



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

2020 Edition

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## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES - 2020

- The **White Book** has been expanded – your OHSAA Preseason Guide PLUS 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**.
- **Umpires working the state tournament must receive a test score of at least 80% in the previous season. In addition 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 and a half 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, it is purely optional. Information concerning the online meeting and attendance requirements is on the back cover of this booklet.
- USA Softball will host a National Umpire School in Massillon on March 7 & 8, 2020. Advance registration is required – please visit [www.usasoftballohio.org](http://www.usasoftballohio.org) or this link for details - <http://www.usasoftballohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-USA-Softball-National-Umpire-School.pdf> Questions can be emailed to Commissioner Warren Jones at [wjonesjr3@frontier.com](mailto:wjonesjr3@frontier.com).

## OHSAA SOFTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS 2020

- **Noisemakers** – The use of any equipment/object 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 section 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 the offender(s). Umpires are asked to first use warnings to enforce this rule.

- Bats – Definitions and Penalties for use of Illegal, Altered, or Non-Approved Bats – This is an item that caused quite a bit of confusion and as a result many problems during the course of last season. It is imperative that umpires understand the definitions, requirements, and penalties associated with use of various items of equipment. This is an OHSAA Point of Emphasis that we will be talking all year but it also is a NFHS POE. The NFHS changes and POES are found elsewhere in this publication – we’re not going to kill trees by printing these twice but certainly encourage you to study these items more than once as a full understanding is important.
- Jewelry – This is an item that we need to again emphasize for 2020. Rule 3-2-12 clearly states that players in the game can’t wear jewelry and lists numerous examples – rings, watches, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc. It’s important to note that jewelry does not need to be made of metal – rubber bracelets, cloth/string necklaces, and other decorative items are all illegal. The penalty for violations is found over in Rule 3-6-1 and includes removing the item and for the first offense a team warning. Subsequent offenses result in a bench restriction for both the offender and the head coach. Let’s make sure that we have the coach re-check the entire team for jewelry whenever that first offense occurs and the related warning is issued. Far too often, we have umpires who want to “take the easy way out” and ignore a safety rule or policy. This is dangerous for the student-athlete, the coach and for you. Let’s work on this. Also, note that religious medals (must be taped and worn under the uniform) and medical-alert medals (must be taped and may be visible) are not considered jewelry. Daith Ear Piercings are permitted provided the school has submitted documentation of necessity from a physician. This must be sent to the OHSAA and a waiver may then be issued. This waiver must be available at the game and shown to the umpires. (3-2-13 Note)
- 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.*

## 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.

## CONGRATULATIONS – 25 YEAR UMPIRES - 2019

Larry	Black	Westerville
Saundra	Cummings	Miamisburg
Gary	Ebaugh	Bryan
Bruce	Epstein	Beachwood
Walter	Fawcett	Hebron
Michael	Koney	Parma
Dale	Kutting	Lorain
Duane	Larason	Alexandria
Larry	Lloyd	Van Wert
Michael	McCarthy	North Ridgeville

Barry	Oyer	Circleville
Donald	Peeples	Ansonia
Eric	Queen	Oak Hill
Theresa	Rice	Brook Park
David	Robenstine	Elmore
Richard	Smole	Parma
Richard	Szczepinski	Mantua
Raymond	Thomas Jr.	Youngstown
Daniel	Walunis	Cleveland
Michael	Williams	Sunbury

# Professionalism

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**. As we prepare for the season the memo below and the Officiating Code of Ethics are great reminders of the important part that officials play in enriching opportunities for Ohio's students.

***TO: OHSAA Registered Contest Officials***  
***FROM: Jerry Snodgrass, Executive Director, and Beau Rugg, Senior Director of Officiating and Sport Management***  
***SUBJECT: Professional Conduct***

Interscholastic athletic contests in Ohio could not happen without our 15,000 registered officials. Our member schools have entrusted each of you to assist in the growth and development of our students who are involved in these programs, and we cannot thank you enough for the role that you play in the process and the service that you provide.

