

Softball 2015 NFHS

Rule Changes and Points of Emphasis

January 2015

Rule Changes (NFHS 2015 Rule Book)

1. **1-6-1** Batting Helmet (page 14)
 - The batting helmet shall have a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface.
 - A glare or mirror-like surface on the batting helmet is illegal due to its distracting nature which may be dangerous to other players.

2. **1-7-1** Catcher's Helmet (page 14)
 - The catcher's helmet shall have a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface.
 - Like the batting helmets, a glare or mirror-like surface is illegal and can be dangerous to other players.

Major Editorial Changes

1. **1-6-1** Exterior Warning Label (page 14)
 - The exterior warning label may be affixed...or embossed (at the time of manufacture).

2. **1-6-6** NOCSAE Standard (page 14)
 - The phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture"...
 - The catcher shall wear a catcher's helmet...that meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.
 - Phrase revised "Meets NOCSAE standard at time of manufacture."

3. **5-1-4** Dead-ball Situation (page 47)
 - After a dead-ball situation, the ball becomes live when the umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball."
 - Old rule phrasing. *After a dead-ball situation, the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher on the pitcher's plate and the umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball" and gives a beckoning hand signal.*
 - "Gives a beckoning hand signal" removed from rule to reflect current practice of pointing to pitcher and calling, "Play Ball."
 - Also clarifies Rule 8-6-18 as to whether ball is live or dead should runner(s) leave their bases when pitcher is inside the pitching circle with possession of the ball.

4. **7-1-1 & 7-1-2 Penalty 2** Batting Order (page 55 & 56)
 - When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the next pitch (legal or illegal), or prior to an intentional base on balls (S.P.), or before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates her normal fielding position if a half-inning is ending.
 - The umpire shall declare the batter who should have batted out (not the improper batter). The improper batter's time at bat is negated and she is returned to the dugout/bench area. All outs stand and runners who were not declared out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
 - If a runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch, passed ball (F.P.) or an illegal pitch (F.P.) while the improper batter is at bat, such advance is legal.

- Wording has been revised for an appeal after the last play of the game.
 - ✓ **NOTE:** *If any situation arises which could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should not leave the field until all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has vacated her normal fielding position.*
 - ✓ If teams line up to shake hands there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line and umpires can leave the game at this point. No appeal can be made once the umpires have left the field.

Point of Emphasis (NFHS 2015 Rule Book)

1. **1-8-6** Electronic Devices (page 15)
 - An electronic device is defined as any device that accomplishes its purpose electronically.
 - Rule 1-8-6 allows for team personnel to utilize technology to transmit or record information pertaining **ONLY** to their players or team's performance within their team dugout or bench area.
 - The information obtained from an electronic device may be used for coaching purposes during the game, but only in the team's dugout or bench area.
 - During the game no electronic devices are allowed on the field to video record.
 - Rule 3-6-10 allows for stopwatches and electronic score keeping devices in the coaching box.
 - Rule 3-6-11 prohibits the use of any information obtained from an electronic device to review a decision made by an umpire.
 - Any video recording solely targeting the actions of the opponent is prohibited.

2. **2-32** Interference (page 24)
 - Interference is defined by Rule 2-32 as an act (physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who illegally impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder; or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline.
 - The NFHS Softball Rules Committee strongly emphasizes that coaches instruct their players on this definition, and what actions they should take. As stated, these acts may be physical or verbal and intentional or unintentional.
 - ✓ Batters and runners must be taught to be aware of where the ball is and where the opposing team fielders are in relationship to the ball.
 - ✓ Other types of interference involves equipment, umpire and spectator.

3. **2-36** Obstruction (page 24)
 - Obstruction is defined by Rule 2-36 as the act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes the progress of a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is making the initial play on a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.
 - The NFHS Softball Rules Committee strongly emphasizes that coaches instruct their players on this definition.
 - ✓ Players need to be instructed that they cannot hinder or impede any runner when they are not making a play on a ball or have the ball in their possession.
 - ✓ Players need to be made aware of where they are on the field in relationship to opposing team members who are running the bases.