

National Federation of State  
High School Associations



NFHS Softball

2010  
Rules Changes  
Major Editorial Changes  
Points of Emphasis  
Mechanics Changes

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High School Associations



NFHS Softball

2010  
Rules Changes

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Pitching Distance Increased  
(1-1-2b)

- Pitching distance increasing to 43 feet
- Distance change discussed for at least 10 years
- Questionnaire results from past several years indicated an increased interest in 43 feet – especially among coaches



Pitching Distance Increased  
(1-1-2b)

- Positive results obtained from experimenting states:
  - FL – 4 years
  - OR – 1 year
- Coaches were overwhelmingly supportive:
  - From experimenting states
  - From visiting states, playing at 43' for the first time



Pitching Distance Increased  
(1-1-2b)

- Game stats gathered indicate:
  - Offensive stats increased slightly (at bats, hits, runs, walks)
  - Strike outs – reduced
  - Defensive errors & length of game – no significant change
- More pitched balls hit into play
- Defense becomes more involved – skill development enhanced



Pitching Distance Increased  
(1-1-2b)

- Change becomes effective (mandatory) – August, 2010
  - Fall states – Fall, 2010
  - Spring states – Spring, 2011
  - Summer states – Summer, 2011
- States may adopt in 2009-10, if desired
- States determine distance for sub-varsity programs



**Pitching Plate to 43 feet**  
Rule 1-1-2b

Pitching plate distance increased from 40 to 43 feet in 2010-11.

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Frame 1

**Bat Specifications Defined**  
(1-5)

- Bat rule reorganized and clarified
- All previous bat specification requirements still in place
- List of legal and non-approved bats can be found on ASA's Website:
  - [www.asasoftball.com](http://www.asasoftball.com)
- Link also provided on NFHS Website

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**Bat Specifications Defined**  
(1-5)

- Bat components include:
  - Knob
  - Handle/Grip
  - **Taper – most significant change**
  - Barrel
  - End Cap

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**Bat Specifications Defined**  
(1-5)

- Most significant clarification/change – taper of bat must have:
  - A smooth, solid surface (no holes)
  - A conical shape

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**Bats**  
Rule 1-5-1

Illegal; taper does NOT have a smooth, solid surface.

Legal; taper has flat portions, but is a smooth solid surface and conical shape.

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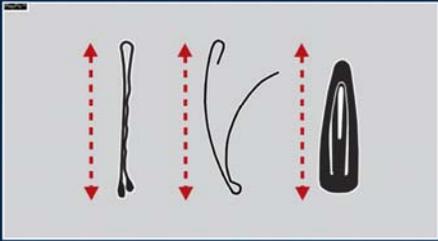
Frame 2

**Hair Devices**  
(3-2-12)

- Specific hair devices now permitted
- Must be:
  - Unadorned
  - No longer than 2 inches
- Examples include:
  - Bobby pins
  - Barrettes
  - Clips

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**Bobby Pins, Hair Clips**  
Rule 3-2-12



No more than 2 inches.

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### Pitcher's Record (9-6-6)

- Change made in determining a pitcher's record for a win or loss
- Specific guidelines for:
  - A starting pitcher
  - A relief pitcher
- Changes were made to more appropriately depict what occurs in the game of softball



### Dynamic Stiffness Effective Date (1-3-3 Note 1)

- Effective date for dynamic stiffness of softballs reached – January 1, 2010
- Softballs **DO NOT** have to be labeled differently
- Manufacturers are required to adhere to all specifications during the manufacturing process in order to use the NFHS Authenticating Mark



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## NFHS Softball

### 2010 Major Editorial Changes

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### Softball Circumference (1-3-3)

- Softball maximum circumference increased by 1/8 of an inch
- Change assists manufacturers in meeting softball specifications and tolerances
- Promotes a more consistently manufactured product



### Fair Batted Ball (2-20-1f)

- Second base* added to definition of a fair batted ball
- Ball first falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second or third base
- Occurrence unlikely, but rule coverage important for consistency with spirit and intent



### Fair Batted Ball Rule 2-20-1f

Fair ball

Foul ball

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### Lineup Card (3-1-3)

- The team's lineup card shall include the **first initial and last** name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and eligible substitute
- Previous rule only stated "name"
- Too many variations presented to umpires

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### Lineup Card (3-1-3)

