



## April Plays and Clarifications

### **Comments from the National Umpire Staff**

The month of April should trigger preparation for the upcoming National Championship season for those umpires that are assigned to work one of them. Many of you will be umpiring events that use both the two and three Umpire System. Depending on the Championship, it could be the two Umpire at the beginning of the Championship, then change to three Umpire toward the end of the Championship, or it may be three Umpire all the way through. In any event now's the time for you to prepare for the Championship you have been assigned. How do you do this?

First off, get out and umpire, work the system or systems we will work in our assigned Championship. If your league uses the one Umpire System only, ask another umpire to work a few games in the two umpire system and split the pay or better yet, work games for the experience at no fee.. Those of you who will work the three umpire system in your Championship should get out and work the three umpire system, volunteering or by splitting the pay with the other umpires. Try to umpire the Classification that you will be working in your National Championship. If it is a JO Championship, then work JO ball. If it is a Men's Championship, find some Men's ball to work. Working the type of games you will be working in your National Championships will only make your preparation time more beneficial.

Secondly, get your rule book out and read it! Study the ASA Rules as they are different from High School Federation or NCAA ball. Understand that you will not have a rule for every play however; you will have a book of rules that will cover and address anything that happens. Rule knowledge will make you a better game manager and umpire.

Even if you are not assigned to work at the national level or only want to work on the local level, you should prepare for the 2014 ASA season. As a matter of fact, some areas of the country have already started the season. Continue to work to get in shape, study the ASA Umpire Manual and Rule Book. Using both these tools will help you be the umpire that you want to be when entering the field of play. Knowledge of the rules and the mechanics of the Amateur Softball Association will aid you in working more trouble free games and enjoying your umpiring experience.

Also remember to update your umpire uniform to reinforce your pride in being an ASA Umpire. Wearing the ASA umpire uniform with pride is something we should do every time we walk onto the field as it represents all of the ASA umpires that have paved the way for you and me to be the "Best Softball Umpires" in the world.

Last but not least, enjoy this season's experiences and reach for the level of success that you want and desire.

## **Clarifications:**

### **52/300 12 inch ball:**

We have received a lot of e-mails and phone calls about the 52/300 ball that is mandated for Adult Male Slow Pitch (Except Seniors) in 2014. The questions center around what does the 52/300 ball afford us in our great game of Slow Pitch Softball.

We know that the ASA Testing and Certification Committee has and continues to do a lot of work on the equipment used in our game. The Committee makes their decisions based on information gathered by meticulous scientific tests performed on the field and in the laboratory. In the case of the 52/300 ball, tests were performed and the results were very good. The Chairman of Equipment Testing and Certification Committee Dick Gulmon's report spells out why the 52/300 is the ball to use in ASA Slow Pitch Softball. He lists 4 major reasons:

- 1) The 52/300 ball produces dramatic reduction in the impact severity index which will reduce injuries to players upon impact either by a thrown or batted ball.
- 2) The 52/300 ball is less affected by extreme temperatures or humidity and will provide more consistent playability.
- 3) Lab and field studies have indicated that the 52/300 ball will reduce batted ball speed (BBS) by an estimated three (3) mph.
- 4) The 52/300 ball still allows those who can/should hit home runs to do so.

In light of these results, as well as results of many swing speed studies, the committee suggested, and the ASA Council agreed, that this is the ball we want used in our game.

### **2104 Umpire Exam:**

Here is a clarification and answer for a few questions on the 2014 Umpire Exam.

Question #11 - should have been marked as a fast pitch question only. It involves a non-caught third strike and the batter-runner's ability to advance.

Question #30 - has had some questions about the rule reference. We agree the rule reference given is not totally complete and should have referenced more rules, Rule 8, Section 8M and Rule 1 Definitions as examples. This is a great question because it takes into consideration "apply the book of rules to the play versus a rule for a specific play."

