



May 2017 Plays and Clarifications

Posting Updates

The rule differences between USA Softball, NCAA and NFHS have been updated with a few corrections and one addition. They are all highlighted in yellow so all can find the differences right away.

We have also posted the 2017 Fast Pitch VS Slow Pitch rule differences. I apologize for not having them sent in to have them posted earlier.

National Umpire Schools

The last of the 2017 National Umpire Schools was held in Derry, New Hampshire and despite the 6-8 inches of snow that fell Friday night, 112 students showed up and were treated to an outstanding school. A great deal of thanks go to Commissioner Alisa Durocher and UIC Will Martin and staff for going the extra mile to make sure all the students knew we would still hold a school. Because of the new National Umpire School Agenda, the teaching staff was able to adapt everything to fit the facility and time frame left to hold the school. A special thanks to the 112 students that came out, participated and learned something on such a day.

All of our schools this year were a great success. A lot of that success goes to the new agenda for schools, however, if it was not for the participation of the Local Association Commissioner from each association in the process none of the schools would have been a success. To Dave Devine (Dallas/Fort Worth), Chad Greene (South Carolina), Jeff Dubchansky (Sacramento), Walker Clark (Arkansas), and Alisa Durocher...Thank you for holding the new National Umpire School and making them a great success.

Fast Pitch Camp

The 2017 Fast Pitch Camp, to be held in Cummings, Georgia, is almost full at 52 students. We are sure that we will have a great camp and will be able to continue to advance the training of umpires who want to be better at their trade of Fast Pitch umpiring. If you want one of the openings contact camp coordinator Rick Hearn at 770-560-3754 or email at rick.hearn@gaasablue.net.

National Championships

With our Junior Olympic Fast Pitch National Championships right around the corner, now is the time to be honing your umpiring skills and prepare for the Championship level you may be assigned. Get in shape and work games in the classification of play you will be umpiring. Be sure to work both the 2 Umpire and 3 Umpire System to be better prepared for your Championship. It is an honor to be chosen to umpire in a USA Softball Championship. Showing the teams you are ready to umpire because you are the best trained umpire in softball will only serve to show everyone why they should play USA Softball.

Questions from the three panel discussion for USA Softball

Why can't NCAA, NFHS, and USA Softball adapt the same mechanics?

From a USA Softball perspective, we mentioned in the panel discussion NCAA has one game with that being elite Fast Pitch. We have several games along with several Classifications and Divisions of play. The NCAA has about 5,000 umpires whereas we have 21,000 of which not all work National Championships. Therefore our mechanics are for the umpire that goes to a National Championship or works the Local League day in and day out. Since we have so many different levels of umpiring, it is our opinion that having one set for everyone is better. As we have previously mentioned, we also feel that we have designed our mechanics to put our umpires in the best position for the primary call, the best position for the secondary call, and their partners will know where they are supposed to be in all of our games. In most cases, NCAA umpires work with each other all year long and have been able to adapt their mechanics to their game, however, a number of our umpires may not have worked with each other when they attend a National Championship. We feel having one set of mechanics that works for all of our Classifications and Divisions of play will suit our umpire program best.

Why can't there be more uniformity between signals for all codes. More and more levels of games are on TV. It is better for viewers and umpires to have this kind of uniformity.

We feel there is a lot more uniformity in signals than most umpires realize. NFHS and USA Softball have the same signals while the NCAA has the same signals with a few adaptations to their game. Example: the NCAA allows the hammer on an out call a little higher than USA Softball, however they also allow the same hammer at the same time. There are only two signals that the NCAA has that USA Softball and NFHS do not have. Those are the safe signal for no interference and the two fingers to the forearm for the timing play, and we have chosen not to use those signals in our games. We feel if you see interference you call it and if you do not you do not call it. The theory on the timing play is a solid one and we understand why the NCAA uses it. We feel if the umpire is consistently pre-pitching and truly in the game they know when they have two outs and if a run scored prior to the last out.

On the issue of TV I would suggest that most people do not notice the difference in signals. For example Major League baseball has been on TV for a long time but NCAA baseball and NFHS baseball do not necessarily use their signals.

Why not adapt the same rules between all three organizations? If the game is the same, why not the same rules?

All three codes have different methods to add, change and subtract rules which make it very difficult for all three to have the same rules. We also have many more games than NCAA or NFHS. NFHS and USA Softball and NCAA are very close but all of the organizations have the ability to change and adapt rules to their games through their process. Our relationships allow us to work very closely with both organizations on new rules and have tried to consolidate rules when it makes sense.

Also remember we are traditionally a recreational sport while NCAA and NFHS are primarily championship play. We have rules that are designed to help more people play and enjoy the game of softball. An example is when NFHS and USA Softball allow both starters and substitutes to reenter the game. Our rule used to be just starters could reenter but was adapted to allow more players to play.

Some umpires are afraid to question the UIC about mechanics, positioning and so forth.
Advice on how to handle the situation

This should never happen. How can an umpire truly learn and improve if they cannot ask questions of their UIC? I would encourage all umpires at a Championship to ask questions because it is the only way for you to truly learn. We have tried to train our UICs to be better listeners and to be able to explain why we do the things we do. If you do not get an answer to the question then ask someone above them. This does not mean just because you disagree you should ask others. However, if you feel very strongly in your thought process and do not feel your questions have been answered then continue up the chain and ask others. I truly believe if you ask the question in the correct manner and not just to argue you will get better results.

Plays and Clarifications

Play: R1 on 3B and B3 is supposed to bat but B4 bats. With a 2 ball 0 strike count the pitcher throws a wild pitch and R1 scores. On the next pitch B4 receives a walk and advances to 1B. Before the next pitch the defense appeals that B4 batted out of order and B3 should have batted.

Ruling: B4's time at bat is negated. B3 is called out, B4 would bat and R1's run would count. **Rule 7 Section 2D [2]** Even though the run scored while the incorrect batter was at bat, B4, the incorrect batter did nothing to score that runner. The intent of our rule is when a run scores because the incorrect batter becomes a Batter-runner for any reason that run would not count.

Play: R1 at 3B, R2 at 2B and one out. F1 throws the third strike but it gets away from F2. R1 scores as the throw from F2 to F1 goes into the infield. R2 tries to score and is thrown out at home. B4 initially watches the play at home and forgets to run. B4 is thrown out at 1B for the third out. Does R1's run count?

Ruling: No runs would score due to the batter-runner being called out prior to reaching 1B safely as the third out. **Rule 5, Section 5B[1]**

Play: R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B, an offensive team player leaning over the dugout rail drops a softball on the ground in front of the 3B dugout B3 hits a grounder to F4 who turns to make a throw on R1 going to 3B. F5 misses the throw and the ball lands next to the ball on the ground outside the dugout in playable territory. R1 rounds third and tries to score. F5 hesitates as they look at both balls and picks up the wrong ball and throws it home to retire R1.

Ruling: Once the offensive player dropped the ball in Playable territory it becomes offensive equipment not involved in the game. We would consider that a blocked ball and if the umpire feels the ball impeded, hindered, or confused the defense from making a play you could have interference by **Rule 8, Section 5G [3] Effect**, the runner being played on is ruled out.