

Pink highlights are additions to or corrections of contradictions in the NCAA Softball Rule book.

Blue highlights are contradictions in the Softball Umpire Manual.

State of the Game

As we enter into the conference competition part of the season, this is a good time to reflect on the field happenings thus far. It is also a good time to return to pages 6 and 7 of the playing rules and review the rule book points of emphasis with your colleagues and/or student-athletes.

New to this year's rules is the prohibition on arguing balls and strikes. The intent of the committee is to minimize the confrontation between coaches/players and umpires regarding pitch location but not to inhibit professional discussions. Consistent badgering from across the field is quite different from a sincere request for information made at the plate between the coach and umpire. As leaders and professionals, I would just ask you all to simply do the right thing when it comes to discussing balls and strikes with each other.

The pitcher's lane seems to be far less of a topic of conversation than other pitching infractions but it is part of the rules committee's continued emphasis on providing tools for pitching rule education for players and enforcement by umpires. The basic pitching rules have not substantially changed over the life of the NCAA rule book. What has changed are subtleties (like a portion of the pivot foot rather than half on the pitcher's plate) and teaching cues. The lane is intended to help the pitcher stride forward and to help the umpire see that she is doing so. The brand new, first time ever, NCAA SUIP Web site has video and talking points for umpire education including clues to help detect leaping, crow hopping and replanting ... all pitching violations in each and every edition of the NCAA Softball Rules Book. As leaders and professionals, I would ask you all to simply encourage the education of our players and coaches on what the pitching rule requires and expect consistent enforcement by the umpires.

Flow of the game emphasis has helped to eliminate some of the gamesmanship of the past, but, truth be told, the early season games have seen too many interruptions in play. As leaders and professionals, I would ask you all to simply do what you can to make the game enjoyable for all the participants and spectators.

Sportsmanship is a repeat topic in the NCAA Softball Rules Committee points of emphasis that still needs your attention. Incident reports, coaches' ejections, and ejections that carry with them mandatory suspensions are equivalent to last year's numbers but there is a marked increase in the number of incidents reported after the games. Whether threats by coaches to never allow the umpire back on "their games" or berating umpires on the way to their cars, somehow when the game is over, it is not over. As leaders and professionals, I would just ask you all to examine your own style for resolving conflict and find ways to agree to disagree while seeking common ground for understanding.

Final Thought... Off the field, when sanity prevails and the pressure of competition is off, we all know what has to be done to turn this season of tension between coaches and umpires around regarding illegal pitches. Players need to pitch according to the rules. Thankfully, there are excellent teachers and video analysis to help them and the beauty of youth is their adaptability. If someone did not teach them correctly or they developed illegal habits on their own, they need to work hard to make the necessary adjustments. Coaches need to teach, correct and encourage their players who have strayed from pitching legally and they need to initiate professional conversations with umpires when they do not understand calls made on the field. As educators, subverting the playing rules is indefensible. Umpires need to work at proper mechanics, professional communication skills and consistently and appropriately applying the playing rules...including calling illegal pitches when they happen. It is not acceptable to pick and choose the rules they think are appropriate to the game they are currently officiating. Rather, umpires are expected to enforce them all, as written, all of the time. Conference umpire coordinators, the softball rules committee, the SUIP and I support the efforts, commitment and positive results of those (coaches and umpires alike) doing the hard work, to level the playing field by complying with and enforcing all the pitching rules. At the same time, we need to correct and ultimately penalize those who cannot or will not play by the rules and ask everyone to fulfill their important role in diminishing what can best be described as a contentious relationship. It will not be easy work for any of us, but it is both necessary and will be rewarding when we look back at season's end to all that has been accomplished from such a rough start.

Future of the Game

The next few months are critical ones for our sport. Youth programs are declining with the economic challenges of park districts, physical education classes are being replaced by recess and subvarsity athletic teams are being eliminated or changed to "pay if you want to play" programs at alarming rates. On the elite level, well, no need to rehash the elimination of fastpitch from the world's largest stage--the Olympics, and the accompanying decline in USOC dollars invested in our international teams. And yet, the collegiate game continues to grow in participation numbers and in entertainment value. ESPN and other regional television companies are increasing their investment in promoting fastpitch. More and more institutions are streaming video, audio or live scoring, which increases our visibility and value to fans. Of the more than 400,000

student-athletes competing in 23 sports, the NCAA chose our players, our sport to be one of its 7 equity sports. We, on the softball fields of collegiate programs, have a chance to grow the passion we share in our sport at a time when opportunity is declining for those both older and younger than our players. We have a chance to lead the sport through what will prove to be a very rough stretch of time. So where will we lead, how will we lead? As leaders and professionals, I would hope we will raise the level of our games and make the most of the opportunity we have been given by setting aside personal agendas and egos in order to grow our sport.

Rule 2, Section 4

In honor of breast cancer awareness month, can the bases, pitcher's plate and or home plate be painted pink?

No, the pitcher's plate, home plate and the bases must be white as specified in the rule. The reason is for visibility, safety of the players who need to visually locate it to make a play (both offense and defense), and for umpire accuracy (colored bases and/or plates are hard to see from any significant distance). Pink banners and or bunting in the field area are most often used in addition to uniform recognition but occasionally a grounds crew will take the time to hand paint the rise (height) of the base pink, leaving the top portion entirely white. This is not precluded by the rules.

Rule 3, Section 3.1.8

Is the diamond style taping allowed on a bat handle?

Yes, Rule 3.3.1.8.3 specifically allows for a taped continuous spiral but it need not be a solid layer. The idea of a continuous spiral is to have one single piece of tape and not multiple pieces that will fray and peel off. But the single piece can spiral with the bat handle showing between turns as in the diamond style or as in the open turn configuration.

