



2012 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES CHANGES

POWERPOINT SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPT

Slide 3: The change will assist schools in ordering and manufacturers in producing, the actual product being used in the field.

ART. 1 . . . The ball(s) shall be an optic yellow sphere formed by either solid core or number one long-fiber Kapok or yarn wound around a small core of cork, rubber, polyurethane or similar material, and covered with a flat surface or a smooth seam stitch.

Slide 5: Knob. The knob may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. Devices, attachments or wrappings are permitted except those that cause the knob to become flush with the handle. A one-piece rubber knob and bat grip combination is illegal.

Slide 8: ART. 5...Headwear (caps, visors, headbands, ribbons, etc.) may be mixed. If worn, they must be white, black, beige or school colors (the colors are not required to be the same for team members). The logo may be any color. Flat items, no longer than 2 inches, used to control the hair, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips are permitted. Plastic visors, bandannas and hair-beads are prohibited.

Slide 9: The exception formerly found in 3-2-12 has been moved into the new text of 3-2-5.

Slide 10: As in other NFHS sport rules, the wearing of feathers in the hair has come into question. The spirit and intent of the above rules would be to prohibit the wearing of feathers (i.e., it is a similar adornment as hair-beads). However, individual states may interpret this rule differently since it isn't specifically prohibited in the rules.

Slide 12: PENALTY: (Section 4) The batter is out. (Arts. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13) The ball is dead immediately. (Arts. 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13) All runners must return to the base occupied at the time of pitch. (Art. 2) When the illegal bat is an altered or non-approved bat, the batter and head coach are also ejected. Runners would not return if they were put out on the play. (Art. 4, 14) Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. See also 8-6-10 Penalty.

Slide 17: Art. 1... The bat shall be:

c: Be free of rattles, dents, burrs, cracks and sharp edges. Bats that are broken, altered or that deface the ball are illegal. Materials inside the bat or treatments/devices used to alter the bat specifications and/or enhance performance (e.g., shaving, rolling or artificially warming the bat barrel) are prohibited and render the bat illegal.

Slide 19: SECTION 4 BAT: Legal, ILLEGAL

ART. 1 . . . Legal Bat. A bat that meets the specifications listed in Rule 1-5.

ART. 2 . . . Illegal Bat. A bat that does not meet the specifications in Rule 1-5 and subject to penalty as in 7-4-2, including:

a. **Altered Bat.** A bat that was once legal, but has been structurally changed including, but not limited to: shaving, rolling or artificially warming the bat barrel.

b. **Non-approved Bat.** A bat that does not meet ASA specifications and has been placed on the current non-approved bat list (www.asasoftball.com).

Slide 24: Art. 3 . . . On-deck Batter. The on-deck batter is a player of the offensive team entitled to occupy the on-deck circle closest to her dugout. A single on-deck batter shall remain in her team's on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up. See also Rule 7-5.

Rule 7 Section 5

On-Deck Batter

Art. 1... The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle closest to her dugout.

Art. 2...The on-deck batter may warm up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat or a combination not to exceed two bats.

Art. 3...The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:

when she becomes a batter.

when directing a runner advancing from third base to home plate.

Art. 4...The on-deck batter shall not commit interference with the defensive team.

PENALTIES: (Art. 4)

1. **When the interference is with a thrown or pitched ball, the ball is dead and the runner closest to home is declared out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of interference.**
2. **When the interference is with a fair batted or foul fly ball, the batter is out. When, in the judgment of the umpire, the interference prevented a possible double play, the runner closest to home shall also be declared out. Other runners return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.**

Slide 26: 3-5-6 . . . Offensive team members (excluding a runner or retired runner) shall not interfere with a fair batted ball or foul fly ball.

PENALTY: (Art. 6) The ball is dead immediately and the batter is out. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the interference prevented a possible double play, the batter and runner closest to home shall be declared out. Other runners shall be returned to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. (7-4-12; 7-5-4; 8-6-16)

7-4-12 . . . Offensive team members (excluding a runner or retired runner) shall not interfere with a fair batted ball or foul fly ball.

PENALTY: (Art. 12) The ball is dead immediately and the batter is out. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the interference prevented a possible double play, the batter and runner closest to home shall be declared out. Other runners shall be returned to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. (3-5-6; 7-5-4; 8-6-16)

8-6-15 . . . Offensive team equipment causes a blocked ball (and interference).

PENALTY: (Art. 15) The runner being played on is out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but runners shall return to the last base touched at the time the ball is declared dead.

8-6-16 . . . Any coach or member of the offensive team, other than a runner, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. The coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- b. A coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in the coach's box, or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.
- c. After being declared out or after scoring, a runner **intentionally** interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw may be considered a form of interference. This does not apply to the batter-runner running on the dropped third strike rule.
- d. Member(s) of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. Members of a team include bat/ball shaggers or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.

PENALTY: (Art. 16) The ball is dead and the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

Slide 29: ART. 13 . . . Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½" thick. Knee and ankle braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding/covering.

NOTE: Each state association may, in keeping with applicable laws, authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. The accommodations should not fundamentally alter the sport, allow an otherwise illegal piece of equipment, create risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage.

Slide 31: EXCEPTION: When an injury or disqualification occurs in the top of the first inning to the pitcher/catcher identified on the lineup card and she is unable to face the first batter in the bottom of

the first inning, the player who ran for her is retroactively her substitute, no longer a courtesy runner. All substitution rules apply and the pitcher/catcher has left the game.

Slide 33: NOTE: The umpires maintain administrative responsibilities for the contest through the completion of any required reports or correspondence in response to any action occurring while the umpires have jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents after the umpires' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a game is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.

Slide 47: This particular uniform would likely NOT be deemed distracting by an umpire. A uniform may be distracting if the pitcher has optic yellow on the uniform where the ball in hand passes the hip.

Slide 54: The NFHS is pleased to welcome officials to the NFHS Central Hub.

- This web site is dedicated entirely to members of the NFHS Officials Association.
- If your state is a 100% state you, as an official, already have access to the "Home Plate" Central Hub.
- If your state is not a 100% state, you may join as an individual.
- This site is committed to delivering the most current online resources available to assist the official in his/her season.
- "Home Plate" provides information about the sport, rules information, resources and will include video content relating to softball umpiring.
- A special rules library is available and provides a searchable rules database of NFHS softball rules and situation interpretations.
- For information to join the NFHS Officials Association log on to www.nfhs.org / Join or Renew / Officials.