

2009 NFHS Softball Rules Interpretations

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Printing Errors and Corrections:

1. Page 37, 3-3-10, delete the last sentence that begins, "If there is an excessive...."
2. Page 48, Dead Ball Table, Awards or Penalties No. 38, rules reference should be 7-4-4.
3. Page 53, 6-2-3, the Exception and Note apply to Arts. 1 and 2 and should be moved up to under Art. 2.

SITUATION 1: B1, B2 and B3 all make outs and no one is aware of the third out. B4 walks; B5 gets a hit; B6 walks to load the bases. B7 has a 1-0 count when the mistake is discovered.

RULING: Once the official scorekeeper confirms the three original outs, and all are in agreement that three outs occurred, cancel the activity after the third out (unless unsporting conduct, a major infraction or an ejection) and start that team's next at bat with the proper batter had there been no mistake. End the inning; B4 will lead off that team's next at bat. (2-31)

SITUATION 2: With only one out and R1 on second base, B3 grounds out for what is thought to be the third out of the inning. All defensive players leave the playing field for the dugout and R1, who had advanced to third base, now enters her team dugout to get her glove and join the rest of her team on defense. While the teams are switching positions, the base umpires check with the official scorekeeper and verify there are only two outs. **RULING:** Since R1 abandoned her base by leaving the field of play and entered dead-ball territory, she is called out for the third out. The batter who follows B3 in the batting order will lead off the next half-inning. (2-31; 8-6-22)

SITUATION 3: In the top of the sixth inning with the bases empty and only one out in a very long half-inning, B7 grounds out for what is thought to be the third out. All defensive players leave the playing field for the dugout and the team that was at bat assumes the field on defense. The official scorekeeper notifies the umpires that there were only two outs and not three (a) before a pitch is thrown, or (b) after a pitch is thrown in the bottom of the sixth inning. **RULING:** In (a), the umpires should inform the coaches that the top of the sixth inning is not complete and have the teams switch positions and continue the game with the batter that follows B7 coming to bat with two outs. In (b), since the bottom of the sixth inning has begun with a pitch being thrown, it is too late to make a correction. When the top of the seventh inning starts, the lead-off batter will be the batter whose name follows B7 in the batting order. (2-31; 10-2-3g)

SITUATION 4: The visiting team lists Johnson as the starting pitcher, batting third in the order. Johnson gets a base hit in the first and third innings; courtesy runner Adams runs for her both times. With the visiting team leading 6-0, Johnson is replaced as the pitcher in bottom of the fifth inning by Jones. Jones gives up two runs in the bottom of the fifth and three runs in the bottom of the sixth inning. In the top of the seventh, with bases loaded, the visiting team's coach re-enters Johnson for Jones and tells the umpire that Johnson will pitch the seventh inning. Johnson singles to drive in two runs. The coach sends in courtesy runner Adams to run for Johnson.

RULING: Illegal; Johnson was not the last player to physically play the position of pitcher, so Adams may not run for her. Johnson must run for herself or be replaced by a pinch-runner. If she is replaced by a pinch-runner, she is no longer eligible to re-enter and pitch the bottom of the seventh. (3-3-5; 8-9-2)

SITUATION 5: R1 is at third and R2 is at first base; B3 steps in the batter's box. F1 holds the ball for longer than 20 seconds and the umpire awards a ball to the batter. F1 begins to engage in the same action on the next pitch. **RULING:** As soon as the umpire believes that F1 is attempting to intentionally walk B3, F1 will be directed to pitch and both F1 and the head coach will be issued a warning. The umpire should be able to detect after one "timing" violation F1's intent to intentionally walk the batter. If F1 does not pitch, she and the head coach shall be restricted to the dugout/bench or ejected. **COMMENT:** A player/team cannot violate one rule to circumvent another; this makes a travesty of the game and is NOT within the spirit of fair play. (3-6-13c & Penalty; 6-2-3)

SITUATION 6: With R1 on third base, F1 throws a wild pitch that goes back to the screen. F1 comes in for a play at the plate as R1 attempts to score. F1 receives the tossed ball from F2 to apply the tag. The umpire calls R1 safe. When does the umpire begin the 20-second count for F1 to deliver the next pitch? **RULING:** The 20-second count begins for F1 when the umpire deems she is preparing for the next pitch, not when she receives the ball from F2 as part of a play at home plate. In this case, the count should begin when F1 is in a position on the field consistent with where she would typically receive the ball after a pitch from F2. (6-2-3)

SITUATION 7: R1 is on first base with no outs and attempts to steal second base on a pitch to B2. B2 bunts the ball in fair territory directly in front of the plate. B2 heads for first base and as F2 picks up the ball and is getting ready to throw to first base, the plate umpire steps forward to make a fair-ball signal and accidentally knocks the ball out of F2's hand. By the time F2 retrieves the ball, both runners are standing on their respective bases. **RULING:** There is no rule provision for calling umpire interference in this situation; the runners are safe. (5-2-2c; 8-5-6)

SITUATION 8: R1 is at second base. B2 hits sharply to center field. The ball could hit the ground or may be caught in flight. R1 takes off to third base, as R1 passes the umpire, the umpire cuts to the inside of the field, the coach instructs R1 to return as F8 made a diving catch. R1 turns around and starts back to second base and runs into the umpire. After the collision, she continues back to second and is tagged out. **RULING:** There is no rule provision for calling umpire interference in this situation; R1 is out. (5-2-2c; 8-5-6)

SITUATION 9: R1 is on second base with two outs. B2 hits a sharp ground ball to F6. R1 takes off for third base as F6 fields the ball and prepares to throw to F3 for the force out at first base. Just after F6 releases the thrown ball, it hits R1 in the right shoulder and travels to the outfield. **RULING:** Unless R1 intentionally interferes with the thrown ball (after the release), no infraction has occurred and the ball remains live. (8-6-10d)