**March Plays and Classifications**

**From the Director:**

We have received several emails and phone calls about the gray pants we now stock. These pants are charcoal gray and match the color that the NCAA requires for their uniform. I want to clarify what our intention is for stocking these pants. We were approached by some of the NCAA umpire staff to see if we could get our manufacturer of heather gray pants to match the charcoal color used by the NCAA Umpires. From many umpires the NCAA pants do not fit as well and do not press up as well as the Fechheimer pants that USA Softball sells. After working with Fechheimer we were able to match the charcoal gray pants worn by the NCAA umpires and ordered them and put them in stock so the NCAA umpires would have another option for their pants.

It is not our intent to change to that color for the USA Softball gray pants. We have no plans in doing so.

However, we have been told that most all other umpire organizations, NCAA, MLB, and some NFHS Associations have transitioned to this color pant. Because of this change by many organizations, we may not be able to get the heather gray pants in the future. If or when that happens, we might have no choice but to transition to charcoal gray. If this happens, we will do as we have always done and that is have a grace period before making a complete change.

**Plays:**

PLAY: With R1 on 3B and R2 on 1B and one out. F4 is positioned close to 2B. B4 hits a

ball to the right side of the infield but to the left of F4. F4 attempting to go and

field the batted ball behind F3 collides with the umpire and is unable to make a play. Do we have

umpire interference? What do we do with the base runners?

RESULT: We have both mechanical and rule issues that we need to address in this play. The proper position for the umpire in this play will be shading the lead runner behind an imaginary line between F3 and F4. By being behind this line they are not in front of the defensive players. There must also be enough distance from F4 to allow them the opportunity to make any play necessary. (Umpire Manual – Base Mechanics – Section 2 -Starting Positions)  Regarding USA Softball rules, we do not have interference on the fielder who collided with the umpire. Umpire interference on the base umpire occurs when the ball contacts an umpire before passing a fielder other than the pitcher. **(Rule 8, Section1E [7])**

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PLAY:

F5 obstructs a runner rounding third base between third base and home plate.  The obstruction causes the runner to fall to the ground. The third base coach picks the runner up off the ground, and the runner retreats on their own to third base safely.  What, if anything, should the umpire rule?  Things to consider - obstruction, interference, awards, and assistance.

RESULT:  We have the runner protected between third and home by the obstruction. They cannot be put out between these two bases with only the exceptions listed in Rule 8, Section 5B Effect 1 Exception, and being physically assisted is not one of those exceptions.

Signal Delayed Deadball when obstruction occurs. Then when the coach physically assists the runner, which is an out, call Dead Ball. Although this is typically a live ball situation it becomes dead as the obstructed runner is being called out. So Dead Ball at that point and award the runner the base they would have reached had there not been obstruction. **Rule 8 Sec 5 B 2 Effect**

Also, a coach helping a player up is considered physically assisting them. Any action that helps them proceed is assisting, helping them up saved them time from getting up on their own so that is assistance.

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PLAY:

Late in a tense and contended game, an assistant coach gets ejected for bumping into an umpire.  The crew quickly gets involved, walks the coach to the dugout area, and tells them they must leave the area - be out of sight and sound, nowhere near the fields.  The UIC of the event walks the assistant coach to the parking lot and has a cordial conversation with the assistant coach.  After the game, the winning team is the team who had the coach ejected.  They get their gear and head to the other end of the park.  The assistant coach meets them and joins the team as they warm up for the next game.  Once the game begins, the previously ejected coach resumes their coaching responsibilities and is a base coach in the first base coach's box area.  The UIC, who is walking around watching games notices the coach is on the field coaching.  What should they do?

RESULT:  We recommend walking over to the field and discussing it with the team’s coaches to determine if there has been a successful appeal of the next game’s suspension.  As **Rule 4 Section 8B** indicates, there is a provision in the rule that an ejected participant may appeal missing their one-game suspension.  It would be the job of the UIC to follow up with the coach(es) to see if the previously ejected coach must leave immediately. We believe that before forfeiting a game, we must make sure that all information needed has been made available. It’s probably a good game management tool to have them leave and if they refuse or argue, then forfeit the game.