore  
John Craig.....North Canton  
Jason Craven .....Marietta  
Paul Dinan..... Pickerington  
Greg Drach..... Cincinnati  
John Fazio..... Middleburg Hts.  
George Gulas ..... Medina  
Charles Hall.....Ashland  
Brian Harrell .....Fairlawn  
Galen Harris .....Casstown  
Tom Hathaway ..... Cincinnati  
Paul Hines..... Marion  
Bill Hutchinson ..... Wooster  
Raymond Isla ..... Canton  
William Jordon..... South Point  
Matthew Kleiner..... Monroe  
Kevin Lehman ..... Dundee  
Rob Luklan..... Youngstown  
Paul Melcher .....Westerville

John Meyers ..... Oregon  
David Miller ..... Ottawa  
Patrick Montana..... Girard  
Ryan Murphy..... Kimbolton  
Rick Nemet.....Jefferson  
Paul Offenbacher.....Lima  
Linda Papagna.....Warren  
David Robenstine ..... Elmore  
Gary Russell II ..... Roseville  
John Schultz ..... Huntsville  
David Scott Jr. .... Cincinnati  
Robert Seedhouse Jr. ....N. Olmsted  
Brandon Smith ..... Lebanon  
Tyler Smith .....Wheelersburg  
Ron Tatgenhorst ..... Byesville  
Karly Tennant ..... Etna  
Steven Trout..... Wapakoneta  
Bruce Varner .....Heath  
Michael Williams Jr. .... Boardman  
Donald Wood..... Westerville

# SPORTING CONDUCT & EJECTIONS

We all know the importance of good sporting conduct. This applies not only to coaches and players but to umpires as well. Umpires are reminded to study Rule 3-6 and other rules relating to sporting conduct. Remember that potential penalties for unsporting conduct by a coach often include a bench restriction. When appropriate, we encourage that this option be used.

When an ejection does occur, there are important steps that must be followed:

Officials shall file a report with the OHSAA office whenever a coach or player is ejected from an athletic contest **within 48 hours of the ejection.**

**Step 1: Speak with offender's principal/athletic director** – Whenever an ejection occurs, the ejecting official shall speak with the offender's principal/athletic director no later than **the first school day** following the ejection.

**Step 2: Submit Report Form** – Officials will fill out the form electronically on their Dashboard at [www.myohsaa.org](http://www.myohsaa.org). The link is on the left hand side of the screen; "Submit New Game Report." Please complete one report per offending school.

The Game Report Form may also be used to report good or poor sportsmanship, severe injuries, facility problems, or equipment problems.

Ejections other than players or coaches and other items of which the Director should be made aware must be reported.

The school AD and OHSAA will automatically be sent an email concerning the ejection..

Response email notifications will be sent once the protocol has been completed.

An official failing to follow the ejection protocol and/or failing to file the Officials Report may result in a maximum fine of \$100 to the official per occurrence.

Ejected players must stay with the team. Ejected coaches or adult team personnel must leave the area of the contest, have no further communication with the team, and not perform any coaching functions. Such personnel may only return if summoned by an official in case of a situation such as a serious injury.

Ejected players and coaches are ineligible for the remainder of the day of the ejection and all contests at all levels until two games of the same level as the game of the ejection are played.

*Post-game ejections are possible.* Umpire jurisdiction does not end until all umpires have left the confines of the field. Inappropriate behavior on the field, after the game has ended, may result in an ejection and will be handled no differently than an ejection during the game. Umpires are not to be harassed, threatened, followed, or menaced while coming to or leaving the field. The home team or game management is responsible for the security of the officials.

## Revised Thunder & Lightning Policy

1. If thunder is heard, the game is stopped, the 30-minute clock kicks in-**NO EXCEPTIONS!**

2. If lightning is seen (but no thunder heard), the game will be stopped and the Game Administrator(s), Umpires, and Head Coaches will convene and determine what type of delay will be administered. **If there is lightning in the area, the 30-minute clock kicks in.**

3. At night (after dark) under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it MAY be safe to continue. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low to the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty. **If any member of the group assessing conditions is uncertain, delay for 30 minutes!**

4. **Lightning detection devices may be used to stop the contest if lightning is in the area (usually 10 miles) even if it is not seen or thunder heard. Often, school medical personnel are monitoring this equipment – obtain their input as part of your discussions.**

5. **Err on the side of safety. If there is a delay, players, coaches and officials must clear the field of play and seek cover. The host school is responsible to have an evacuation plan to get everyone to designated safer areas.**

6. The "thirty minute clock" is re-started each time that thunder is heard or there is lightning in the area.

# Game Ending/Suspended/Interrupted Games

With the typical weather issues we see each spring there seem to be many questions on this topic. Please review and apply the OHSAA Weather Policy regarding lightning. There have been reports that officials have ignored severe weather conditions. Officials who do this will be fined and/or suspended.

