



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin

Director of Officials Development – Softball

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Topics in this message –

- 1) The OHSAA Softball Pre-Tournament Clinic will be held Sunday, May 4 at Waggoner Rd. Junior High School, 360 South Waggoner Rd. in Reynoldsburg. Registration will begin at noon, the clinic will start at 1230PM, and conclude around 4PM. All OHSAA umpires are welcome. In addition to other information, we will highlight the three umpire system used in our Regional and District games.**

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. It is not necessary to bring gear or be in uniform. Please dress comfortably.

- 2) More Plays and Situations – See below

- 3) Two Online Local Meetings will be available this year – On Monday an email was sent from the Columbus office and DragonFly with instructions for the April (second) meeting. Refer to that email to access the meeting. The meeting is available until May 8.

- Situation: A team has either a cardboard or an electronic sign in the dugout used to display numbers that are part of their offensive or defensive signals. Ruling – This is permissible but the sign must be kept in the dugout.
- Situation: Righthanded batter swings and chops the pitch downward to the plate. The ball bounces forward slightly and the catcher, reacting to the play, fields the ball on the bounce with a foot in the righthanded batter's box, and tags the batter-runner. Umpire rules fair ball, BR out on the tag. Offensive coach claims it is a foul ball because the catcher's foot was in the batter's box when she contacted the ball. Ruling: Umpire's call was correct. Fair/foul status is determined by the position of the ball when touched and not the position of the fielder. While the batter is protected when, while in the batter's box, a batted ball hits her and creates a foul ball, that does not apply to any fielder.
- Situation: Runner on 1B. Batter hits sharp ground ball up the middle slightly to the left of 2B. Shortstop dives for the ball and controls it in her glove. She then reaches out and touches the base with her throwing hand before the runner arrives. Umpire rules runner safe because the ball was not in the fielder's hand that touched the base. Ruling: Incorrect ruling. How is this play different from a fielder, on a force play or a play on the batter-runner at 1B, stepping on the base with the ball in her glove? See 8-6-3.
- Situation: No runners, two strikes on batter. Batter swings and misses the next pitch and the ball gets away from the catcher rolling into foul territory to the right of the lefthanded batter's box. Catcher retrieves the ball and throws to first baseperson who is positioned on the orange (foul side) base of the safety base. Umpire rules runner safe because fielder must use the white base. Ruling: Incorrect. This is exactly the type of situation for which the safety base rule was created. 8-10-2 specifically addresses this, allowing the defense to use either base on any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.
- Situation: Runners on 2B and 1B, less than two outs. Batter hits a short pop-up between the pitching circle and the third base foul line. The third baseperson and the pitcher both go for the ball, run into each other and the ball falls from the third baseperson's glove. Umpires make no call and all runners and the batter-runner are safe. After the play, the defensive coach requests that the infield fly rule should be applied. Ruling: Infield fly is a ruling that can be applied after the conclusion of the play if it is realized that the IFF was in effect. However, IFF is not an automatic out for the defense. Instead, it is protection to prevent the defense from gaining an advantage by allowing the ball to drop and create a double play situation. IFF is a judgement call by the umpires and is declared (2-29) when a fair fly (not a line drive or bunt) can be caught with ordinary effort. Factors in that judgement: (a) was the ball hit high enough to allow defensive players to make a play with ordinary effort and (b) was the ball hit into an area of the infield that would allow defensive players to make a play with ordinary effort. Given that the defenders had to move to attempt to field the ball that created a collision, it appears that the judgement of the umpires was correct to not rule infield fly.
- Situation: Runner on 2B. Pitch to the batter ricochets off catcher's leg guard and rolls into the dugout/bench area. Umpire awards runner home. Ruling: Incorrect. Though the impetus of the movement and direction of the ball was a product of

contact with the catcher, this play was the result of a pitched ball and 8-4-3-C is applied, the penalty a one base award.

- Situation: Runner on 2B. Runner attempts a steal of 3B on the pitch. Base umpire does not react or move to the play. Plate umpire notices this and moves toward the base to take the call. The plate umpire signals out; at the same time the base umpire calls the runner safe. Umpires get together and discuss the play, ultimately determining that the runner was out. Ruling: This was the base umpire's call (a play on any runner advancing on the bases by steal, passed ball, etc. is the base umpire's call). The plate umpire should not initiate a call unless there is clear communication with the base umpire that PU will take the call (in this case, this did not happen). Proper procedure is to allow BU to make the initial call. If BU is unsure because of a poor angle or being blocked, BU can request help after a call is made, or if questioned by the coach. Please review Base Umpire Responsibilities and Base Umpire Coverage, page 56 of the Umpires Manual.
- Situation: B1, a right-handed batter, hits a ball that rolls in front of home plate up the first base line. As B1 is running to first base and is just past the left-handed batter's box F2 is coming from behind the plate to field the batted ball that is in fair territory, F2 and B1 make contact with each other. The umpire rules that F2 was making the initial play on the batted ball and B1 is guilty of interference. They rule a dead ball and B1 is out. Team B's coach argues that their runner has the right to their basepath to run to first base and should not be guilty of interference. RULING: Correct ruling by the umpire. Only one fielder is ruled to be making the initial play on the batted ball. In this case the umpire judged F2 was the fielder that was making the initial play so they are the fielder that can be interfered with. Since B1 hindered or impeded F2 while making the initial play on a batted ball in fair territory they are guilty of interference. (2-31-1, 8-2-7a)