

National Federation of State
High School Associations



NFHS Softball

**2009
Rules Changes
Major Editorial Changes
Points of Emphasis**

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High School Associations




NFHS Softball

**2009
Rules Changes**

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Softballs – Dynamic Stiffness
(1-3-3)

- Ball specifications changed to include dynamic stiffness measurement
- Dynamic stiffness measurement more closely resembles the bat-ball collision occurring on the field
- Rule becomes effective January 1, 2010
- Measurement must not exceed 7,500 pounds/inch
- Compliance through NFHS Authenticating Mark Program



Dynamic Stiffness of Softball
Rule 1-3-3






Dynamic stiffness of softballs not to exceed 7,500 lbs./inch after Jan. 1, 2010.




Frame 1

Bunt Attempt Definition
(2-8-2)

- Changed to require batter to withdraw bat in order to take pitch
- Holding bat in the strike zone without withdrawal will be considered a bunt attempt
- Makes bunt attempts easier for umpire to determine
- Creates better balance between offense and defense



Bunt Attempt Definition
Rule 2-8-2

Bat in strike zone is considered an attempted bunt unless it is withdrawn away from the ball.

Frame 2

Pitching Windup Revolutions (6-1-4d)

- Pitcher may not exceed 1½ clockwise revolutions in windmill windup
- Clockwise as viewed by first base umpire
- Previous rule interpretation of anything less than 2 revolutions was an advantage for pitcher



Pitching Windup Revolutions (6-1-4d)

- Rule changed to provide better balance between offense and defense
- Illegal pitches easier to identify and enforce by umpires



Pitcher Time Limit Penalty (6-2-3 Penalty)


- When pitcher exceeds 20-second time limit to release next pitch
- Ball is awarded to batter
- Previous rule of illegal pitch was severe as runners were also advanced




Pitcher Time Limit Penalty (6-2-3 Penalty)

- Change makes time-limit penalties consistent for batter (strike) and pitcher (ball)
- Pitcher may NOT intentionally violate time limit four times to issue an intentional walk to the batter
- Umpire shall issue a warning to pitcher and coach – subsequent violation results in ejection of both



NFHS **Pitcher Time Limit Penalty** Rules 6-2-3 Penalty 



Ball awarded to batter for exceeding 20-second time limit.

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American Flag on Glove/Mitt (1-4-2)

- More and more American flags are attached to gloves/mitts
- Without the new provision, the flag would make the glove/mitt exceed the number of permissible colors
- Now consistent with other apparel and equipment guidelines



American Flag on Glove Rules 1-4-2

 **REFEREE**




One American flag (2 inch x 3 inch maximum) is permitted on the glove.

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Frame 4

Catcher's Helmet Eye Shield (1-7-1)

- Attached eye shields **MUST**:
 - Be constructed of rigid material
 - Permit 100-percent allowable light transmission – **NOT TINTED**
- Does not affect required face mask/guard
- Now consistent with batting helmets



Eye Shield on Catcher's Mask Rule 1-7-1

 **REFEREE**




Eye shields must be clear - not tinted.

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Frame 5

Uniform Style Exceptions (3-2-1)

- Permits the state association to make an exception to the uniform color/style rule for religious reasons
- Schools wanting to request an exception for a student-athlete's uniform should contact the state high school association



Uniform Color and Style Rules 3-2-1

 **REFEREE**




State association may permit different style uniform.


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Frame 6

Exposed Undergarments (3-2-7)

- Clarified that all exposed undergarments must be a solid color
- Permissible colors include:
 - Black
 - White
 - Gray
 - A school color




Exposed Undergarments Rule 3-2-7






Legal




Illegal

Exposed undergarments must be a solid color — black, white, gray or a single solid school color.

