



April 2017 Plays and Clarifications 2017 Rule Book Errors

A few errors have been discovered in the printing of the 2017 Official Rules of Softball. We have marked them and they will be corrected in the 2018 Rule Book. The corrections are as follows:

Page 43: The table for Women, Coed and JO Girls shows the .440 COR, 375.0 Compression 11 inch ball is still allowed in these Classifications of Play. As we see in the rule changes and spelled out in Rule 3, Section 3F **The 11 Inch Ball**, the ball allowed, due to a rule change, is the .520 COR, 300.0 lbs. compression ball. Please mark the table on page 43 with the correct information.

Page 111: Rule 8, Section 9B2, has a few words left out and should read; (Adult Slow Pitch except Seniors) Any eligible players that may participate on offense or defense and are on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy “runner.” The word runner was inadvertently omitted.

Page 111: Rule 8, Section 9B2: the sentence “**A courtesy runner may be used once per inning**” was also inadvertently left out and will be added back in the book for 2018. **Rule 8, Section 9B2** should read (Adult Slow Pitch except Seniors) Any eligible players that may participate on offense or defense and are on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. “**A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.**”

Umpire Manual Corrections

There are a few errors in the umpire manual that have been reported to us by some umpires. We say thank you for the heads up and we apologize for the errors being in the manual. The corrections for next year’s umpire manual are as follows:

Page 56: Two Umpire Fast Pitch Runner on 1B only, Ground Ball to the Infield:

PU - Trail the batter-runner no more than 1/3 of the way to 1B in fair territory and read the play. As the lead runner approaches 2B, move toward 3B to first obtain the proper angle, and then close your distance as the play develops working to get an unobstructed view of the play and to obtain a final calling distance of 10-12 feet from the play. Remember as the four elements come together; stop, read the play and make the call. Let the ball take you to the play. Remove ~~You are responsible for any play at 1st or 2B and the last runner to 3B.~~ This should say: **You are responsible for the lead runner at 3B and any play at the plate.**

Page 64: Two Umpire Slow Pitch Runner on 2B Only STARTING POSITION: SHADE THE RUNNER AT 2B. START BEHIND OR OFF OF AND TO THE 4B **2B** SIDE OF THE SECOND BASEMAN AND SQUARE TO THE PLATE. THIS POSITION SHOULD BE ADJUSTED BASED ON THE DEPTH AND LOCATION OF THE SECOND BASEMAN OR ANY ADDITIONAL PLAYERS POSITIONED IN THE INFIELD. WITH A RUNNER ON BASE, GO TO THE READY POSITION AT THE START OF THE PITCH.

The starting position should be to the 2B side of the second baseman.

Equipment:

There are a lot of new products that have come out over the past few years that we get phone calls and email about. One is a sensor that attaches to the end of the knob of a bat as shown below in this picture: The attachment is allowed in practice and as a training aid, but not allowed to be attached to a bat in game situations.



Questions from the three panel discussion for USA Softball

What can UIC's do before a tournament to help get teams to attend?

I do not believe they can do a lot in formally recruiting teams for Championships but they can reach out to teams or leagues they know well and inform the teams about our Championships. We have moved the Men's Super, Men's A, Men's B and Men's C Slow Pitch to Oklahoma City to attract more teams to play at our great complex. If we help spread the word to the leagues we have umpires at and or leagues currently not playing USA Softball it could help add teams to these Championships. However the best way would be to do a good job with the umpires and have the umpires do a good job with the games so the word would get out. Thereby we attract more teams by being great umpires.

We strive for consistency in all we do. Why did USA Softball delete a "standard" umpire uniform and offer so many options?

USA Softball has not deleted a standard umpire uniform. We still call our Powdered Blue Shirt and Navy Pants our default uniform. We have over the years added Gray Pants and a Navy Blue Shirt. Currently we have two shirts that can be worn with Gray Pants and one shirt that can be worn with Navy Blue pants. We have been approached by many umpires asking for a lighter color shirt to wear with the Navy Blue pants. We have been made aware that umpires that go to the larger Championships enjoy being able to wear different uniforms. We also try to match pants, blue or gray, to the local association hosting the championship. An example, when you go to the south most umpires wear gray pants so that becomes the pants required for all umpires at that Championship. However, when we are at a Championship that does not have a required pant color we always require the Powder Blue shirt and Navy pants as the default uniform.

When is USA Softball going to teach advanced mechanics versus the basics over and over so umpires can continue to develop?

I am not aware of what is meant by advanced mechanics versus basic over and over mechanics. USA Softball mechanics have been designed over the years for several reasons. The primary factor was to design mechanics that can be used in all the games we have in USA Softball. We have Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch, 16" Slow Pitch, and Modified Pitch. Many of our umpires call all four games. We feel these mechanics do several things. We feel they put our umpires in the best position for the start of the primary call, in the best position to move to the secondary call and have our umpires in a position that their partner will know where they will be. We also teach our umpires to move from the primary position when the play dictates to get an unobstructed view of the play. We can teach that you have the ability to adjust but we do not believe we can or should outline where you should adjust to until a certain play happens. In that case we can review that play and together, umpire and instructor, can decide if the movement was good, why the movement was needed and what if anything could have been done differently.