Recently, there have been 2 articles I co-authored with Karissa Niehoff, Executive Director of the NFHS that have appeared in newspapers as well as being addressed on television (it was even addressed on a national television network). While drawing attention to fan behavior (specifically adults), it has been followed with positive feedback but also has served as a continued reminder for officials and the code of ethics and conduct in which you are required and expected to adhere as a registered contest official in Ohio. That code starts out by saying "Officials are to be independent, impartial and responsible to the people they serve."

What does that mean? It means a lot of things, but we wanted to take this opportunity to specifically remind you that making verbal comments or utilizing social media to comment on anyone's age, gender or ethnicity or to comment about a group of people or a particular community **are not acceptable**. This includes, but is not limited to, comments to and/or about coaches, athletes, school administrators or personnel, fans or your fellow officials. While you may believe you are merely joking, what you say is not being taken as a joke by those on the receiving end. As someone once said: "treat others as you wish to be treated."

If you witness unprofessional behavior by an official, or are on the receiving end of such behavior, we encourage you to let us know about the incident. Every member of the officiating profession carries a responsibility to act in a manner becoming of a professional, so we expect all unethical behavior to **STOP** immediately and for all of us to set a positive example. We know the officiating community will rise to the occasion, be united as a team and continue to make interscholastic athletics in Ohio an enjoyable and positive experience for everyone involved.

While we have focused on fan behavior, we also want to do our part to emphasize the code of ethics and responsibilities to coaches and officials – it takes *everyone* to continue to provide quality officiating and the opportunities we ALL play a part in providing to our student-athletes in Ohio.

## **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>

## Welcome to the 2020 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 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.

We have a number of things that are new for 2020 – the first of these is the expansion of this publication - “The White Book”. You'll recall that in the past all OHSAA umpires received the NFHS/OHSAA Softball Preseason Guide which included several pages of OHSAA customized information. Last year we started a conversion to our own single publication, “The White Book”, which will provide both highlights of NFHS rules and mechanics along with the OHSAA information that you'll need for the coming season. The idea 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 will continue to use NFHS Mechanics which are the same as those written by and used in USA Softball. This new booklet will instead focus on the same types of items found in the NFHS/OHSAA Softball Preseason Guides of years past with special concentration on rules

changes, points of emphasis, umpire mechanics and the OHSAA emphasis items that we want to share with all of you. We are confident that the customized content will better serve you.

Before further discussing the coming season I would like to congratulate, on behalf of the entire OHSAA family and all of our officials, Linda Papagna of Warren. Linda was the 2019 recipient of the National Federation OHIO OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR for softball. She has served as an OHSAA tournament umpire at all levels, one of our tournament observers, and is very active as a member of both the Trumbull County Umpires Association and the Youngstown Metro Umpires Association. When you see Linda on the field please congratulate her and say thanks for all her many contributions to the OHSAA.

Linda was honored at the Officials Hall of Fame Banquet in June. In addition veteran softball umpires Raymond (Gene) Bess, Bernard (Bernie) Hensley, Robert (Bob) Juliano, Anthony (Tony) Montana and Rolly Weber were all inducted into the OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame. We also recognized officials completing 25 years of service as OHSAA softball umpires. These umpires, along with those who worked our 2019 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!**

2020 marks a special anniversary as it is the tenth year of the OHSAA's sport specific program to provide officials additional training opportunities and you the opportunity to improve your "game". The OHSAA Board of Directors has directed substantial resources to enhance the training programs for all officials. We need your help as we continue to strengthen officiating in Ohio. We expect all of you to support our efforts to see that both playing rules and the approved umpire mechanics are followed. 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 goal is simple: ONE RULE/ONE INTERPRETATION/ONE MECHANIC

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

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 for 2020 – 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, as well as other topics, on Sunday, May 3 at Reynoldsburg HS Livingston Campus. This free clinic is intended for umpires working the three umpire system 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.

This year we will 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 by mid-February and will have a mid-March deadline. Additional details will be sent to you when the test is available online. **And remember – umpires working the state tournament must receive a test score of at least 80% in the previous season.**

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.

