



October Plays and Clarifications

Comments from the Director of Umpires:

Our Slow Pitch Championships have ended and from all indications, were very successful. While attending a few of these I was able to see a few opportunities for us to improve our overall umpire program. However, now that they are totally over it is time to concentrate on the 2016 Council Meeting and preparing for the 2017 Softball Season. The Deputy Staff, Jerry Hanson, Chairman of the Playing Rules Committee, and I met in Oklahoma City, Okla. to review the new rule proposals submitted for council review and vote. The Code and Procedural Manual Committee also met and were able to finalize all the new proposals that were submitted but also able to finalize the entire proposals needed to clean up the Code and Procedural Manual as we move to USA Softball and reorganize to ten regions.

It is interesting times but even more, exciting times. It is not often that you get to participate in the beginning of a new era, like we do at USA Softball. This will initiate a lot of changes and as we all know change is tough especially when it affects you directly. But it also opens the door to move forward in a direction that can do nothing but help USA Softball and the USA Softball Umpire Program. It allows us to recruit umpires under a new banner and promote our umpire program under the umbrella of wearing USA on your hat and shirt.

Over the next few months more changes will come down the pipe. Hopefully at our Council Meeting the new regions will elect their officers which will include their Regional Umpire-in-Chief. This will allow us to move forward and begin to work on programs we feel are needed to enhance and improve our umpire program. In the next few weeks and months we will have new leisure wear, a new look for our award programs, and have the ability to order our new umpire uniform if you so desire. Come along for the ride, embrace the experience and enjoy being on the leading edge of a new era of Softball as USA Softball.

2017 New National Umpire Schools

The new 2017 schools are posted on the web and available for all to see. Added to this list from the original sent out is the Fast Pitch Camp to be located in Cummings, Ga. just outside of Atlanta. Along with the locations of the schools we have attached the 2017 Agenda for our new schools. As mentioned the National Umpire School committee has worked hard to come up with a new and improved agenda that is adaptable to the number of students, location of the school and adjustable to all levels of umpires in attendance. We are excited about the new look, the approach and the new agenda. First up is the Dallas Texas school and it should be exciting. Make your plans to attend and experience our new approach for training our umpires by signing up for a school in your area.

2017 UIC Clinic

We wanted to send out a follow up note to remind everyone that hotel rooms are going fast for the 2017 UIC Clinic. Reach out to your Commissioner, UIC or RUIC if you need more information on the clinic. Also you can go on the web, ASA/USA Softball, where all the hotel locations, names and room prices are located. See you in OKC in February 2017.

Rule Clarification:

The question came up during several of our Slow Pitch National Championships if runners and the batter-runner have to run out an over the fence four base award. An over the fence four base award in Slow Pitch can be described by rule, Rule 5, Section 5A. Any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, should be declared a four base award and shall not be included in the total of over-the-fence home runs. By rule whether it, an over the fence home run or an over the fence four base award, the batter-runner and all other runners do not have to run the bases. Rule 8 Section I Exception states: Awarded bases must be touched in legal order. *Exception: All Adult Slow Pitch. On any fair batted ball hit over the fence for a home run or on a four base award, the batter and all runners are credited with a run. The batter and any runners on base are not required to run the bases. This eliminates any appeal play on the runners.*

Mechanics Clarification

A common concern discussed during our National Championships was when umpires should rotate in the three umpire system. As we know, the goal in the Three Umpire System is to always have an umpire ahead of a runner. With this in mind, the plate umpire should begin rotating to their calling position at 3B when a runner approaches 2B. This allows the plate umpire to be in position prior to the runner reaching 3B. Many umpires were waiting to rotate until after the runner had touched 2B and some even waited until after an initial play at 1B was completed. In a hit and run situation where R1 from 1B is going to continue directly to 3B, waiting this long to rotate does not allow the plate umpire the ability to be in position prior to a play developing at 3B. The same holds true for the 1B umpire rotating home, as the runner approaches 2B they need to begin rotating home, keeping in mind to “pull” the 3B umpire over to cover 1B when they have rotated home. Although the desired time to begin rotating for both umpires is the same, one difference between the plate umpire and the 1B umpire is when there is an initial play at 1B. In this situation the 1B umpire is responsible for making that call at 1B prior to rotating home, while the plate umpire’s primary responsibility is any play at 3B so they are free to begin rotating as the runner approaches 2B. If the runner stops at 2B, the plate umpire should have still rotated to 3B. If the 1B umpire reads this they can stop and not rotate home and stay at 1B. Keep in mind as I mentioned in the beginning of this paragraph, the plus of the three umpire system is we will always have an umpire in front of the runner. As you can see in the situations described we have accomplished that goal.