



October 2019 Plays and Clarifications

From the Director of Umpires

It is the time of the year where we are looking at finalizing the 2020 Rule Book and the 2020 Umpire Manual. As we all know, the new online umpire manual includes many items that previously were not included. One item specifically is the Point of Emphasis (POE). This is normally populated with items we see at National Championships that are being done incorrectly to items we hear are being taught incorrectly. The plan is to add and subtract items every year. For example, in reading all this year's National Championship Umpire Evaluation Forms, we still have trouble with the U1 defaulting to the 45-degree angle on plays at 1B. Therefore, this will stay in the 2020 manual and will be updated with other ideas for umpires to understand this is the maximum angle you should ever achieve at 1B. Your angle should be 90 degrees to the throw in most all cases. Please let us know if you have issues with understanding other mechanics and we can add them to the POEs. Send them to your Regional Umpire-in-Chief (UIC), Deputy Director and/or me and we will try and add them to the manual.

We also, as a group, will be discussing National Umpire Schools, Umpire Advanced Camps, National Championships, the Biennial UIC Clinic, and many more topics. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the USA Softball Umpire Program, please reach out. We have discussed on many occasions that we need to be better communicators, and this is one way to accomplish this. Let us know your thoughts, we will weigh the pros and cons of your suggestions for the betterment of the whole, and let you know what we think. This is your chance to have an open discussion and share your thoughts. Again, let us know by contacting your Regional UIC, Deputy Director and/or me.

Play: (F.P. Only) With two outs and R1 at 3B, B4 swings at the pitch and misses for strike three. F2 short hops the ball for a dropped third strike as R1 slides into home safely. B4 stays at the plate observing the action and does not proceed to 1B. F2 retrieves the ball and tags B4 after R1 has scored. The umpire rules the run counts since the R1 scored before the tag out on a dropped third strike.

Ruling: Incorrect ruling by the umpire. The run does not count because the batter-runner was put out before reaching first base. **Rule 5, Section 5B [1]**

Play: R1 on 3B and R2 on 2B with one out. B4 hits a fly ball to F8 who catches it for the second out. R1 and R2 both tag up but R1 leaves early, R1 scores and R2 is thrown out for the third out. The defense wants to appeal R1 for leaving too soon.

Ruling: If appealed properly R1 is out and the run is nullified by our fourth out appeal. **Rule 5 section 5 C**

Play: (Slow Pitch with Stealing) B3 receives ball four and the pitch gets away from the pitcher with a) no runners on base and b) R2 on 2B. Can B3 continue to 2B as the ball is live?

Ruling: In a) The batter is not allowed to continue to 2B with nobody on base. In this case, Slow Pitch with stealing, the rule was intended to allow base runners to steal on a ball not caught by the catcher. It was not designed to allow a batter-runner to advance to 2B. In a), the batter runner is required to stop at 1B unless the catcher's return throw was not to the pitcher. In b), R2 is allowed to run until the ball is in the pitcher's possession and all play has apparently been completed. The batter-runner is required to stop at 1B unless a play is made on another runner on base. **Rule 8 Section 4F [1- 4].**

PLAY: With one out, R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B, B4 hits an extra base hit to the outfield. R1 rounds 3B and is obstructed and knocked down. R2 accidentally passes R1 as R1 is lying on the ground. The ball is returned to the infield and R1 is tagged out. What is the call?

RULING: When R1 was obstructed between 2B and 3B, the base umpire should signal and call "obstruction." **Rule 8, Section 5B** the umpire should then rule R2 out when R2 passed R1 with the ball remaining live. (Rule 8, Section 7D EFFECT) When R1 is tagged out between the two bases where the obstruction occurred, the umpire should call "time" and award R1 and all other runners the base or bases they would have reached, had there been no obstruction. **Rule 8, Section 5B [2] & [4] EFFECT** This would nullify the out on R2 and both R1 and R2 would be awarded the bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction. In this play, that base appears to be home.

Play: B1 hits a fly ball to the outfield where F9 catches the ball for the first out. While B1 was leaving the plate area, F2 tripped B1 causing B1 to fall to the ground.

Ruling: The umpire should signal delayed dead ball and call "obstruction" when the obstruction occurs. When F9 catches the fly ball for the out the umpire should ignore the obstruction and rule B1 out on the catch. **Rule 8, Section 2 C; Rule 8, Section 5 B EXCEPTION 2**