



January 2016 Plays and Clarifications

Mechanic Concerns:

As we begin the 2016 ASA/USA Softball Year we feel based on feedback from Regional Umpires-in-Chief, Deputy Directors, National Championship UIC Evaluations and visits to several National Championships we have several umpire mechanics we need to visit. Based on this we will make a concerted effort with this year's Plays and Clarifications to visit mechanic issues as much as possible. If you have questions about the correct mechanics or see a mechanic that does not seem correct please let us know. If you do not understand why we do a specific mechanic, please ask. We will explain why we strongly believe our time proven mechanics best serve ASA/USA Softball Umpires and the reasons we believe our umpire mechanics are the best for all ASA/USA Softball Division of Play.

Based on visits to several National Championships in our upper classifications of play, we have noticed several mechanics which were not being used properly. A few of them were (1) not picking up the ball as we come into the infield to button hook, (2) going immediately to the 45 degree angle at 1B regardless of where the ball is hit, (3) lack of communication between the umpires on the field when rotating especially in the 3 umpire system, and (4) not verbally and visually confirming that your partner has rotated into the position they should be based on our preferred rotations.

In the coming weeks we will attempt to address these mechanic "slip-ups" and explain why ASA/USA Softball uses them. We will include video, when possible, as an excellent teaching tool when we have it. We will provide our observations on what is happening as well as what should be happening according to our umpire manual and mechanics teaching tools. Hopefully this will become a helpful tool for teaching mechanics, explaining why they should be used and help our umpires become more mechanically proficient.

Deputy Staff

Many of you are aware that we have gone through a process of selecting up to four additional Deputies to the ASA/USA Softball Deputy Director Staff. We had an outstanding group of candidates from all around the country apply for these positions which made the selection process very difficult. After reviewing the candidate's responses to multiple stages of questions the decision was made to add four new Deputies to the Deputy Director Staff. The new Deputies Directors are: Dave Chandler Indiana ASA for the Northern Territory, Randy Sprouse Piedmont VA. ASA for the Eastern Territory, Steve Nelson Alabama ASA for the Southern Territory, and

Chris Drumm SoCal ASA for the Western Territory. I hope all of you join me and welcome them to the National Umpire Staff.

These new appointments will allow us to concentrate on some new projects to benefit the umpire program. This will also allow the Regional Umpires-in-Chiefs to concentrate their attention on their regions and address what needs to be done to get the umpire numbers in their region back up to where they should be. All of the National Umpire Staff will continue to work on projects to help our umpire program while having the ability to spend more time in their region working with their regional umpire program. The National Umpire Staff, new Deputies included, are working on projects such as National Umpire Schools, the 2017 UIC Clinic, National Championship Umpire Evaluations, working with the NFHS on training videos, and many others. If you have an item that you think can help our umpire program in anyway please reach out and let us know.

Umpire Registrations:

The declining numbers across the nation in our umpire ranks continued in 2015 in most Local Associations. There are a few Local Associations that added and/or remained at the same level as 2014. Declining numbers of umpires needs to be reversed. It is time for all of us to step up and figure out why this is continuing and how can we stop it. The recruiting talent we have on a local level in all of our umpire programs is outstanding and tells me we will stop the decline and reverse it so we can proudly say we have added umpires over the previous year. It will take hard work and dedication from all of us to accomplish this goal.

We have approximately 24,000 umpires registered last year across all Local Associations. If each umpire found one person to join our ranks we would double our numbers. If half of our umpires only added one umpire look what it would do to our numbers. We could add an amazing amount of new umpires to our umpire family allowing them to experience all we have experienced in our umpire careers. It will take a lot of work but I believe this family we call ASA/USA Softball Umpires can accomplish this goal.

2016:

As we move into 2016, we see the umpire program growing, training getting stronger, communication improving, and the opportunities continuing to grow.

Let's all be a part of it and find those people who want to join in on the fun and excitement known as ASA/USA Softball Umpires.

2016 Umpire Exam:

We have discovered that question 9 in the umpire exam has an incorrect number. It shows that the answer is (C) and it should be (A). The rule references support the answer is (A). We apologies for the error and have made the necessary changes to the answer portion of the online exam.

