



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin

Director of Officials Development – Softball

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- The 2024 season is under way with mostly good weather and many games played this past week. This bulletin will provide some meeting updates and answers to the most frequently asked questions of the preseason.
- Our Pre-Tournament Clinic will be held Sunday, May 5 at Waggoner Rd. Junior High School, 360 South Waggoner Rd. in Reynoldsburg. Registration will begin at noon and the clinic will conclude around 4PM. All OHSAA umpires our welcome. In addition to other information we will highlight the three umpire system used in our Regional and District games. With the increase to seven divisions in 2025 there will be a significant increase in the number of regional and district games using three umpires. For those who want to be considered for these games, now is the time to start working on the three umpire system, it's positioning, coverages, and rotations. This is always one of our highlight training programs with a big crowd – no reservations are needed.
- Information concerning the first online local meeting was emailed to all officials twice. Information is reprinted in italics below. **Note that due to a technical problem the entire meeting was not posted. Those who view the meeting will receive meeting credit. We are working to include the pitching presentation in the second online meeting.** Note the second online meeting will be available in mid/late April. An additional email will be sent announcing that meeting. It is not necessary to call or email asking when meetings will be available.

*These are optional meetings for officials to view and each meeting can be completed for **one local meeting credit each**. Your attendance credit is not uploaded automatically upon completion like the online state rules meeting.*

The meeting will only be available on the timeline below. Your attendance will be uploaded on the timeline below:

Meeting Available	Last Date Available	Credit Upload
<i>Monday, March 25th</i>	<i>Friday, April 5th</i>	<i>Friday, April 12th</i>

To access the online local meetings for your sport:

1 - Log in to your myOHSAA profile - <https://officials.myohsaa.org/Logon>

2 - Select the orange "Official" icon

3 - On the left-side menu toward the bottom select the button labeled "Special Presentations" under the orange section header labeled "OHSAA Resources"

4 - Once on the Special Presentations screen, select the meeting for your sport by selecting the "View" button for your sport's meeting.

5 - After the "Last Date Available" listed above, the meeting will not be available for viewing or local meeting credit.

- April 8 games – As most of you know there will be an eclipse in Ohio on Monday, April 8. Please double check your schedules as I am told some schools have been adjusting times for games. In addition to taking the standard "eclipse" precautions for the eyes please note that there may be traffic issues on this date. Also, keep in mind that a game may be interrupted by darkness caused by the eclipse and then continued as soon as daylight is restored. This would be the same as if there was a delay caused by a rain shower. Obviously, the impact and time of this event will vary widely based on your location in the state.
- Question - Are softball pitchers allowed to get a signal from the coach or the catcher off of the pitching plate? Ruling - The pitcher may take a signal from anyone, at any time, and from anywhere. However, the pitcher must also, while in contact with the pitcher's plate and with the hands still apart, take a signal or simulate taking a signal from the catcher. (Rule 6-1-1a, b,&c) The purpose of this rule is to allow the batter time to focus in on the pitcher. The penalty is an illegal pitch.
- Situation - I had a coach ask me about substituting pitchers within an inning. This particular coach has three starting pitchers and would like to use them all during games and sometimes within an inning. I found rule 3-3-2 Note; that a pitcher may be removed and returned once per inning, provided no violation of substitution or charged conference rules occurs. In the case book, rule 3-3-2 situations E & F also state that same phrase. However, situation E gave me pause, as it says, "This is legal one time per inning." Can more than two pitchers be used in one inning? For example, could F1 start

an inning and F3 replace F1, to then have F3 be replaced by F4, who would then be replaced by either F1 or F3? Ruling - The easiest way to clarify this is to say that no one can be a pitcher three times in an inning. That said, also note Rule 6-2-5 Note 1, which makes it clear that a pitcher returning in the same half inning receives no warm-up pitches. Hopefully that helps with the pace issue that could develop here.

- Play - Runners on 1st and 3rd. Pitcher pitches the ball. The catcher throws it back to pitcher inside the circle. The pitcher walks out the back of the circle for the next sign. As she stands outside the circle are runners legal to advance? Ruling – Yes, the Look Back Rule does not apply when the pitcher has the ball outside of the circle. (Rule 8-7-1)
- Situation – A batter enters the batter’s box with a non-approved or an altered bat. Ruling - A batter who enters the box with an illegal bat or is discovered having used an illegal bat with the infraction being detected by the umpire or the defense prior to the next pitch is out. The ball is immediately dead and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If a runner was retired on the play the out stands and the runner does not return. **When a non-approved or an altered bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are ejected from the game.** (Rule 7-4-2) 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. It’s a good time to review the White Book – pages 20 & 21 which provide more information on bats.
- Question – Are bat sensors legal in high school softball? Ruling – No, these devices, which measure swing speed, are not approved (Rule 1-8-1). The item (or the bat) must be removed prior to it being used. If the batter has entered the box with a bat containing a sensor it is an illegal bat and penalized as in the previous item.
- It’s also a good time to review the White Book – page 23 – which covers Game Ending/Suspended/Interrupted Game Procedures. This week we had a game played in which the Tie Breaker Rule was used in extra innings (**NOT ADOPTED IN OHIO**) and we had umpires tell coaches and an assigner that a game called after six innings was a suspended game. **THIS WOULD NOT BE TRUE UNLESS ONE OF THE EXCEPTIONS ON PAGE 23 APPLIED!** In this case it did not.
- Encourage your partners and fellow umpires to review the White Book and also read these OHSAA SB Bulletins. This helps everyone and improves the umpiring in the games we work. Obviously, you are studying the bulletins because you have gotten this far – but many do not. We had three local interpreters email questions this week about two items that we covered in last week’s bulletin – one way electronic communication to the catcher and C Flap helmets. Both are permitted in baseball but **NOT PERMITTED IN SOFTBALL**. It’s great to receive questions but unfortunate when we have questions on topics that have just been covered in the past few days.