## Extra Innings

Most softball games are seven innings. When a game goes into extra innings the OHSAA has no tiebreaker procedure and the only rule change relates to charged conferences (see Rule 3-7-1). No runners are placed on bases.

## 5 Inning Games

Schools may agree to play a five inning game when multiple regular season games (such as a doubleheader) are scheduled for the same day. This agreement must be reached prior to the conclusion of the pregame conference.

## Runs-Ahead Rule

The ten run rule applies after five innings in all games. In addition, any game will also end when both head coaches and the plate umpire mutually agree to shorten and terminate the game. A game will also end when it is forfeited under NFHS rule 4-3, however, in OHSAA play no game can be forfeited until after it has started. A game which can't be started for any reason is a "No Contest". All of these rules apply equally to regular season and tournament games.

## Tournament Games

When an OHSAA tournament game is interrupted or suspended for any reason the game shall be resumed at a later time and continued from the point of suspension/interruption unless both head coaches and the plate umpire mutually agree to shorten and terminate the game.

## Games Interrupted

The OHSAA does not permit games to be called and "started over" at a later date. When a regular season game is interrupted and the game can't be resumed that day, the game will be suspended if the team behind in the score has not completed its turn at bat in the fifth inning. If a regular season contest has gone beyond this point it is a complete game subject to two important exceptions. The first of these exceptions is a tie game. The OHSAA does not permit games to end in a tie and therefore all games are

won, lost, or suspended. Tie games are suspended. Any game is also suspended when all of these conditions apply:

- it has gone at least five innings
- the visiting team has scored to tie the game or take the lead in the top half of an inning
- the home team does not retake the lead in the bottom half of the inning and has not completed its turn at bat

When a suspended game is completed it shall be continued from the point of suspension with batting orders and lineups the same. Substitutions may be made. Suspended games that are not resumed are a "No Contest". These games do not count in a team's won/loss record.

## Continuing a Suspended Game

Rule 3-1-3 states: **The team's lineup card shall include first initial and last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and shall include each eligible substitute. PENALTY: After the lineup card has been submitted to and verified by the umpire and a change is subsequently made to a player/substitute name or number, or if a player/substitute is added to the lineup card, the umpire shall issue a team warning to the head coach of the team involved. Any further changes made to a player/substitute name or number results in the head coach being restricted to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game.**

In Ohio we have this exception to this rule - **EXCEPTION: If a game is suspended and resumed on another date the head coach may make any number of additions to the list of players and substitutes or uniform number changes to the lineup card provided such changes are reported to the umpire immediately prior to the resumption of play on the new playing date.**

**Rationale:** Due to weather conditions and darkness, suspended games with resumption of play on another date can be a common occurrence. This exception allows for lineup card numbering changes and player additions to be made in these situations without penalty. These changes and additions are often necessary for a variety of valid reasons – damaged uniforms, players moving from JV to varsity or vice versa, etc .

# TIPS FOR NEWER UMPIRES

We are fortunate to have both some veteran and retired umpires who contribute their time to watching and working with new umpires, primarily at the sub-varsity level. Here are some ideas that may help both newer and even not so new umpires. Special thanks to Bruce Fisher (Westchester), George Gulas (Medina), Tom Hathaway (Cincinnati) and Eric Shroyer (DeGraff) for their contributions to this list. All are members of our Softball Umpire Improvement Team and are well known for the work they do. If you have time to work with new umpires let your local secretary, instructor or assigner know – they will appreciate it and so will the umpires.