Frame 7


Timeframe to Deliver Next Pitch (6-2-3; 7-3-1)

- Clarified that the time frame to deliver the next pitch begins when the ball is returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch
- Alleviates any confusion when the ball is “returned” to the pitcher for a play at the plate after a wild pitch/passed ball



Timeframe to Deliver Next Pitch (6-2-3; 7-3-1)

- The count would not begin until the play at the plate was over and the pitcher was returning to the circle
- In this case, it is umpire judgment as to when she is “preparing for the next pitch”



Timeframe for the Next Pitch Rule 6-2-3 and 7-3-1






Batter has 10 seconds to take her position in the batter's box.




Pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch.


Frame 8

Pitcher Committed to Delivery (7-3-1 Penalty)

- Penalty clarified to state that a pitcher is “committed to delivering the pitch” when the hands have been brought together
- If the pitcher has *brought the hands together*, the batter leaves the box at the risk of having a strike called



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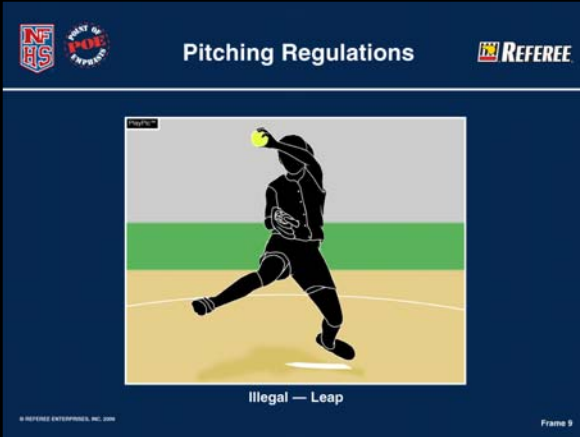
Pitching

- Second consecutive year as POE
- Improvements have been made
- Still room for more improvement
- Rule in place for a reason
- Dominant pitchers receive an unfair advantage if illegal pitches are not called
- Umpires refusing to enforce the rules do a disservice to the game



Leap

- Leap = Both feet are airborne by the pitcher prior to the release
- Pivot foot must stay in contact with the ground as it drags away from the plate until the lead foot touches the ground
- If both feet are off the ground at the same time – an illegal pitch shall be called by the base umpire


Pitching Regulations REFeree

Illegal — Leap

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Crow Hop

- Crow Hop = A replant of the pivot foot prior to releasing the ball
- This is done by:
 - Sliding the foot in front of the plate
 - Lifting the pivot foot and stepping forward
 - Jumping forward with the pivot foot off the plate prior to starting the pitch



Crow Hop

- Pitcher must have:
 - Pivot foot partially on top of the plate
 - Both feet within 24-inch length of plate



Crow Hop

- Umpires can determine a replant by looking at the location of the pivot foot when the hands separate to start the pitch
- If the pivot foot is off and in front of the plate before the hands separate, a crow hop has occurred – an illegal pitch is called by the base umpire



24-Inch Plate Violation

- Both feet must start within or partially within the 24" width of the pitching plate
- The stride and pivot foot must remain in or partially within the 24" width of the pitching plate throughout the windup and delivery
- Home plate umpire is responsible for this call



Pitching Regulations

Must stay within 24-inch length of pitcher's plate.

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Frame 10

Obstruction/Interference

- Improvements made in this area due to clear definitions and rules changes
- Umpires must continue to enforce the rules properly



Obstruction

- Requires a clear defensive infraction
- Two conditions must exist for obstruction to occur:
 - Defensive player is blocking runner's access to a base or path without being in possession of the ball
 - Runner is impeded or hindered




Obstruction

- Both situations must be present
- If a fielder is blocking a base *without* the ball and the runner has not been impeded in any way – NO obstruction
 - Impede = slowed down or path is altered
- If fielder obtains the ball *before* runner is hindered – NO obstruction




Obstruction

- If the fielder's location limits the runner's access to the base or path **AND** the fielder does **NOT** yet have the ball – **OBSTRUCTION**



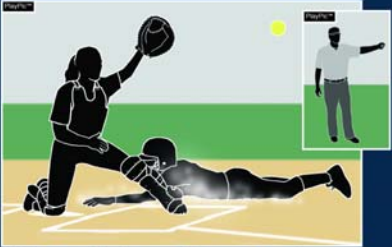
Obstruction



Umpires must be aware of obstruction, especially at first base as batter-runner rounds the bag. This is a delayed dead-ball situation.