- Made lineups difficult to understand and affected how games were administered
- Change promotes more professional and understandable lineup cards
- Incomplete lineups should be returned to the head coach for proper completion

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### Lineup Card Rule 3-1-3

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOLS ASSOCIATIONS  
Official Lineup  
Softball  
Date: April 8, 2010    Venue:    Lions Eagles

NO.	PLAYER	POS.	NO.	PLAYER	POS.
14	K. Alford	P	1		
7	C. Baker	C			
12	A. Charles	1B			
10	S. Daniels	DIP			
32	T. Edwards	A			
77	L. Franklin	2B			
29	K. George	3B			
2	D. Hamilton	S			
19	A. Irwin	LF			
15	T. Johnson (FLEX)	S			
	SUBSTITUTES				
1	D. Smith				
11	S. Anderson				
31	N. Robinson				

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### Infield Fly Rule (8-2-9 Note)

- A note was added to clarify that the batter-runner is out when she hits an infield fly
- Even when it is not initially called by an umpire
- It must be brought to the umpire's attention before the next pitch

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### Infield Fly Rule 8-2-9 (Note)

"Time"

Meeting with coach

Batter is out

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NFHS Softball

2010  
Points of Emphasis

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**Illegal Pitch Enforcement** 



When ball is hit fair or foul, offense gets option of the result of the play or the penalty for the illegal pitch.

Frame 7

**Illegal Pitch Enforcement**

- Calling illegal pitches has been a point of emphasis the past several years
- Provides a tremendous advantage to pitchers if permitted to pitch illegally
- Important for umpires and coaches to understand how illegal pitches are enforced



**Illegal Pitch Enforcement**

**ILLEGAL PITCH**

↓

Umpire gives *delayed-dead ball signal* and verbalizes *"illegal pitch"*  
(loud enough for the nearest players to hear)

↓

Batter takes illegal pitch

↓

Ball awarded to batter and all base runners awarded one base

↓

Batter hits illegal pitch fair or foul or becomes a base runner

↓

Coach has option of result of play or illegal-pitch penalty



**Illegal Pitch Enforcement**

- Players/coaches not hearing the "illegal pitch" call does not void the illegal pitch
- Batters must be coached to know they can swing at illegal pitches
- Results in options for team/coach




**Three-Foot Running Lane** 



Runner is required to have both feet in the three-foot running lane.

If hit by thrown ball, no interference.

Frame 8

### Three-Foot Running Lane

- Space defined by:
  - Line drawn 3 feet from and parallel to first-base foul line
  - Starts halfway between home and first base
  - Extends to first in foul territory



### Three-Foot Running Lane

- Batter-runner **must** use the three-foot running lane when entitled to run for:
  - Batted ball
  - Base on balls
  - Dropped third strike
- An award of first does not negate requirement



### Three-Foot Running Lane

- Batter-runner out for interference:
  - Outside running lane
  - Throw to first base
  - *Umpire judges*, she interferes with fielder taking that throw at first base
- May run outside three-foot lane to avoid fielder attempting to field a batted ball



### Non-Traditional Game Equipment

- New products continue to be introduced to HS softball
- Non-traditional game equipment must be reviewed by NFHS SB Rules Committee

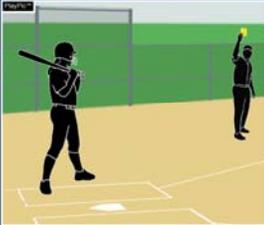


### Non-Traditional Game Equipment

- Umpires, coaches and administrators should contact state association to have non-traditional equipment reviewed
- Manufacturers should contact the NFHS prior to distributing or selling non-traditional equipment



Non-Traditional Game Equipment



Illegal; a coach is prohibited from having anything but scorekeeping materials/devices in the coaching box.



Legal; a batting stick has the same general shape and size as a bat used in competition.