- Contact your partner before the game. Confirm game details - site, time, and where you will park and meet. Park next to your partner and if possible away from others.
- Arrive on time (at least 30 minutes before the scheduled game start).
- Create a list of items to include in a pregame conference with your partner. Each pregame is different - a sample is on pages 12 and 13 of the NFHS Softball Umpires Manual.
- Be prepared and know how you will communicate with your partner – especially when you need help on a pulled foot, swipe tag, or similar. Remember we always need a call before getting help of any kind.
- Know the rules – Suggestion #1 – read the rule and then the corresponding case play section. Suggestion #2 – highlight items of importance to you and use for future study. Suggestion #3 – take the rules test to assess your rules knowledge. Look up the answers if you don't know them. Suggestion #4 - Attend local meetings and remember that four is the minimum – you will learn more by exceeding that number.
- Study your mechanics – they are just as important as rules. Know your responsibilities for base coverages, fly ball tag ups, and touching bases. ALWAYS HUSTLE!!!!
- Check your appearance – proper OHSAA uniform, shoes, and equipment. FIRST IMPRESSION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT WE DO!
- Pre-pitch Planning – prepare for the next play – WHAT WILL I DO IF .....?
- Make sure we always have “eyes on the ball and runners”. Know how you will transition from your calling position to your next Initial Position (IP) and be sure your partner has you covered as you lose eye contact with the ball and runners.
- Get the required distance and angle on plays. On tag plays 90 degrees to the path of the runner, at the leading edge of the base she is trying to reach, and 10-12 feet from the play. On force plays and plays at first base increase the distance to 18-21 feet from the play and if possible 90 degrees to the path of the throw. (Manual page 32)
- STOP, SET, SEE THE PLAY AND THEN MAKE THE CALL! Remember the three keys to good judgment calls – POSITION, STATIONARY, AND TIMING!!!
- Be approachable – be prepared to answer questions and treat people the way you would like them to treat you.
- After the game, make an honest review of your performance. What did you do well? What problems did you have? What do you need to improve? This can be done with your partner or on your own. If you are fortunate enough to have someone observe you listen carefully to what they have to offer to you and use it to your advantage. Make a list of the things that you want to work on and review regularly to improve on these.
- Learn from veteran umpires – if you have a day off or rain out go to a game and observe the crew. Ask questions after the game. Ask your assigner who would be good to observe and where they are working. Veteran umpires are always willing to help!

Your association's interpreters, instructors, and observers are there to help. Call or email them with questions. Perhaps you'll be able to find a mentor through these people – this person can work with you and watch you – a great help.

Doing these things will help you develop confidence in your rules knowledge, mechanics, and in your calls – this helps you to sell yourself.

## OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION 2023 SOFTBALL UMPIRE MECHANICS CLINICS

**All sessions are from 9 AM to 4PM**

- **Saturday, February 11 – East – John Glenn High School - 13115 John Glenn Sch. Rd. New Concord**
- **Saturday, February 18 – Southwest – Lakota West HS, 8940 Union Centre Blvd. West Chester**
- **Sunday, February 19– Southeast – South Webster High School 10529 Main St, South Webster –**  
**Note: the South Webster clinic is in conjunction with a morning baseball clinic and runs Noon – 4PM.**
- **Saturday, February 25 – Northwest – Glenwood Middle School – 1715 N. Main St. Findlay**
- **Sunday, February 26 – Northeast – Walsh Jesuit HS – 4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. Cuyahoga Falls**
- **Sunday, March 5 – Central - Reynoldsburg HS SUMMIT CAMPUS – 8579 Summit Rd. Reynoldsburg**

The OHSAA will sponsor six Softball Mechanics Clinics in 2023. These clinics, designed to help umpires improve their skills and attain their advancement goals, will emphasize plate and base mechanics. Staff will be from the OHSAA Softball Umpire Instructional Team and will include OHSAA softball tournament observers. Umpires attending will receive credit for their required state meeting and one local rules meeting. **Attendees will also receive three points added to their TOURNAMENT SELECTION SCORE.**

The cost of each clinic will be \$60 which includes all instruction, lunch, and a registration gift. Immediate registration is encouraged as the number of attendees at each location will be limited.

This clinic will be a working clinic – attendees should come prepared for both plate and base drills in an indoor setting. Please bring your plate equipment - OHSAA umpire uniform is recommended. Please also bring gym shoes as the weather will likely require that these be indoor events. Stations will be rotated in order that attendees can work with each instructor. Questions should be directed to Clinic Director Jerry Fick, OHSAA Director of Officials Development – Softball at [swdoc@fuse.net](mailto:swdoc@fuse.net).

**For Registration – Send form on the next page to: OHSAA – follow instructions on the form**

Note – Clinic registration will start at 9AM and program will begin at 930AM. In case of inclement weather participants will be notified by email and the clinic will be rescheduled.



# OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## 2023 SOFTBALL UMPIRES MECHANICS CLINICS

### REGISTRATION FORM – SELECT LOCATION:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 11 – East – John Glenn High School - 13115 John Glenn Sch. Rd. New Concord
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 18 – Southwest – Lakota West HS, 8940 Union Centre Blvd. West Chester
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 19– Southeast – South Webster High School 10529 Main St, South Webster
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 25 – Northwest – Glenwood Middle School – 1715 N. Main St. Findlay
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 26 – Northeast – Walsh Jesuit HS – 4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. Cuyahoga Falls
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday, March 5 – Central - Reynoldsburg HS SUMMIT CAMPUS – 8579 Summit Rd. Reynoldsburg

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

OHSAA Permit # \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Years as an OHSAA Softball Umpire \_\_\_\_\_

### Attendees will also receive three points added to their TOURNAMENT SELECTION SCORE.

Payment of \$60 may be made via check or credit card. Checks must be made payable to OHSAA. If paying by credit card scan and email completed form to [jfick@ohsaa.org](mailto:jfick@ohsaa.org) or mail to OHSAA as indicated in next line. If paying by check mail to:

**OHSAA, Attn: Accounting, 4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, OH 43214**

#### CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Full Name on Card

Card Number

Expiration Date  
(MM/YY)

CVV Code (3-4  
digits)

Billing Street Address

Billing City

Billing State

Billing Zip Code

Amount to be charged

\$

Product Description

Phone Number

Email Address

**Remove this page to submit your Mechanics Clinic Registration**

**Remove this page to submit your Mechanics Clinic Registration**

# State & Local Meeting Attendance Requirements

As in the past, all softball umpires must complete four education credits and one state rules meeting. The OHSAA requires umpires holding permits in both baseball and softball to attend four local meetings for each sport – details are elsewhere in this publication.

The state meeting will be available both online and in person. The **BEST WAY** to start your preparation for the coming season is to attend a “face-to-face” State Rules Interpretation Meeting. There will be eight in person meetings. **Each meeting will feature sessions of about two hours and in addition to the state meeting will review the most important items that we want to cover prior to the season. By attending the entire session, you will receive credit for a local meeting in addition to the state softball meeting.** There is no need to “pre-register” for any face-to-face State meetings. The schedule is listed below with all meetings starting at 6PM.

Monday, January 30 – Columbus – OHSAA Office –Ceramic Building– 4080 Roselea Place

Tuesday, January 31 – Lakota West High School, 8940 Union Centre Blvd. - West Chester -  
**Cafeteria - Enter through cafeteria doors east end of building.**

Tuesday, February 7 – Oak Hill – High School – 5063 SR 93.

Thursday, February 9 – Cleveland - Garfield Heights High School – 4900 Turney Rd.

Wednesday, February 15 - New Concord – John Glenn High School - 13115 John Glenn Sch. Rd.

Thursday, February 16–Canton –Stark County Educational Service Center, 6057 Strip Ave NW

Tuesday, February 21 – Piqua – Upper Valley Career Center – 8811 Career Dr.

Thursday, February 23 – Findlay – Glenwood Middle School – 1715 N. Main St. Findlay

The online state meeting for softball will be available by the week of February 6. Details will be emailed to all officials and will include the deadlines for completing the meeting. To access the meeting, log in to your myOHSAA profile and click the “Rules Meetings” icon in the top right, then 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”. This search will display the online meeting option as well as any face-to-face meeting options. 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.

## **In-Person State Rules Meetings**

Monday, January 30 – Columbus – OHSAA Office –Ceramic Building– 4080 Roselea Place

Tuesday, January 31 – Lakota West High School, 8940 Union Centre Blvd. - West Chester

Tuesday, February 7 – Oak Hill – High School – 5063 SR 93.

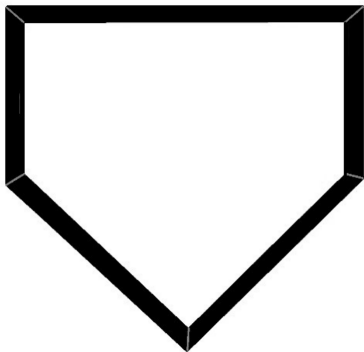
Thursday, February 9 – Cleveland - Garfield Heights High School – 4900 Turney Rd.

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Tuesday, February 21 – Piqua – Upper Valley Career Center – 8811 Career Dr.

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## **OHSAA Softball Umpire Mechanics Clinics**

■ Saturday, February 11 – East – John Glenn High School - 13115 John Glenn Sch. Rd. New Concord

■ Saturday, February 18 – Southwest – Lakota West HS, 8940 Union Centre Blvd. West Chester

■ Sunday, February 19– Southeast – South Webster High School 10529 Main St, South Webster –

Note: the South Webster clinic is in conjunction with a morning baseball clinic and runs Noon – 4PM.

■ Saturday, February 25 – Northwest – Glenwood Middle School – 1715 N. Main St. Findlay

■ Sunday, February 26 – Northeast – Walsh Jesuit HS – 4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. Cuyahoga Falls

■ Sunday, March 5 – Central - Reynoldsburg HS SUMMIT CAMPUS – 8579 Summit Rd. Reynoldsburg