Frame 11

Obstruction




Fielder cannot block a runner's access to any base without being in possession of the ball.

Frame 12


Interference

- Base runner has responsibility to avoid contact with a fielder attempting an initial play on a fair batted ball
- If contact occurs, interference is called, the ball is dead and the runner is out
- Other runners return to last base touched at time of interference



Interference

- Responsibility changes after initial play opportunity has passed – fielder no longer protected
- Once a fielder (except the pitcher) misplay the fair batted ball, and the ball is beyond a step and reach from that fielder and contact occurs – obstruction is called and a delayed dead ball is signaled



Interference



Runner must avoid contact with fielder making an initial play.

Frame 13

Umpiring – Obstruction/Interference

- Umpires must maintain proper positioning and stay attuned for potential obstruction or interference violations
- Proper calls and signals are essential
- Even when the award may be the base already obtained by the obstructed runner



Umpiring – Obstruction/Interference

- Defense must be aware they have committed an infraction
- So they don't commit the same infraction again – when the situation is more significant and the penalty more costly



DP/FLEX

- POE is refresher for coaches and umpires to better understand and utilize DP/FLEX rule
- Originally adopted in 2004 because it gives coaches more flexibility and student-athletes more participation opportunities



DP/FLEX – For Coaches

- Basic rules to remember:
 1. Decide the ten players you want as starters
 - List those who will bat in slots 1 thru 9
 - List the remaining player – FLEX – on the 10th line
 2. Fill in the defensive positions and the player not initially playing defense as the DP



DP/FLEX – For Coaches

3. When making lineup changes:
 - The DP cannot play defense only; the FLEX cannot play offense only
 - When the DP spot in the order comes up – the DP, FLEX or a legal substitute must bat or run bases
 - The DP may replace anyone on defense at any time, any number of times



DP/FLEX – For Coaches

- The FLEX may replace the DP any time, any number of times
- When any of the first nine leaves the batting order – they have left the game
- When the FLEX doesn't play defense – she has left the game



DP/FLEX – For Coaches

- Coaching Strategies – how to utilize the DP/FLEX rule based on the skills of your players
- Two strategies listed in POE portion of Rules Book
- Three additional strategies found on NFHS Website



DP/FLEX – For Umpires

Maintaining your lineup card:

1. DP/FLEX option may be used provided it is made known prior to start of game
2. DP's name is on lineup as one of nine hitters in batting order
3. Player for whom DP is batting (FLEX) placed in 10th position in lineup



DP/FLEX – For Umpires

4. Legal substitute may replace DP at any time or FLEX may bat for DP – DP has left game
5. DP may play defense at any position
6. Legal substitute may replace FLEX at any time or DP may play defense for FLEX – FLEX has left game



DP/FLEX – For Umpires

7. Illegal substitution if FLEX goes in to bat for anyone but the DP
8. Team may go from 10 to 9 players any number of times or end the game with 10 or 9 players
9. DP and FLEX may never be on offense at the same time – but may be on defense at the same time



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DP/FLEX RULE SAMPLE EXERCISES

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Sample Lineup Card


All samples will use this lineup card and progress through a series of substitutions

NO.	PLAYER	POS.
17	HARRIS	6
17	ADLE	4
20	THOMAS	8
24	JONES	DP
15	ALEXANDER	3
22	MOORE	2
23	COOPER	7
19	MORRIS	5
3	RODGERS	1
18	GREEN (FLEX)	9
NO.	SUBSTITUTES	POS.
10	HOWELL	
11	BAKER	
16	SMITH	
25	WILSON	