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Frame 9

## 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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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## NFHS Softball

### 2010 & 2011 Mechanics Changes

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### NFHS 2010 & 2011 Umpires Manual

- Mechanics Changes:
  - Uniform slacks (p. 19)
  - Field umpire positioning (p. 39)
  - Between-inning mechanics (p. 54 and 71)



### Uniform Slacks

- Navy blue slacks added as an option in addition to heather gray
- Navy blue slacks are more readily available and hide dirt better than heather gray
- State association determines uniform options
- Umpires must dress uniformly



### Field Umpire Positioning

- On force plays, positioning changed back to being no closer than 18 feet from the base
- This provides a better angle on force plays to see all four elements:
  - The ball
  - The base
  - The offense
  - The defense



## Between-Inning Mechanics

- Plate umpire stands facing the field, 10-12 feet from:
  - The **first-baseline extended** when the team in first-base dugout comes to bat
  - The **third-baseline extended** when the team in third-base dugout comes to bat



**Between-Inning Mechanics**




Plate umpire faces the field and stands 10 to 12 feet from the third baseline extended when the team in the third-base dugout is coming to bat and the first baseline extended when the team in the first-base dugout is coming to bat.

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## Between-Inning Mechanics

- Puts the umpire in the same general vicinity during each half inning
- Provides each coach easy access to communicate without having to walk in front of a pitcher warming up
- Permits the plate umpire to observe both dugouts without having his/her back to either one



## NFHS 2010 & 2011 Umpires Manual

- **Points of Emphasis:**
  - Trailing the batter-runner
  - Walking the line
  - Holding up play



## Trailing the Batter-Runner

- Plate umpires must make it a habit to trail the batter-runner
- Assists the base umpire with
  - A pulled foot
  - A bobbled catch
  - A swiped tag
- Exit to the left of the catcher to avoid a possible collision



## Walking the Line

- Field umpires should walk the line with no runners on base
- Provides a smoother transition when the ball is hit and the umpire must move to the next position



### Holding Up Play

- Use the do-not-pitch signal when the pitcher appears ready to pitch, but the batter is not in the batter's box
- This is preventative umpiring and may avoid a "no pitch" or an "illegal pitch"



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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	HT	WT
19	HARRIS	6	
17	ABLE	4	
20	THOMAS	8	
24	JONES	DP	
15	ALEXANDER	3	
22	MOORE	2	
21	COOPER	7	
7	MORRIS	5	
3	RODGERS	1	
10	GREEN (FLEX)	9	
SUBSTITUTES			
10	HOWELL		
4	BAKER		
2	SOUTH		
33	BROWN		

### 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	HT	WT
19	HARRIS	6	
17	ABLE	4	
20	THOMAS	8	
24	JONES	DP	
15	ALEXANDER	3	
22	MOORE	2	
21	COOPER	7	
7	MORRIS	5	
3	RODGERS	1	
10	GREEN (FLEX)	9	
SUBSTITUTES			
10	HOWELL		
4	BAKER		
2	SOUTH		
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.	PTS.
19	HARRIS	6	
17	ADLE	4	
20	THOMAS	8	
14	JONES	DP	
6	SMITH	DP	
15	ALEXANDER	3	
22	MOORE	2	
21	COOPER	7	
7	MORRIS	5	
3	RODGERS	1	
18	GREEN (FLEX)	9	
SUBSTITUTES			
10	HOWELL		
11	SPRUE		
4	SAFFLE		
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 4<sup>th</sup> 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



NO.	PLAYER	POS.	PTS.
19	HARRIS	6	
17	ADLE	4	
20	THOMAS	8	
14	JONES	DP	
6	SMITH	DP	
15	ALEXANDER	3	
22	MOORE	2	
21	COOPER	7	
7	MORRIS	5	
3	RODGERS	1	
18	GREEN (FLEX)	9	
SUBSTITUTES			
10	HOWELL		
11	SPRUE		
4	SAFFLE		
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



NO.	PLAYER	POS.
11	HARRIS	6
12	ABLE	4
13	THOMAS	3
14	JONES	DP
15	SMITH	DP
16	ALEXANDER	5
17	MOORE	2
18	COOPER	7
19	MORRIS	8
20	RODGERS	1
21	GREEN (FLEX)	9
SUBSTITUTES		
22	HOWELL	
23	SPENCER	
24	SMITH	
25	BROWN	

### Sample Exercise #4

Note –

- Jones the DP is now playing offense and defense
- Thomas still bats in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 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.
11	HARRIS	6
12	ABLE	4
13	THOMAS	3
14	JONES	DP
15	SMITH	DP
16	ALEXANDER	5
17	MOORE	2
18	COOPER	7
19	MORRIS	8
20	RODGERS	1
21	GREEN (FLEX)	9
SUBSTITUTES		
22	HOWELL	
23	SPENCER	
24	SMITH	
25	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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