Also ongoing will be the use of observers at our state and regional tournaments. Thanks to the many wonderful volunteers, we had observers last year at all of our regional and state championship sites. These observers not only were able to help the umpires working these games but their input was also 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 potential improvement items for all of our umpires. It is also important to note that our observers play an important role in determining tournament assignments for future seasons.

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 2020 as this section contains very important information that we all need to know.**

This season we must continue to work on both 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 all games. Our current 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 forming near them. We need your help - please encourage your friends and neighbors to get involved!

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

Jerry Fick

Director of Officials Development – Softball

## **NFHS RULES CHANGES & POINTS OF EMPHASIS - 2020**

### **Bats – Definitions and 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. 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.
- 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 (formerly ASA) 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 also 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.

- For 2020 a new definition has been added for a damaged bat. This item 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.
- 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:



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 each team's equipment prior to every game. It's important to note that umpires are being expected to remain vigilant throughout the course of 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.

Here is another excerpt from the NFHS Softball Points 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. Although umpires may inspect equipment, they are no longer required to do so. What is important to remember is equipment wears during use. Bats can become damaged, or a player may purchase a new bat that does not meet the NFHS requirements. Both catchers' helmets as well as batter's helmets have screws that hold face guards in place. These screws loosen and will eventually fall out rendering the equipment illegal for use and potentially causing a safety risk to the player if not detected. It is critical that coaches 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.

## Rule 6-1-1 Change and Point of Emphasis – Pivot Foot Location

This rule has been changed and the pivot foot must now be in contact with the pitcher's plate rather than having a requirement that it be on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. The rationale for this change, again from the NFHS Softball Points of Emphasis –

Due to the varying levels of play and levels of skill in pitching development, prior to the start of the pitch, NFHS rules allow the pitcher to choose foot placement. The pitcher may choose to take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the plate and the non-pivot foot behind the pitcher's plate or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. Prior to the start of delivery, both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. This allows for personal preference and developing pitchers to work through levels of progression.

### Rule 8-4-3d Penalty – Base Award – Detached Equipment

This rule has been clarified to state that the batter-runner, not a batter, would be awarded bases(s) when a fielder intentionally contacts a pitched ball with detached equipment. Thanks to Ned Ewers, of Defiance, a member of our OHSAA Softball Umpire Improvement Team and a great student of the rules, for calling this to my attention and the attention of the NFHS Softball Rules Committee.

### Rule 9-1-1c Change – Run Counts – Appeal Play

A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made by a preceding runner who is declared out on an appeal play. This is simply a clarification of the rule.

All rules changes and points of emphasis will be covered in our state meetings.

## OHSAA REMINDERS FOR 2020

- Rule 3-2-1 allows state associations to permit players to wear sweatshirts and jackets when there is inclement weather. This rule was added in 2017 and for 2018 the OHSAA adopted this rule. Please review this in your rule book and cover it in local meetings.
- Although we don't have pregame equipment checks by umpires it's important to note that you are being expected to remain vigilant 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 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.

- 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 times where there is cause to refer to the rule book. I know it can take time but while a 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.
- **A message to all who hold BOTH a baseball and softball permit and also to all local association secretaries for these sports.** The OHSAA requires umpires holding permits in both sports to attend four local meetings for baseball and four local meetings for softball. Local Associations are not permitted to offer meetings that give credit for both sports in a single session. There is one exception to this provision as each local association will be able to conduct one meeting that covers OHSAA regulations and other items that are common to both sports. Officials will be able to attend only one of these meetings and those who do so 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.
- Note – 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.
- George Gulas, our state interpreter from Medina, has again put together a list of observations from our observers and others who saw a lot of games in 2019. 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. We believe that work in these areas will help improve the capabilities of all of our umpires.**

