



## 2011 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

**SITUATION 1:** Defensive players F5 and F3 are wearing face/head protectors. With R1 on second, B2 hits a slow ground ball to third base. F5 and F3 remove the face/head protectors and discard them. In (a), the batted ball hits F5's discarded face/head protector in fair territory, or (b) F5's throw to first is off the mark and the thrown ball hits F3's discarded face/head protector. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), the ball has been blocked by the defense; the ball is dead immediately; runners are awarded two bases. R1 is awarded home and B2 is awarded second. In (b), B2 is awarded third bases if she had already reached first base when the ball was released by F5. **COMMENT:** The umpire should inform the defensive players that they are subject to blocked-ball and/or obstruction penalties if they continue to discard their face/head protection during a live ball. (1-8-4; 2-2-3; 8-4-3f Penalty)

**SITUATION 2:** In the second inning, it is discovered that the visiting coach has listed the numbers of all starting players/substitutes incorrectly on the lineup card. In the fourth inning of the same game, the coach attempts to enter a substitute who is not on the lineup card. **RULING:** Although multiple corrections were required in the second inning, one team warning is issued to the visiting head coach as the violations were discovered and corrected at the same time. In the fourth inning, if the substitute is added to the lineup card, the visiting head coach is restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game; if the substitute is not added to the lineup card, there is no penalty assessed and the earlier warning is still in effect. (3-1-3 Penalty)

**SITUATION 3:** A coach gives the lineup card to the plate umpire at the pregame conference that includes the DP/FLEX on the card (using 10 players). The lineup card is verified and accepted by the plate umpire. Moments later and before the game starts, the coach indicates he/she wishes to start the game with 9 players and not use the DP/FLEX in the first inning, but wishes to retain the right to go back to 10 players later in the game. **RULING:** Legal. A team is entitled to go from 10 to 9 players anytime during the game. This includes before the game actually begins since the lineup is official once submitted and verified by the plate umpire at the pregame conference. If the team goes down to 9 players before the game begins, one player has left the game and utilized an

“entry” for substitution purposes. The rules do not permit a team to start with 9 and then add the DP/FLEX option later. (3-1-3; 3-3-6)

**SITUATION 4:** B1 hits a home run over the left field fence. While B1 is completing her trip around the bases, her teammates leave the dugout and kneel down beside the third baseline. As B1 passes them, on her way to home plate, her teammates flop down face first and wildly move their arms and hands demonstrating an individualized tribute to B1.

**RULING:** Two rules have been violated in this scenario. First, Rule 3-6-6 indicates that only specific individuals are permitted outside the designated dugout/bench area. Further, Rule 3-6-13 addresses unsporting actions. At a minimum, the umpire should issue a team warning to the head coach, with a subsequent offense penalized with ejection of the offenders or the head coach. The umpire could also restrict the head coach to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. (3-6-6; 3-6-13)

**SITUATION 5:** R1 is on third base and R2 is on first with less than two outs. B3 strikes out swinging when F2 catches the foul tip. B3 takes off towards first base. F2 makes a wild throw toward first base into right field. R1 scores and R2 goes to second. **RULING:** B3 merely running to first base as a retired runner doesn’t necessarily mean interference has occurred. B3 must actually interfere with a pick-off attempt of R2, which is the only reason for F2 to throw in this situation. If B3 is struck by the ball or prevents F3 from catching the ball (e.g., collides with her), then interference shall be ruled. (8-6-18)

**SITUATION 6:** B2 is at bat with R1 on first base. F1 has been instructed to deliberately bounce the ball to the plate in an effort to prevent B2 from striking at the pitch. Before the pitch is released, R1 leaves first base on her way to second base. The base umpire declares "dead ball" and calls R1 out just before the plate umpire calls an illegal pitch and gives the delayed dead ball signal. **RULING:** The timing of this play is important. Since R1’s base-running infraction creates an immediate dead ball, the illegal pitch doesn’t actually occur. R1 is out; B2 remains at bat with the same count. (6-2-1; 8-6-21)

**SITUATION 7:** B2 is at bat with R1 on first base. F1 begins her wind up and then holds onto the ball instead of releasing it toward B2. R1 leaves first base anticipating that F1 will release the pitch. **RULING:** A pitching and base running infraction have occurred at virtually the same time and both are penalized. R1 is out for leaving the base before release of the pitch; an illegal pitch is called on F1 for failing to deliver the pitch, which results in a ball being awarded to B2. However, if in the umpire’s judgment, F1’s act was deliberate to bait and deceive R1 into leaving the base early, the umpire shall call “time” and “no pitch.” The umpire shall eject F1 and/or the head coach from the game. If the umpire believes the coach is directly responsible for the actions of F1, the umpire may eject only the coach. The defensive team is attempting to benefit by circumventing the rules. R1 is obliged to stay in contact with the base until the ball is released by the

pitcher, however, the tactic being utilized by the defense is deceptive and not in accordance with the spirit of fair play. (3-6-13b, c; 6-2-1; 8-6-21)

**SITUATION 8:** R1 is on first and B2 hits a foul fly ball to F5. F5 makes the catch and throws to F3 in an attempt to double off R1 at first base. The throw is high and F3 leaps to make the catch and lands on the colored base in foul territory before R1 touches the white portion. **RULING:** The defense and the base runner may use either the white or colored base in this situation since the throw pulled F3 off the white portion of the base. Therefore, R1 is out on the force play. (8-10-2b, 3)