

2010 NFHS Softball Rules Interpretations

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SITUATION 1: The home team is supporting a charitable cause and has purchased pink softballs with the NFHS Authenticating Mark for use in a contest. **RULING:** Not permitted. The rules require the ball to be white or optic yellow. Use of any other color fundamentally changes the game and could increase liability exposure to the organization that permitted its use. There are numerous other "pink" items that can be used in a game without fundamentally changing how the game is played (shoes, socks, shoelaces, wristbands, headbands, uniforms and bats). **COMMENT:** Manufacturers are required to only put the NFHS Authenticating Mark on softballs that meet all NFHS specifications. The NFHS should be notified when a pink softball has an NFHS Authenticating Mark. (1-3-1; 1-3-8)

SITUATION 2: The home team provides game balls to the umpire that are labeled with identical COR and compression, but not labeled with dynamic stiffness. **RULING:** Proper procedure; COR and compression are required labels on softballs used in competition. Those are separate and different specifications and measurements from dynamic stiffness. The dynamic stiffness of 12-inch softballs shall not exceed 7,500 pounds/inch. Manufacturers are expected to adhere to this requirement during the manufacturing process in order to stamp the ball with the NFHS Authenticating Mark. As a result, all softballs used in competition with the appropriate NFHS Authenticating Mark are assumed to meet the requirement. No new mark indicating compliance is required to be stamped on the ball. (1-3-3; 1-3-4; 1-3-8)

SITUATION 3: The home team has a box in its dugout designed to hold and heat numerous bats. The box has an artificial heat source and heats the bats up to 75 to 80 degrees. **RULING:** Heating bats alters the bat specifications, enhances performance and renders the bats illegal. Therefore, the bats are not permitted to be heated and the box shall be removed from the dugout. (1-5-1c, 7-4-2)

SITUATION 4: B1 comes to bat in the first inning with a "stinger" on the grip of her bat. **RULING:** Legal; this type of attachment does not change the properties of the bat, nor does it enhance the bat's performance. (1-5-2a)

SITUATION 5: A player has an eyebrow piercing and has a rubber piece inserted into the piercing to maintain the opening. **RULING:** This item is considered jewelry and players in the game are prohibited from wearing jewelry. (3-2-12)

SITUATION 6: The field includes an elevated cement step in front of each dugout. F3 catches a foul fly with her right foot on the ground completely in live-ball territory and her left foot on the elevated cement step with half the foot on the step and the other half over live-ball territory but completely off the ground. **RULING:** F3 is out of play and no-catch is declared. The foot that is on the cement step is out of play since no part of that foot is touching the ground in playable territory. (5-1-1i Note b)

SITUATION 7: In the first inning, one of the new softballs is fouled out of play. The plate umpire hands a new ball to the catcher. She immediately drops the ball to the ground, scuffs up the surface, returns it to the pitcher and the next pitch is thrown. **RULING:** Illegal pitch; no player is permitted to apply a foreign substance to the ball. **COMMENT:** If possible, preventative umpiring should be used by stopping the catcher from rubbing the ball on the ground, taking it away and giving her a different ball. (6-2-2 Penalty)

SITUATION 8: With one out, R1 on first base and B3 in the batter's box with a 3-2 count, the plate umpire calls the next pitch a strike for the second out. The plate umpire then turns toward the backstop to talk to the scorekeeper while B3 stays in the batter's box thinking she only has two strikes. When play resumes, (a) B3 swings and misses the next pitch for what she believes to be strike three, or (b) B3 hits the next pitch for a triple, scoring R1 from first base. B4 steps into the box when time is called for a defensive appeal that B3 batted twice. **RULING:** When B3 remains in the batter's box after she struck out for the second out, she becomes an improper batter. In (a), B3 is removed from the batter's box and B4, the proper batter comes to bat with a 0-1 count and two outs. In (b), B4, the proper batter, is declared out for the third out and the inning is over. R1's run is negated since she would have been returned to first base had the inning not been over. (7-1-2 Penalties 1 and 2)

