



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin

Director of Officials Development – Softball

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Tournament Clinic

Local Online Meeting #2

Plays and Rulings

- **Reminder and save the date – Our tournament clinic is Sunday, May 17.** We have a new location this year and will be at Hilliard Memorial Middle School, 2900 Walker Rd, Hilliard, OH 43026. That clinic will start at 1230PM with registration and doors open at noon. Enter at the doors behind the building near the Middle School Football Field. We will wrap up late afternoon. This clinic will cover both the three and four umpire system mechanics as we will be using four umpire crews for all of our 28 regional final games this season.
- We're pleased to announce that Fleming's Ref and Sport will be on hand for umpires needing to get equipment or update their wardrobe to look sharp for the OHSAA tournaments. Fleming's staff will be there prior to the meeting and will stay until the meeting starts. It's always suggested and a good idea to place advance orders and reserve your size – please call 614 798 8888 to place your order and they will have it packaged and ready for you.
- The final online meeting for 2026 will be sent via DragonFly soon. Please follow the instructions for viewing the meeting and for registration credit. The instructions provided will give you suggestions on how to handle any issues with getting the meeting to start and a “help” contact should you need it.

Plays and Rulings –

- Play – Can batters use the C Flap helmet that is used in baseball rather than the softball face protector? Ruling – NFHS Softball Rule 1-7-6 states that the face protector must meet

the NOCSAE standard and that a statement to that effect must be permanently affixed to the face protector. The C Flap does not meet this requirement.

- Play – Is the double first base optional for regular season games? Ruling – The OHSAA requires the use of the double first base for all games (regular season and tournament) and all levels. Rules pertaining to this item are found in Rule 8-11.
- Play – We had a game where the school was using softballs without the NFHS logo. Is this permitted in OHSAA play? Ruling – NFHS rules require that the softball include the NFHS Authenticating Mark (found in Figure 1-4 on page 11 of the 2026 Rule Book). The OHSAA logo is not required on the softball. If a school does not have softballs with the proper mark play the game and complete a report on DragonFly – see Bulletin 26-8 or White Book page 24 for reporting instructions. Remember all of our past bulletins, as well as the White Book, can be accessed at the softball section of this link - <https://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/DOD>
- Play - What is the penalty for a teammate touching a scoring runner or batter-runner on a home run? I've had coaches wanting this called and I don't see it in the rule book. Ruling – The reason that this can't be located in the rule book is that it is not there. Rules 8-2 and 8-7 provide a list of the things that batter-runners and runners for which are called out. This “violation” is not listed because it does not violate any rule. That said, in the interest of allowing the umpires to perform their duties and watch runners touch bases and the plate, as well as part of having good sporting conduct the players should stay away from the plate area until after all have scored. If this becomes a problem, the rule citation is 3-5-6 which limits who can be out of the dugout. When an issue occurs, the umpire should inform the coach that subsequent offenders will be restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game. **An out can never be called for this reason.**
- Play – We have a very good team in our area that hits a lot of home runs. When they do this the teammates come on the field and place a crown on the hitter's head as part of their celebration. Is this legal? Ruling – No, please review White Book page 27 which states - ***In recent years there have been some reports that celebrations have gone beyond what is acceptable and have been the cause of issues between participants. We certainly want to allow brief and spontaneous emotional reactions after a play. Beyond these reactions, umpires should not permit prolonged, orchestrated, choreographed, self-congratulatory, self-glorifying, excessive, or demeaning actions that are not good for the game.*** It's quite obvious that the use of a crown or other similar “props” are pre-planned celebrations that violate our standards. Again, if an issue occurs let the coach know that any repeated violations will result in penalty of bench restriction or ejection for unsporting conduct. And again – those are the penalties - **An out can never be called for this reason.**
- Play – a coach asks – one day I forgot to report a substitute and a batter later I told the umpire and he called the runner out as an illegal substitute. The next day our opponent's coach did the same thing and the umpire would not call anyone out but gave a warning

instead! What is correct? Ruling - Rule 2-57 defines both unreported and illegal substitutes which are not the same thing. These situations would both be an unreported substitute which is penalized under Rules 3-2-4 and 3-5-7. This is a team warning for the first offense and a restriction to the bench for the offending player and coach for additional violations.

- Play – another from a coach – can the same courtesy runner run for both the pitcher and catcher in the same game? Also, who can be a courtesy runner? I also coach summer ball and it all seems different and confusing. Ruling - The NFHS rules cover the courtesy runner in Rule 8-10 (was Rule 8-9 until there was some re-numbering this year - no change to content) on pages 75 & 76 of the 2026 rule book. Many of the exceptions played in summer tournaments and "rec" ball are not part of the NFHS rules. In Article 1 the final sentence states "The same courtesy runner may not run for both the pitcher and catcher at any time during the game." In Article 3 - "Players who are currently in the game or who have participated in the game in any other playing capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners." Obviously, there is more to the rule but these two articles specify who can be a courtesy runner and if no one meeting the requirements is available then the pitcher or catcher would have to run.
- Play – Another one from a coach – Our opponent started one pitcher and changed to a second pitcher. In the 7th inning they changed to a third pitcher and after she walked 2 batters, they re-entered the 2nd pitcher. This is illegal and was not caught by the umpires. I will be honest I didn't catch it until afterwards when I was looking at the book. I don't know what can be done if anything, please let me know what the process is. Ruling – Sorry coach, but unless I am missing something this is not a rules violation. Please keep in mind that all players (starter or substitute, Rule 3-2-5) may re-enter the game one time. In any event the OHSAA does not recognize protests so this would need to have been resolved at the time if indeed there was a rule violation involved.
- Play - Another coach question - Are you aware of any rule prohibiting walk up music? A few coaches have mentioned that the Away team cannot play walk up music due to the Rule 1-8-6 clarifications regarding players recording or transmitting audio/video from the playing field during live play. Please advise. Ruling - This information below is re-printed from the Softball Coaches Manual page 19 and the White Book page 13. Like most rules it would apply equally to each team. The use of music from locations outside the dugout (in the stands) would be subject to the site rules as adopted by school administration/game management. **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.**
- Play – one more from a coach - We lost a game tonight in the bottom of the seventh inning. The game was tied 5 to 5 going into the bottom of the inning The first batter for the home

team struck out. The second batter got hit by a pitch. The third batter bunted the ball into fair territory, dropped the bat in fair territory and ball hit the bat again sending the ball in an awkward direction. I argued that the batter should be out and the ball dead. The umpire said no and allowed both runners to remain on base. The next girl got a hit and win the game. I think the ruling of the ump was an error. Ruling - This is covered by Rule 7-4-13 which states the batter is out when the bat hits the ball a second time while the ball is on or over fair territory. There is an exception for when the bat is still in the batter's hands and the batter is still in the batter's box. That is a foul ball unless an intentional act. In the play you describe, the ball hit the bat and that is not a violation of the above rule. That ball remains alive. The umpire must judge if the bat hit the ball or the ball hit the bat.

- **NOTE – There are some unusual things that can happen in a softball game. Please carry your rule and case books, as well as your White Book to refer to as needed!**