Question #55, answer d. should read "Any" of the above. It now reads "All" of the above

### **2014 National Umpire Schools:**

We currently have three National Umpire Schools still available for this year. They are located in Region 8, (Baraboo Wisconsin April 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>) Region 1,(Lewiston Maine, May 2- 4) and Region 11, (West Fargo North Dakota, May 2-4). We also have two Camps available. The Slow Pitch Camp, almost completely filled, June 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> in Clackamas Oregon and the Fast Pitch Camp, slots still available, June 17<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> in Bloomington Indiana. If you want to improve your umpiring skills in either or both games we highly recommend these camps.

### **Umpire Award Programs:**

We have a new hat for the Blue Level Medals Program as well as new Medals Program pins. We do not have hats available for Bronze, Silver or Gold as of yet. This change came as we were ready to restock our supplies and we wanted our logo to match our current ASA Umpire Logo. As the need to reorder the other levels occurs we will be changing the new logo on them too. We also have ordered the new pins that will have the new umpire logo and will be the color of the level you have achieved. The pin will be the ASA Umpire Logo only; they will not have the wreath around the logo. I have included a picture of the new hat design for your convenience.



### **"E" Cigarettes or Vapor Devices:**

Questions have been raised about the use if E Cigarettes and or Vapor devices that have replaced cigarettes. These devices have been deemed to violate the ASA Code and ASA Rules, **Article 310 of the Code and Rule 5, Section 12B & C.** These devices have been deemed smoking and or tobacco products. The devices should not be allowed in the dugout and or the playing field.

### **Plays and Clarifications:**

**Play:** With two outs and R1 on 3B, R2 on 2B and R3 on 1B, it is B6's turn to bat but power hitter B4 erroneously bats and smashes a long safe drive to the outfield. All runners score but B4 is thrown out at home plate for the third out of the inning. Before all infielders leave the diamond the defensive team appeals that B4 erroneously batted out of turn.

**Ruling:** This is batting out of order and is not a fourth out appeal. If properly appealed:

- a. B4's time at bat is negated.
- b. B6's, the player who should have batted, is declared out.
- c. Any advancement or score of a runner as a result of the improper batter is negated.  
Runners not called out must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.  
Any runner, who is called out prior to the discovery of the infraction, remains out.
- d. The next batter (B7) is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. **Rule 7, Section 2C Effect**

**Play:** In the top of the 8<sup>th</sup> inning, F2, who was the last batter to complete their turn at bat, is placed on 2B. The offense wants to put a Courtesy Runner in to run for F2. The umpires do not allow this because F2 did not bat and reach base safely.

**Ruling:** The umpires should have allowed F2 to have a Courtesy Runner. As long as F1 and/or F2 batted for themselves in the inning prior to the tie breaker and were the last to complete their turn at bat, they have earned the right to be put on 2B, therefore they can have a Courtesy Runner. **Rule 8 Section 10A**

**Play:** With no outs and R1 on 1B, B2 hits the ball up the middle of the infield. F6 dives for the ball and falls down close to 2B as F4 covers 2B waiting on the toss from F6. F6 reaches toward F4 and without letting go of the ball, puts the ball into the F4's glove as the runner slides into 2B.

**Ruling:** R1 is safe at 2B since F6 has not relinquished control of the ball to F4. Even though the ball is in F4's glove, F4 does not have control and the runner should be called safe.

**Rule 1 Definition of a Catch / No Catch, Rule 8, Section 7C.**

**Play:** (Junior Olympic 18U Fast Pitch) In the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, a relief pitcher comes to the pitching plate wearing an undershirt with optic yellow sleeves. No other defensive player is wearing an undershirt. The offensive coach comes out and tells the umpire that this is illegal; the pitcher cannot wear anything on their forearm that is distracting to the batter. The umpire agrees and makes the pitcher remove the undershirt.

**Ruling:** Incorrect procedure. **Rule 3, Section 6C** states that players may wear a solid-colored undershirt. No restriction to color is mentioned. **Rule 6, Section 6B** applies to anything worn over the uniform. The pitcher should have been allowed to pitch wearing the undershirt.