SITUATION 9: With one out, R1 on first base and B3 in the batter's box with a 3-2 count, the plate umpire calls the next pitch a strike for the second out. The plate umpire then turns toward the backstop to talk to the scorekeeper while B3 stays in the batter's box thinking she only has two strikes. When play resumes, B3 hits the next pitch for a triple, scoring R1 from first base. B4 now steps in the batter's box and (a) takes the first pitch for a called ball, or (b) grounds to first for the third out. At this point the defense appeals that B3 batted twice. **RULING:** Even though B3 batted twice, it is too late to appeal batting out of order. When a pitch was thrown to B4 in both (a) and (b), B3 became the proper batter and all play stands. (7-1-2 Penalty 5)

SITUATION 10: B1 swings at and misses a pitch but has time to reset and swing again, making contact the second time. The ball is hit either fair or foul. **RULING:** When B1 attempts to contact the ball a second time, the umpire should call an immediate "dead ball" and a strike on B1. Any runners on base are returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. Each batter is only permitted one swing at each pitch. (5-1-1b; 7-2-1b)

SITUATION 11: With first base unoccupied, F2 drops strike three to B1, a right-handed batter, and the ball rolls into fair territory in front of home plate when (a) B1, in her attempt to run to first base, unintentionally kicks the ball away from F2, or (b) B1 and F2 collide as F2 tries to retrieve the ball. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), interference is called on B1; the ball is dead and B1 is out. (8-2-6)

SITUATION 12: Ball four is called and B1 is awarded first base. B1 begins to advance to first base and F2 throws the ball to F3. B1 touches first base and overruns it while the ball remains live. After overrunning first, she (a) returns immediately to first base, or (b) makes an attempt toward second base before returning. In both situations, F3 then tags B1 with the ball while she is off the base. **RULING:** In (a), B1 is permitted to return to first base, and in (b), she is declared out. (8-6-8)

SITUATION 13: R1 is on second base and R2 is on first base with no outs. B3 hits a high pop up in the vicinity of F4. "Infield fly" was not called by either umpire. The ball drops and R1 advances to third base. F4 fields the ground ball and throws to F6 covering second base for a force out of R2. There was no tag. After all action stops, the defensive coach appeals to the umpires that the infield-fly rule should have been called and therefore B3 should be declared out. **RULING:** After conferring, the umpires call B3 out on first base for the infield fly; however, R1 and R2 advanced at their own risk. If R2 is tagged out before reaching second, she is out. If the defense just touched the base for a force, she is safe. If she was initially called out for the force, she would be put back at second. **COMMENT:** There is no "putting the runner(s) in jeopardy" in this situation. The fielders, runners and coaches are expected to know the infield-fly rule and when it is in effect, even if not called by the umpires. (2-30; 8-2-9 Note)

SITUATION 14: With no outs and R1 on first base, B2 hits an over-the-fence home run. R1 scores and as B2 rounds third base, her teammates line up on the third base foul line and give her "high fives" as she heads for home. One teammate reaches out and pushes her toward home plate. **RULING:** Even though this is during a dead ball, the teammate who pushed B2 toward home is in violation of assisting a runner. R1's run counts and B2 is called out for being physically assisted. (8-3-11; 8-6-5)

SITUATION 15: With one out and R1 on first base, B3 bunts the ball down the third base line toward F5 who fields the ball. F5 rushes her throw to F3 at first base and the ball hits the first base dugout. F2, who has trailed up the line, picks up the ball and throws to F3 who has moved to the colored portion of first base. R1 seeing F3 change to the colored portion of the base runs inside the base path in fair territory heading for the white portion of the bag. The throw hits B3 in the shoulder before reaching first base. **RULING:** The ball remains live and play continues. When the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, the defensive player uses the colored portion of the double base and the batter-runner is permitted to run in fair territory. If the batter-runner is then hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference unless she intentionally interferes. (8-10-2c)