

Plays and Clarifications

January 2025

We hope everyone had a fantastic holiday season! With the start of a new year, it is time to start thinking, planning and preparing for your 2025 softball season. That preparation includes updates in rules, uniform and equipment. In this edition of Plays and Clarifications we will address all of that and some other information to aid in your preparation.

RULE CHANGES FOR 2025

RULE	SECTION	TOPIC
2-1	The Playing Field	Changes base distance for Boys 14U, 16U, and 18U to match Adult Slow Pitch.
4-7C [1&5]	Coach	Allows the use of one-way electronic communication to all players on both offense and defense.
5-1	Home Team	The undefeated team shall determine the home team in the Championship game.
6C-1	Preliminaries	Allows pitchers in Men's, Women's, and Coed Class C, D, and E/REC to position themselves up to 6 feet behind the pitching plate to start their pitch.
8-9A [2]	Adult Slow Pitch	Allows the same player to be a courtesy runner for the pitcher and a position player in the same half inning.

UNIFORMS

At the 2024 USA Softball Council Meeting a recommendation was made from the USA Softball Properties Board and accepted by the Council to adopt charcoal grey pants as the acceptable grey pants in the umpire uniform. This change of pants will be phased in over a three-year period starting with the 2025 season. In 2025 National Championship play umpires may use either heather grey or charcoal grey with all umpires in a crew on the field together wearing the same shade of pant. In 2026 charcoal grey will be the mandatory shade of grey used in Championship play. In 2027 charcoal grey will be the official grey pant used in all USA Softball.

At present Official Gear, the umpire uniform store for USA Softball, is having a sale of heather grey pants and their entire assortment of shoes at great discounts. This sale can be viewed at Official Gear on the umpire tab of the USA Softball website or at www.officialgear.com

UIC Clinic

The USA Softball UIC Clinic which is held biennially in the odd years will be held in 2025. In the past the Clinic was held in the first week of February, but it is moving dates in 2025. The UIC Clinic will be held October 23-25 in Oklahoma City at the Oklahoma City Convention Center being the new venue and the Omni Hotel being the host hotel. October 23 will be the arrival date for the clinic with the instruction starting at 8 am on October 24 going through mid afternoon on October 25. The clinic will have a format similar to the clinics in the past. The change of dates allows the clinic to be held in better weather conditions and it will tie into the USA Softball Council meeting which starts with the Hall of Fame Banquet on the evening of October 25. Registration for the UIC Clinic will begin February 1 and will be accessible on the Umpire tab on the website: www.usasoftball.com If you need further information contact Steve Nelson at bubbatheump@windstream.net

PLAYS

Play: In a Slow Pitch game, the pitcher leads off the 1st inning with a base hit. The pitcher is replaced by #7 as a courtesy runner, and #7 subsequently scores. The catcher batting in the 5th spot in the batting order hits a double and is replaced by #7 also as a courtesy runner. Is this legal?

Ruling: Yes, this is legal. This is a rule change for 2025, and it allows the same player to be a courtesy runner for the pitcher and once for a player other than the pitcher in the same inning of a game.,. *Rule 8-9A {2}*

Play: In a Junior Olympic game, a coach uses a microphone to communicate batting signals to the batter. The batter has an earpiece in her batting helmet and a microphone to communicate with the coach as well. Is this legal?

Ruling: No. This is a rule change for 2025 as well. The coach may have an electronic device to communicate with the offense or defense, but the communication must be one-way only. The players cannot utilize equipment for two-way communication. *Rule 4-7C {1 B&C}*

Play: At the plate conference of the Men's Major Fast Pitch Championship game the coach of the undefeated team wants to be the visitors and bat first. The team with one loss doesn't want to be the home team and asks for a coin toss. How do we resolve this dispute?

Ruling: A coin toss is used to establish the home team in every game except the Championship game. In this game only the undefeated team determines whether they will be the home team or the visitors at the plate conference. *Rule 5-1*