This is the best answer I can give until I get a better understanding of what is meant by "advanced mechanics." I will be glad to go into more detail with whoever would like to discuss this issue by email, kryan@usasoftball.com or by phone 704-941-4404.

Why does USA Softball insist on the inside/outside theory for FP when repeated video shows the speed of the game prevents the majority of the umpires from being able to get inside before the ball is touched?

Our mechanics are based on several factors, those mentioned previously in the question about “advanced mechanics”, but also on the desire to try and keep an umpire ahead of the play at all times. The button hook allows for this to happen more times than not. We respectfully disagree with the premise that the majority of umpires are unable to get inside before the ball is touched. We feel we have forgotten a very important part of our mechanics and a very valuable asset of being an umpire referred to as pre-pitch preparation. We feel very strongly that if an umpire pre-pitches each pitch for items such as, who is at bat, how fast the runner is, how many runners are on base, where do I go when this happens, to mention only a very small portion of pre-pitching, so you can get inside, be ahead of the runner and in a great position to make your calls. We agree the speed of the game has increased and in order to stay ahead of a runner, which is extremely important, we must get back to the pre-pitch preparation and get very good at it.

Does all this mean we will never have to stay outside because of a particular instance? No it does not! We know there are certain circumstances that this may happen and if an umpire can explain why they remained out or why the play dictated they do so, and then we need to listen and understand. However, we feel that the majority of the time the Inside/Outside Theory works best for the reason we described.

NFHS and in USA Softball in the three umpire system why can't the, Plate Umpire cover 1B when the U1 chases instead of U3?

In NFHS and also in USA Softball both teach that in a three umpire system when the 1B umpire goes out that the 3B umpire has the call at 1B. We do this for a couple of reasons. When the 1B umpire goes out the 3B umpire comes across the diamond and most of the time they are already at a 45 degree for the play at 1B on the Batter-Runner. Sandy Searcy for the NFHS adds “This better angle allows U3 to see the foot touching 1B as well as the ball entering the glove allowing them better coverage and ability to make the judgment whether the ball beat the runner or the runner beat the ball for that play at 1B.” We also look at if the throw is coming from RF to 1B the plate umpire will not have all four elements in front of them as they are blocked by the runner and the defense on the throw to 1B. We also have the time when we have a runner on 3B that the Plate umpire must stay home and or cover 3B when the 1B umpire goes out. Having the 3B umpire cover 1B in all circumstances promotes consistency and helps the plate umpire stay home for any possible situation at any time.

We will also say if the 3B umpire and Plate Umpire do deviate this mechanic for a specific reason this needs to be communicated on the field and have a good reason for doing so. It should not and cannot be a planned deviation for all plays at 1B when the 1B umpire goes out.

Plays and Clarifications:

Play (Fast Pitch) R1 on 3B, R2 on 2B and R3 on 1B and two outs B6 hits an over the fence home run. In the act of running the bases B6 passes R3 in a) after R1 and R2 had touched home plate and in b) before R2 touches home plate. The plate umpire should rule:

Ruling: In a) when B6 passes R3 they would be called out and two runs would score since R1 and R2 had scored prior to the third out. In b) when B6 passes R3, they would be called out and since this is the third out the only run that would count would be R1. **Rule 8, Section 7D and Rule 5, Section 5B**

Even though the ball is dead, by the definition of a dead ball all base runners have live ball base running responsibilities. The issue of runs scoring now becomes a timing plays as it is whenever the third out of an inning is recorded before or after runs score.

Correction from March:

Play: (Slow Pitch without stealing) R1 on 1B, with B2 at bat. R1 leaves when the pitch reaches home plate and the pitch is judged as ball four and B2 is awarded 1B. The ball gets away from the catcher and R1 continues to 3B. The play ends with R1 on 3B and R2 on 1B.

Ruling: Since the Ball is dead the runner on 1B is only allowed to go to second base and we should have had R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B. if this had been Slow Pitch with Stealing the runner could have continued to 3B.

Rule 8 Section 5 A reads: When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls

Effect: (Fast Pitch)

1 The ball remains live unless it is blocked.

2 Any runner affected is entitled to one base and may advance farther with liability to be put out.

3 (Slow Pitch) The ball is dead.

Exception: In 16-Inch Slow Pitch and all divisions with stealing, the ball remains live

We mistakenly put this in as Slow Pitch with Stealing and should have been without stealing so we have corrected the question, added a comment about Slow Pitch with Stealing and added the exception to Rule 8, Section 5A. A thank you, to USA Softball of Michigan, for pointing out the error so we could correct it in this month's plays.