



## **February Plays and Clarifications**

### **Rule Book Issues**

The 2016 Official Rules of Softball have been printed and are in the hands of several Local Associations. There are a couple of items we wish to bring to everyone's attention with regards to the rules as written in our rule book.

**Rule 4, Section 6F3 Exception:** Under Illegal Player in our rules we define an Illegal Runner. The exception to the Illegal Runner is in games where a Courtesy Runner is allowed. By our new rule change in Rule 8 Section 9 B2 we allow a Courtesy Runner in all Adult Slow Pitch Classification of Play. This was not listed in the rule as an effect of the new rule change and should be listed in the Exception

**Rule 7, Section 4 Effect 4I-L:** This is when a strike is called on the batter. The Effect: 1.The ball is dead. 2 A strike on the batter. 3 Each runner must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch, **should include letter H** which states "For each pitched ball swung at and missed which touches any part of the batter."

**Rule 8, Section 2M:** The Batter-runner is out (Slow Pitch) for excess over-the-fence home runs. ~~In Class E/REC it also ends the offensive half-inning.~~ The sentence for the half inning ending out should have been removed from the new rules.

**Rule 8, Section 7Q Effect 2:** The effect states "that the runner closest to home is out". However this is an incorrect statement. It was scheduled to be corrected in the 2016 ASA/USA Softball Rule Book but was missed. The correct statement should read: "The runner is out". This is the same as in most base running cases of interference. This will be corrected in the 2017 ASA/USA Softball Rule Book to read: **Rule 8 Section 7Q:** When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains upright and crashes into the defensive player.

#### ***Effect:***

- 1 *The ball is dead.*
- 2 ***The runner is out.***
- 3 *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
- 4 *If flagrant, the offender is ejected.*

**Rule 8, Section 9:** The title now reads Running Masters and Seniors and should be changed to reflect the new courtesy runner for Adult Slow Pitch.

**Rule 8, Section 9B2:** This is the new rule for Adult Slow Pitch allowing a courtesy runner. This new rules states, *(All Adult Slow Pitch, except Seniors) Any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.*

A question came up regarding if you have only one available substitute on base as the courtesy runner and the next player at bat gets injured, what would be the ruling? In similar cases where a new rule does not cover every situation, we review the entire rule book to see if there is any rule discussed in the rule book that would cover that play. In this situation we do, in the Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch courtesy runner rule, this is covered. Therefore, the interpretation for this question would be that the only available substitute, which is being used as a courtesy runner, would be removed from the base and entered as a substitute for the injured player and the player the courtesy runner was running for would return to the base and run for them. This would make the new rule read as follows:

*(All Adult Slow Pitch except Seniors) Any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.*

**Exception:** *Should an injury or disqualification occur and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute and take the place of the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base and is entered as a substitute, the person for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in their place.*

**Rule 8 Section 9B2:** *This new rule states, (All Adult Slow Pitch except Seniors) Any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.*

A question came up on the definition of an eligible player. Can a player who has used up their reentry, run as a courtesy runner. In ASA/USA Softball an eligible player is a rostered player. The intent of the rule change was to allow any rostered player to be a courtesy runner. **This is interpreted as any rostered player not ejected and or disqualified from the game may still be used as a courtesy runner.**

**Safety Awareness Guide:** Page 188 in the Safety Awareness Guide, under Helmets, still contains the sentence, Please note: ~~chin straps are mandatory on all youth batting helmets.~~ This sentence needs to be removed or changed to may be worn.

### **Mechanic Issues**

We mentioned in January's Plays and Clarifications that we wanted to concentrate on mechanic issues we saw during last year's National Championships. Some of them are minor issues however we want to make sure we are all on the same page when discussing ASA/USA Softball Mechanics. This month we will discuss a few of them.

#### **Calling distances for Force Plays or Plays on the Batter-runner beating the throw to 1B:**

The ASA/USA Softball Umpire Manual states that the correct calling distance for these plays is no closer than 18 Feet. We feel that 18 feet is the closest you should be to allow you to see all the dynamics of the play by keeping the interaction of the four elements in front of you. We used to say 18 – 21 feet in our manual but felt that in some plays, even though few and far between, you should be allowed to be a little deeper than the 21 feet.

**Calling Distance on Tag Plays:** The correct distance in our umpire manual for tag plays is 10 to 12 feet. Since these plays involve a defender tagging a runner, the interaction of the four basic elements are much closer together, allowing the umpire to keep all elements in their primary viewing area even at this reduced distance. In addition, the ability to transition to a secondary position as the play develops allows umpires to obtain an unobstructed view of the play. This allows the umpire the ability to see the entire interaction between all four elements.

### **Plays and Clarifications:**

**Play:** R1 on 2B, R2 on 1B, 2 outs and B5 at Bat with no count. F1 delivers an illegal pitch. B5 hits a ground ball to F6. As F-6 is attempting to make a play on the batted ball, R1 lowers their shoulder and plows into F-6, driving them to the ground. The umpires call time and interference and call R1 out and since this is the third out end the ½ inning.

**Ruling:** This would be an incorrect ruling. When R1 lowered their shoulder and ran over F6 the umpires should have called time and called R1 out for interference. Once they did that, because of the illegal pitch, they should have given the option to the coach of the offensive team to take the out or take the effect of the Illegal Pitch since the batter-runner did not reach 1B safely and all other runners did not advance one base. The coach took the Illegal Pitch option so the umpire should move R1 to 3B and R2 to 2B and call a ball on the batter. Since the umpires judged that R1 ran over F6 in an un-sportsman like manner, they should eject R1 and enter a legal substitute for R1 on 3B. **Rule 1 Ejection, Rule 8, Section 7Q, Rule 6A, Section 3 Effect Section 3 [A-N]**

**Play:** (Coed SP) No outs in the 3rd inning B1 (a female) hits a double to left field. The team manager sends a male roster member in as a courtesy runner for B1. The umpire does not allow the courtesy runner because male runners cannot be used as courtesy runners for female players and female runners cannot be used as courtesy runners for male players.

**Ruling:** Correct. Coed play requires a substitute entering the batting order to be of the same gender therefore the same gender is required for a courtesy runner even though it is not a substitute. **Rule 7, Section 2E, Rule 8, Section 9B2**

**Play:** B3 is in the batter's box. R1 is on 3<sup>rd</sup> base and R2 is on 1<sup>st</sup> base. B4 swings at the pitch and tips F2's glove and hits a slow roller to the F1. R1 stays at 3B, R2 makes it to 2B base and B3 is out at 1B. As B4 walks up to and bat the head coach for the offensive team asks for time. The coach asks the plate umpire about the catcher obstruction. What is the ruling?

**Ruling:** The umpire should give the delayed dead ball signal. Once the play is complete, he should give the coach the option of taking the result of the play or the umpire should enforce catcher obstruction. B3 is not out and is awarded 1B, R1 stays at 3B and R2 is awarded 2B. **Rule 8, Section 1D Effect 1 & 2**