## **CONGRATULATIONS 2019 STATE TOURNAMENT UMPIRES**

Mark Abbuhl  
 Richard Annen  
 Leighann Baer  
 Donald Barzak  
 Raymond Bess  
 Michael Blazeovich III  
 Eric Bond  
 Donald Bowman  
 Terry Bowshier  
 Gary Brockman  
 James Brown  
 Mike Burwell  
 Steven Chrisman  
 John Craig  
 Jon Derryberry  
 David DeVelvis  
 Greg Drach  
 George Gulas  
 Charles Hall  
 Brian Harrell  
 Tom Hathaway

Paul Hines  
 Bill Hutchison  
 Raymond Isla  
 William Jordan  
 Timothy Klemm  
 Kevin Lehman  
 Rob Luklan  
 Paul Melcher  
 Pamela Mercer  
 John Meyers  
 Patrick Montana  
 Douglas Murphy  
 Ryan Murphy  
 Vickie Napierkowski  
 Paul Offenbacher  
 Kevin Oser  
 Linda Papagna  
 Pat Porter  
 Richard Randall  
 David Robenstine  
 Robert Seedhouse Jr.

Brandon Smith  
Tyler Smith  
Kenneth Stillwagon Jr.

Kevin Tallent  
Steven Trout  
Bruce Varner

## SPORTING CONDUCT AND 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:

- A. 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.**
  - 1. **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.
  - 2. **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 Ejection Form." Please complete one report per offending school.
- B. The Officials Report Form may also be used to report good or poor sportsmanship, severe injuries, facility problems, or equipment problems.
- C. Ejections other than players or coaches and other items of which the Director should be made aware must be reported.
- D. The school AD and OHSAA will automatically be sent an email concerning the ejection..
- E. Response email notifications will be sent once the protocol has been completed.
- F. 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.

## 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 NFHS Rule Book. Talk about the process for handling these situations in your pre-game conferences.
- 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.

## Revised Weather Policy - Thunder and Lightning

1. If thunder is heard, the game will be stopped and 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. Review the OHSAA Weather Policy above. There have been reports that officials have ignored severe weather conditions. Officials who do this will be fined and/or suspended.

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

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.

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.

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.

## TIPS FOR NEWER UMPIRES

We are fortunate to have both some veteran and retired umpires who contribute their time to watching and working with our newer umpires, primarily at the sub-varsity level. Here are some suggestions that may help both newer and even not so new umpires. Special thanks to George Bringman (Ashland), 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 with newer umpires. If you have time to work with newer umpires let your local secretary, instructor or assigner know – they will appreciate it and so will the umpires.

- Arrive on time (at least 30 minutes before the scheduled game start).
- Park next to your partner and if possible away from others. Your car is your office and your storage area. Create a list of items to include in a pregame conference with your partner. Each pregame is different but a sample document is found on page 12 & 13 of the NFHS Softball Umpires Manual.
- 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.
- 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 .....?**
- 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 ninety degrees to the path of the throw. (See 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!!!**
- **ALWAYS HUSTLE!**
- 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. If necessary ask your assigner who would be good to observe and where they are working that day. Remember that veteran umpires are always willing to help!

- Your association’s interpreters, instructors, and observers are there to help you all season. Call or email them with questions that come up during the year. 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.

## CHECK YOUR UNIFORMS

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

- Pants are to be either Heather Gray or Charcoal Gray. All umpires on a crew for any regular or post-season game are to be dressed alike. In the event that the 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 the short sleeve shirt. An American Flag patch/emblem is optional for the shirt and, if worn, shall be on the left sleeve two inches below the shoulder with the star field facing to the front.
- 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 to all of us. When we take the field we have only one opportunity to make a first impression and we want it to be a good one. 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 all resolve to make the extra effort to look professional. Shine the shoes, clean the hats, and take the time now to see what needs to be replaced this year.**

## Publications Note

In addition to this White Book, the Softball Mailing includes your NFHS publications - Rule Book, Case Book and Umpire Manual. Note that the UmManual is printed every other year and should be retained for the 2020 and 2021 season.

# OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## 2020 SOFTBALL UMPIRE MECHANICS CLINICS

All sessions are from 9 AM to 4PM – except SE clinic

See separate page for schedule and details of Southeast District Clinic

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 9 – East – East Muskingum Middle School – 13120 John Glenn School Road - New Concord

\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 15 – Northwest – Glenwood Middle School – 1715 N. Main St. - Findlay

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 16 – Southwest – Stebbins High School – 1900 Harshman Rd. – Riverside

\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 22 – Southeast – South Webster High School 10529 Main St, South Webster, OH 45640 **USE REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 23**

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 23 – Northeast – Walsh Jesuit High School – 4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. - Cuyahoga Falls

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, March 1 – Reynoldsburg HS LIVINGSTON CAMPUS – Columbus - 6699 EAST LIVINGSTON AVE.

The OHSAA will sponsor six Softball Mechanics Clinics in 2020. 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. An OHSAA state rules meeting will also be available for registered clinic attendees only. 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 - Mail form on the next page to: OHSAA, Attention Officiating Department, 4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, OH 43214** 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  
*2019 SOFTBALL UMPIRES MECHANICS CLINICS*

REGISTRATION FORM

Select Location:

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 9 – East – East Muskingum Middle School – 13120 John Glenn School Road -  
New Concord

\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 15 – Northwest – Glenwood Middle School – 1715 N. Main St. - Findlay

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 16 – Southwest – Stebbins High School – 1900 Harshman Rd. – Riverside

\_\_\_\_ Saturday, February 22 – Southeast – South Webster High School 10529 Main St, South  
Webster – USE REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 23

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, February 23 – Northeast – Walsh Jesuit High School – 4550 Wyoga Lake Rd. -  
Cuyahoga Falls

\_\_\_\_ Sunday, March 1 – Reynoldsburg HS LIVINGSTON CAMPUS – Columbus - 6699 EAST  
LIVINGSTON AVE.

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

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

Primary Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Years Registered as an OHSAA Softball Umpire \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with payment of \$60 to: ***OHSAA, Attention Officiating  
Department, 4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, OH 43214***

***Make checks payable to OHSAA***

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

# REGISTRATION FORM SOUTHEAST CLINIC ONLY

OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## *BASEBALL & SOFTBALL UMPIRES MECHANICS CLINIC*

**Saturday, February 22- South Webster High School, 10529 Main St, South Webster, OH 45640** (this is a dual baseball/softball clinic – there will be no state meeting at this clinic)

Baseball \_\_\_\_\_ 9:00am - 12:30pm

Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ 12:30 pm - 1:00pm

Softball \_\_\_\_\_ 1:00pm - 4:30pm

Both \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Primary/Secondary Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

OHSAA Local Association \_\_\_\_\_ Years Registered as an OHSAA Baseball Umpire \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with payment of \$60 (made payable to OHSAA Clinic) to- ***OHSAA,  
Attention Officiating Department, 4080 Roselea Place,  
Columbus, OH 43214***

For one payment of \$60.00 you can go to baseball, softball or do both clinics that day. **Bring all your base and plate gear, in addition to a smart phone or tablet for video instruction.**

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

# State & Local Meeting Attendance Requirements

As in the past, all softball umpires must attend four local rules meeting 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 and a half 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, it is purely optional. The schedule is listed below with all meetings starting at 6PM.

Wednesday, January 29 – Columbus – OHSAA Office –Ceramic Building– 4080 Roselea Place

Thursday, January 30– Zanesville – High School – 1701 Blue Ave

Tuesday, February 4 – Monroe – High School - 220 Yankee Rd.

Thursday, February 6 – Cleveland - Garfield Heights High School – 4900 Turney Rd.

Wednesday, February 12 – Findlay – Donnell Middle School – 301 Baldwin Ave.

Thursday, February 13–Canton –Stark County Educational Services Building, 6057 Strip Ave NW

Tuesday, February 18 – Piqua – Upper Valley Career Center – 8811 Career Dr.

Thursday, February 20 – Jackson – High School – 500 Vaughn St.

The online meeting for softball will be available January 29. The last day on which an online rules meeting may be viewed without penalty will be Friday, March 27. The meeting will be accessible with a \$50 late fee until Monday, April 27. 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.