Sample Exercise #1


- “Jones” (DP) bats and gets on base safely
- The offensive coach asks for time for a change
- “Green will run for Jones”



Sample Exercise #1

Green
(FLEX)
running for
Jones (DP)


NO.	PLAYER	POS.
19	HARRIS	6
17	ABLE	4
20	THOMAS	8
4	JONES	DP
15	ALEXANDER	3
22	MOORE	2
23	COOPER	7
7	MORRIS	5
3	RODGERS	1
10	GREEN (FLEX)	9
SUBSTITUTES		
10	HOWELL	DP
11	BRIDGEMAN	
4	SMITH	
33	BROWN	



Sample Exercise #1


Note –

- Jones has left the game



Sample Exercise #2

- Two innings later, Green singles to left
- The offensive coach asks for time to make a change
- “Smith running for Green and Green will still be playing right field”




Sample Exercise #2

Smith (sub)
running for
Green (FLEX)

Green
remains in
game playing
right field only


NO.	PLAYER	POS.
19	HARRIS	6
17	ABLE	4
20	THOMAS	8
4	JONES	DP
6	SMITH	DP
15	ALEXANDER	3
22	MOORE	2
23	COOPER	7
7	MORRIS	5
3	RODGERS	1
10	GREEN (FLEX)	9
SUBSTITUTES		
10	HOWELL	DP
11	BRIDGEMAN	
4	SMITH	
33	BROWN	



Sample Exercise #2


Note –

- Smith enters the game for the first time and is the new DP
- Green (FLEX) has NOT left the game – back to defense only



Sample Exercise #3


- In the 4th inning, the offensive coach asks for time to make another change
- “Jones to re-enter and bat for Smith”



Sample Exercise #3

Jones (DP)
re-enters
for Smith


PLAYER		
NO.	NAME	POS.
11	HARRIS	6
12	ADLE	9
20	THOMAS	8
21	JONES	DP
22	SMITH	DP
23	ALEXANDER	3
24	MOORE	2
25	COOPER	7
7	MORRIS	5
3	RODGERS	1
10	GREEN (FLEX)	9
SUBSTITUTES		
10	HOWELL	
7	BOGGS	
4	SMITH	
33	BROWN	



Sample Exercise #3


Note –

- Jones has used her re-entry
- Smith has left the game and has a re-entry remaining



Sample Exercise #4


- In the next half inning, the defensive coach asks for time to make another change
- “Jones (DP) will play defense in center field for Thomas”



Sample Exercise #4

Jones (DP)
to play
defense in
center field
for Thomas


PLAYER		
NO.	NAME	POS.
11	HARRIS	6
12	ADLE	9
20	THOMAS	8
21	JONES	DP
22	SMITH	DP
23	ALEXANDER	3
24	MOORE	2
25	COOPER	7
7	MORRIS	5
3	RODGERS	1
10	GREEN (FLEX)	9
SUBSTITUTES		
10	HOWELL	
7	BOGGS	
4	SMITH	
33	BROWN	



Sample Exercise #4


Note –

- Jones the DP is now playing offense and defense
- Thomas still bats in the 3rd position in the lineup and is playing offense only



Sample Exercise #5


- An inning later, the defensive coach asks for time to make another change
- “Jones (DP) will move to right field and play defense for Green; Thomas will go back to center field”



Sample Exercise #5

Jones (DP) to play defense in right field for Green (FLEX)

Thomas goes back to center field




NO.	PLAYER	POS.	POS.
19	HARRIS		6
21	ABLE		4
23	THOMAS		FX
24	JONES		DP
25	ALEXANDER		3
26	MOORE		2
27	COOPER		7
28	MORRIS		5
29	RODGERS		1
30	GREEN		DP
SUBSTITUTES			
31	HOWELL		
32	SMITH		
33	BROWN		


Sample Exercise #5

Note –

- Jones (DP) is still playing offense and defense
- Green (FLEX) has left the game since she is not playing defense (still has a re-entry remaining)



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QUESTIONS?

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