



2016 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

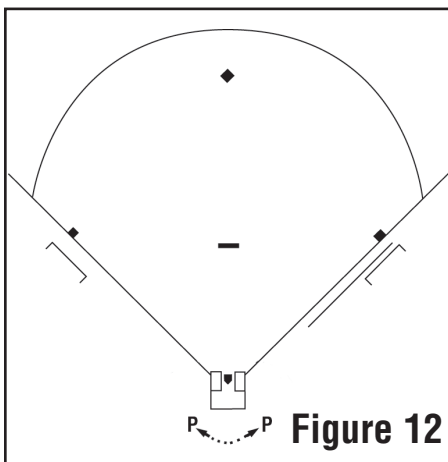
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Case Book Correction: Page 40, 5.1.4: Ruling should read "When the umpire calls "Time" for inspection of a ball, it remains dead until the umpire calls and / or signals "Play Ball."

Umpires Manual Revision: The Figure 12 diagram in the 2016-2017 Softball Umpires Manual was omitted. Following is the copy and Figure 12 diagram from page 38 of the Umpires Manual:

Between Inning Mechanics (Figure 12): The plate umpire shall take a position on the first-base line extended facing the field when that team is coming to bat and the third-base line extended facing the field when that team is coming to bat.



SITUATION 1: While inspecting equipment, the umpires identify a bat that has the ASA 2013 logo. The umpire rules that this bat is not allowed to be used in NFHS play. **RULING:** This is the correct ruling. For NFHS play, bats must have either the 2000 or 2004 ASA certification mark. (1-5-1d) All three certification

marks are shown below for reference.



SITUATION 2: Are the individuals in the following situations required to wear a helmet? (a) A team has a youth player (not a team member) who is retrieving bats and shagging balls. (b) A team member is retrieving a ball inside the field of play during live ball action. (c) A team member is equipped with a mitt facing the batter in foul ground protecting another player who is warming up to pitch. (d) A team member has left the dugout to retrieve a ball that was hit out of play. **RULING:** In (a) and (b) above, they are required to wear a helmet; in (c) and (d), they are not required to wear a helmet. (1-6-3)

SITUATION 3: During pregame field inspections, the umpires notice that the batter's boxes have mats buried under them to reduce the wear in the batter's box area. The umpires rule the field unplayable. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. As long as the devices are properly installed, maintained and remain correctly buried below the surface, they are permitted.

SITUATION 4: The team on defense requests time from the umpire for a conference, but the coaches do not leave the dugout to talk to their players; however, the coach, runners and batter of the team on offense have a meeting. Who is charged for this conference? **RULING:** If the defense

requested a conference, it would be charged with the conference. The offense is allowed to have a non-charged conference during the defensive team's charged conference as long as this conference concludes when the charged conference concludes. (2-14-1, 3-7-3)

SITUATION 5: A pitcher is standing behind the pitching plate with the ball in her glove, looking into her team's dugout receiving the signal from her coach. Following this, she steps onto the pitching plate and looks at the catcher, then brings her hands together in front of her body. The umpire rules illegal pitch since the signal has to be taken while in the pitching position. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. As long as the pitcher pauses long enough when looking at the catcher to simulate taking the signal, there has been no violation of the pitching rule. (6-1-1b)

SITUATION 6: With one out and R1 on second base, B3 bunts the ball; and as she is leaving the plate area toward first base, she makes contact with F2, who is moving toward the batted ball. In (a), the bunt is only a few feet in front of home plate and the other fielders were playing back and had no chance to make a play on the batted ball. In (b), the ball is hit just a few inches in front of home plate and F2 gains possession of the ball but does not attempt to throw the ball before contact is made. In (c), the fielders read the bunt early and are charging toward home as the ball is hit down the third-base line where F5 is about to make the initial play on the batted ball when the contact with F2 is made. In all of the above situations the contact is not malicious. **RULING:** In (a),

if the umpire judges that F2 is making the initial play on the batted ball, then the batter-runner is guilty of interference, the ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and R1 is returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference. In (b), since F2 has possession of the ball and is not yet attempting to throw the ball when contact is made, there is no interference; and, since F2 has possession of the ball, she cannot be guilty of obstruction. In this case it is viewed simply as a collision. In (c), F5 is making the initial play on the batted ball; therefore, F2, who is not making an initial play and does not have possession of the ball, is guilty of obstruction. If the batter-runner is thrown out at first base, then the umpire would rule a dead ball and award the batter-runner as well as R1 the base(s) they would have reached had there been no obstruction. (2-47-3, 8-2-7, 8-4-3b)

SITUATION 7: With one out and R1 on second, B3 bunts the ball; and as she is leaving the plate area toward first base, she makes contact with F2, who is moving toward the batted ball. The fielders read the bunt early and are charging toward home. The ball is hit down the third-base line where F5

is about to make the initial play on the batted ball when contact is made with F2. As the batter-runner makes contact with F2, she lowers her shoulder and extends her arms using excessive force. **RULING:** Since the batter-runner used excessive force when contacting F2, malicious contact should be ruled. When malicious contact is ruled on an offensive player, it is a form of interference, the ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and ejected, and R1 is returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference. (2-32-1, 2-35, 2-47-3, 8-2-7, 8-6-14)

SITUATION 8: With no outs, R1 on third base and R2 on second base, B3 hits a pop-up that lands untouched between home plate and the pitcher's plate. The ball has backspin and is rolling back toward home plate. As R1 slides into home, the ball rolls into her and F2 has to step over her to retrieve the ball. In (a), the ball touches R1 in fair territory prior to her touching home plate. In (b), the ball touches R1 in fair territory after she has touched home plate. In (c), the ball touches R1 in foul territory. **RULING:** In (a), R1 should be called out for being struck with a fair untouched batted ball prior to it passing an infielder. R2 would be

returned to second base and the batter-runner awarded first base (8-6-11). Also, prior to the ball touching R1, if the umpire judged that R1's actions interfered with F2's opportunity to make an initial play on the batted ball, she would be called out and R2 would be returned to second base and the batter-runner awarded first base (8-6-10a). In (b), If the umpire judges that after R1 scored she interfered with F2's opportunity to make a play on another runner, then the ball would be dead, R2 (the runner closest to home) would be called out and the batter-runner awarded first base (8-6-16c). Also, if the umpire judges that R1's actions prior to scoring interfered with F2's opportunity to make an initial play on the batted ball, she would be called out and R2 would be returned to second base and the batter-runner awarded first base (8-6-10a). In (c), this would be a foul ball, unless the umpire judged that while the ball was still in fair territory R1 interfered with F2's opportunity to make an initial play on the batted ball. If the umpire judged that R1 interfered, then R1 would be out, R2 would return to second base and the batter-runner would be awarded first base. (2-20-1d, 2-25-1d, 8-6-10a, 8-6-11, 8-6-16c)