



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Jerry Fick

Softball Bulletin

Director of Officials Development – Softball

May 26, 2025 Bulletin 25 – 14

jfick@ohsaa.org

Topics in this message –

- 1) Congratulations to all of our umpires working tournament play this year. We have completed sectional and district play and are ready for the regional and state games over the next two weeks. We want to remind everyone that the information on three and four umpire system umpire systems can be reviewed at any time on our website. Simply go to this link - <https://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/DOD>. Scroll down to the softball section and you will see these listed under Umpire Mechanics. All of our past bulletins are available there as well.
- 2) We have a team of dedicated volunteers serving as observers at many tournament games. They are there to help you and have been asked to meet with you after your game. They will offer comments both on what went well and what can be improved upon. Please welcome their suggestions, have an open mind, and thank them for their efforts. They are instructed not to become involved in rulings on the field.
- 3) We continue to have questions on the default color for umpire pants in our tournament games. There are no changes to our uniform requirements for 2025. Please refer to page 20 of the White Book (the first sentence includes this information) and there you can also review all the information available about future changes to the umpire uniform. Let's all look sharp as we complete the season. Remember base umpires should bring their plate equipment to all games – just in case there would an injury or other issue.
- 4) The following is borrowed from Baseball DOD Frank Grubb and would apply to any sport: I get asked by several umpires what they need to do to work the tournament or advance to high levels of the tournament. There are several factors that play into

this. Here is a list of some of the top things you can do to help promote yourself as an umpire:

- Be a good partner! Know the Blue book, show up on time, listen, communicate, work hard, etc. Be the umpire partners look forward to working with!
- Be involved in your local association – if you show up to your minimum of 4 meetings (or less with the online) sit in the back of the room and play on your phone while meetings are being conducted, you will not advance as people will have no idea who you are. Offer to lead a meeting, be a mentor, ask to be mentored, help anyway you can. Ask the leadership how you can assist.
- Know who the leaders are in your area and ask for honest feedback. Ask to be evaluated and listen to that feedback and then act on that feedback in your next games.
- Continue to work on your skills in the summertime. Don't get lazy just because it's summer baseball. Continue to strive to get better.
- Appearance is everything. Your perception starts the moment you walk on the field! Is your uniform clean and neat, shoes cleaned, hat free of sweat stains, shirt tucked in, etc. Looking the part will get you a long way in getting respect.
- Work hard! Do you hustle and move with purpose or do you add unnecessary delays to the game because you are not in position? Do you look like you want to be there? People can tell if you don't.

5) One more thing for those who want to umpire tournament ball in 2026. Remember that tournament applications are scheduled to be sent by email on January 15 of each year and are due January 31. Make sure that you note this on your calendar and get this turned in on time in January. It benefits everyone.

6) **2025-2026 OHSAA License renewal** – the OHSAA License renewal for the 2025-2026 season is live! Baseball licenses must be renewed by December 31, 2025 to avoid a late fee on top of your renewal fee. Renew your license now to avoid forgetting about it in December. To do so, log in to Dragonfly and click on your profile and then “my info”. Once there click on the box for the “Prep for 2025-26” and follow the steps to renew your license.

7) Play Situations –

Situation 1: Team A is batting and B5 comes up to bat instead of B4. Team B's coach seeing B5 coming to bat tells the umpire they wish to intentionally walk B5. The plate umpire calls time and awards B5 first base. As B5 reaches first base, Team B's scorekeeper tells the coach that B4 should have been up to bat. Team B's coach now appeals that B5 batted out of order. The umpire rules B4 out for failing to bat in their proper position and B5 is removed

from first base and becomes the proper batter with one out. RULING: Correct ruling by the umpire. Once the intentional walk is awarded to B5 they have completed their turn at bat. If a proper appeal for batting out of order is made prior to a pitch to the next batter it should be honored. (2-65-2, 7-1-2)

Situation 2: Team A utilizes a local college field when they have a rainy day as it is turf and is often playable when their field is not. When Team B arrives they notice the field is marked with lines that extend from the edges of the pitching plate to the end of the pitchers 16-foot circle. They do not want to play on the field as these lines are not allowed per NFHS field markings. The umpire states at the plate conference as part of the ground rules that these lines will be ignored during play and the umpire will judge if the pitcher remains within or partially within the 24" width of the pitchers plate without the use of these lines. RULING: Correct ruling by the umpire. Based on weather and facility availability schools around the country are often forced to utilize various fields to be able to hold their games. Not only are these lines not approved for NFHS play, but they are also most likely installed to other organizations' rules. For this reason, they may not provide the umpire with the correct reference to judge the pitcher legality by NFHS rules. The game will be played but umpire judgement will be used to determine if the pitcher is legal or illegal without the use of the lines.