



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 – Watch for an email from the office and DragonFly for the April (second) meeting. Refer to that email from the office to access the meeting.

- Play - Runners on 1st and 2nd, B7 hits a ball over the fence for a home run. As the batter nears second base, the runner who was on 1st, turns around and gives her a high five but the batter doesn't pass her. Ruling – This is not passing or assisting a runner – please review rules 8-6-4&5.
- Play – F1 uses rosin bag but does not wipe fingers off after doing so. Ruling – This is permitted. Review Rule 6-2-2c.
- Play - Team A is batting with one out and R1 on first base, B3 hits a ground ball that goes untouched to F7. F7 throws the ball over F6's head allowing R1 to advance to third base. F3 fields the throw and tosses the ball to F1 who is in the circle as R1 is on third base and B3 has returned to first base. F1 with possession of the ball in the circle turns their back on B3 at first base and B3 comes off the base and advances to second base. After B3 leaves their base R1 then also takes a step toward home. Team B's coach insists this is a violation of the look-back rule and both B3 and R1 should be ruled out. Team A's coach says that the pitcher made a play on R1 so both runners are allowed to leave their bases. RULING: By rule Team A's coach is correct that a runner would not be called out if a play is made on another runner and a fake throw is considered a play. However, it is umpire judgement if the actions of F1 constitute a play being made. If F1 simply turned their back on B3 and looked at R1 as they were moving back toward the pitching plate while in possession of the ball within the circle this would not be considered making a play on R1. If F1 did not make a play on a runner, B3 would be in violation of the look-back rule. The ball would be dead and B3 would be ruled out. Since the ball is dead when B3 violated the look-back rule, R1 is not out for leaving their base. Only one runner, the one who left their base first, may be called out for violating the look-back rule with the other runners being returned to the last base touched. (8-7-3 Penalty and Exception)
- Play - B5 is scheduled to be the lead-off batter in the inning. As Team A's pitcher is throwing their warm-up pitches both B5 and B6 are outside of the dugout swinging their bats to warm up. The umpire informs the team that only one batter is allowed out swinging a bat in between innings while the pitcher is warming up and that player needs to be in the on-deck circle while doing so. RULING: Correct ruling. B5 is scheduled to be the first batter of the inning but they do not become a batter until they are entitled to occupy one of the batter's boxes. They are not allowed to occupy one of the batter's boxes while the pitcher is throwing warm up pitches. This is evident by this statement in rule 2-5-3 "A single on-deck batter shall remain in the on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up." Since they have not become a batter yet, B5 is considered the on-deck batter until play is ready to begin for that half inning. At this point they are entitled to occupy a batter's box making them the batter and the next player in the lineup is now able to exit the dugout and enter the on-deck circle. As listed in 3-6-6 note other players can participate in throwing or running activities during this time designated for the pitcher to throw their warm-up pitches but again based on the rules cited only one player can warm

up swinging a bat in between innings and they shall do this in the ondeck circle. (2-5-1, 2-5-3, 3-6-6)

- Play - Team A is batting with R1 on first base and no outs, B2 hits a ground ball up the middle. F6 makes a diving play on the ball near second base but on the third base side of the base. The ball bounces off their outstretched glove and F4 who was moving toward second base for the possible play at second base dives back toward first base to attempt to gain control of the ball and R1 who is sliding into second base makes contact with F4 before F4 secures the ball. The umpire rules this obstruction by F4 as they were not making the initial play on the batted ball and did not have possession of the ball when they impeded R1's progress. Team B's coach argues that they were fielding a batted ball, and the correct call should be interference on R1. RULING: Correct ruling by the umpire. F6 made the initial play on the batted ball, if F6 was still attempting to gain control of the batted ball within a step and a reach of the spot of initial contact they would still be considered making an initial play on the batted ball. However, since F6 is no longer attempting to field the batted ball and they deflected the ball, F4 is not considered to be making an initial play on a batted ball. In this case since F4 was not making the initial play on a batted ball and they impeded the runner without possession of the ball they are guilty of obstruction. Also, since the ball was deflected R1 would have to intentionally contact the ball or intentionally interfere with the fielder to be guilty of interference. (2-35, 2-46-3c, 8-4-3b, 8-6-10d, 8-6-12)
- Play - In a continuation of the above play, after the umpire signaled obstruction, R1 is standing on second base and B2 is on first base as F4 tosses the ball to F1. Prior to F1 entering the circle R1 is confused and leaves second base heading toward the first base dugout thinking they were ruled out on the play. As R1 is a few steps toward first base F1 now enters the circle and the coaches tell R1 to get back on the base, so R1 stops and returns to second base. F1 never made a play on either runner and B2 remained on first base during this time. Team B's coach asks if R1 violated the look-back rule. RULING: Since the runner left the base prior to the look-back rule going into effect (F1 was not within the pitcher's circle) they still have the ability to stop once then immediately return or advance to the next base. R1 only stopped once when the look-back rule was in effect and then advanced back to second base, they did not violate the look-back rule. (8-7 Articles 1-3)
- Play - B1 squares to bunt. As the pitch comes in it hits B1 in the chest completely in the batter's box. The umpire rules that B1 was no longer attempting to bunt when they were hit and B1 is awarded first base. RULING: Correct ruling as described. Any time a batter is hit with a pitched ball the ball becomes dead. There are then three options for the result of the play. 1) If any of the following occur the ball is dead and the batter is charged with a strike, if it is strike three the batter is out. If the batter: a. Swings at the pitch. b. Attempts to bunt the pitch. c. Is hit with a pitch that is in the strike zone or their actions prevent the ball from entering the strike zone. 2) If none

of the items listed above occur and the pitch is completely within the batter's box the ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. They are not required to attempt to avoid being hit, but they may not make an obvious attempt to get hit by the pitch. 3) If none of the items in the first option occur and the ball is not entirely within the batter's box and the batter made an attempt to avoid being hit, they are awarded first base. If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter is awarded a ball and remains at bat unless it is ball four. As soon as the batter is hit by a pitched ball the umpire should rule a dead ball. Then the umpire must judge which of the three options listed apply to the situation and enforce the proper penalty/effect to the play. (2-8-2, 7-2-1 g & h, 8-1-2 b & c) It should also be noted that the batter's hands are NOT to be considered part of the bat; they are a part of the batter's body and are enforced the same as if it hit any other part of the batter. If the batter is hit on the hands while any of the items listed in option 1 are true it would be a dead ball strike. If they are hit on the hands and none of the items in option 1 are true, then either option 2 or 3 would be applied to the situation. Lastly, this is true when the pitched ball hits the batter's hands or any part of their body first. If the ball hits the batter's hands or body and then the bat it is a possibly hit by pitch situation and this same line of consideration should be used to determine the proper outcome of the play. However, if the ball hits the bat first and then the batter's hands, or any part of the batter while still in the batter's box the result of the play is a dead ball, foul ball. (2-24-1f)