Rule 3, Section 7.1

Only a nonuniformed player can be outside of the dugout videotaping. Once it is brought to the umpire's attention, the player is rendered ineligible...then what?

If she has been out of the dugout, she is now ineligible to play and must remain out of the dugout so as not to pass along information gained from outside the field. If the nonuniformed player goes in the dugout or passes along that information, the opposing coach should bring it to the attention of the umpire who will warn the violator and head coach. If it doesn't stop immediately (i.e. the player remains in the dugout or passes along more information), the head coach is ejected. The intent here is to allow for scouting and videotaping by a nonuniformed player as long as she is then unable to participate in that game...the effect is applied if the player does something to violate that rule. Since the violator is not participating in the game and would therefore not be a significant deterrent if she were ejected from the facility, it is the head coach who is ejected. It should also be noted that a player in uniform is NOT allowed out of team areas to videotape etc. Should a uniformed player violate the rule, she would be guilty of unsporting behavior and subject to ejection under Rule 13.1.1. If ejected, she may remain in the dugout, however she is not to communicate with those participating in the game. Because the dugout is an area not constantly scrutinized by umpires during play, it is incumbent on opposing coaches to have a uniformed player removed from scouting areas before she gains significant information that she could pass along while serving her ejection in the dugout.

Rule 3, Section 7.4
Rule 13, Section 4

If a team representative is videotaping a game in which they are not a participant but one they wish to scout for future competition, is there a penalty for a non-participating team?

The effect in the rule book is "when brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected." This effect assumes the non-participating head coach is within the facility in order to be ejected but if he/she is not, the team representative should be ejected for non-compliance with the warning. In either case, the umpires should use the on-site administrator to deal with this issue in the stands AND an NCAA incident report shall be filed.

Additional remarks-this long-time rule is becoming increasingly irrelevant with the availability and affordability of video equipment for more than just coaching staffs. Fans in the stands are able to record the action (unless there is a facility rule disallowing it) so they often serve this function for a team rather than having a team representative assigned to illegally record a game in which they are not participating.

Rule 3, Section 9.4
Rule 4, Section 3, Note

If a student-athlete is a base coach and must, therefore, wear a protective helmet, can she wear a baseball style skull cap?

No, since she is a member of the offensive team, she must wear a NOCSAE approved batting helmet as detailed in 3.9.1.

Rule 3, Section 11

Several players on the same team are wearing a spongy pre-wrap product (often used by athletic trainers as a first layer before taping) rolled in their hair. Each player is wearing a different color.

- 1) **Is it legal to use this product in this manner since it is not as intended by the manufacturer?**
Yes, this product's use is legal and, because it is a safer alternative to almost every other type of headband, it should not be discouraged.
- 2) **Is the product considered to be headgear and, therefore, must be the same predominant color?**
No, the wrap is considered a headband which is an accessory no longer addressed in the NCAA softball rules.

Rule 4, Section 4.1.4

At the pre-game meeting attended by umpires, both head coaches and an assistant coach, it is my understanding that the head coach is the spokesperson for the team, and that's who is required to speak to the umpires when making changes, substitutions, discussions, etc.

There is only one spokesperson for the team. Correct?

In NCAA softball, conversations and business transactions are not limited to the head coach and the plate umpire. If a base coach has a question regarding a call at a base, he/she may indeed be more knowledgeable about the play than a head coach who was in another team area or a significant distance from the action. Similarly, under the substitution rule (Rule 8.5.1.2), it specifies "the coach making the substitution shall"...not "the head coach shall". This gives the authority to make a substitution to any coach. That said, the head coach is responsible for all communication with the umpire (Rule 4.4.1.4) so the head coach is accountable for the information. If there is a miscommunication regarding what happened and what the head coach wanted to happen, the miscommunication is his/her responsibility and the information shared with the umpire is considered official. For example, if an assistant coach re-enters a player following a substitution but the head coach did not intend to make the re-entry at that time, the re-entry stands as reported to and accepted by the umpire. It is the head coach's responsibility to train those under his/her purview how to act, what to say and when, because he/she will ultimately be held accountable for the communication with the umpire.

Rule 4, Section 11.2.3

With a runner on first base, the batter bunts the ball in front of the plate. The catcher fields the ball and is just about to throw when the umpire knocks the ball out of the catcher's hand while pointing to indicate the ball was fair. Is that umpire interference?

Using 4.11.2.3 where the umpire interferes with a catcher's attempt to throw out a runner on a non-batted ball as a model, delayed dead ball is signaled. If there is a play in which the defense obtains an out, the play stands. But if the catcher is prevented from making a play or does not obtain an out, the batter is returned to the batter's box and the runner is returned to first base.

Additional remark--if the umpire contacts any other fielder playing a batted ball, the ball is live and interference is not ruled. It is only contact between umpire and catcher that might result in interference.

Rule 5, Section 6

On the line-up card, a coach wants to print the name of the player as J.C. Smith. The player prefers to go by the first name of "J.C." instead of her given name of Jacquelyn. Is this contrary to the requirement to list first and last names?

If the player goes by J.C., it is appropriate to use J.C. on the lineup card. The intent is to provide accurate information to media and opponents. So if she is listed as J.C. on the school roster and that is what she would answer to if someone called out her name, then that actually meets the intent of the rule better than requiring a given name that she doesn't use and people are not likely to recognize. We have often let a Catherine be listed as Cathy and Roberta listed as Bobbie so this is no different and is allowable as long as that's what she prefers to be called and there's no one else on the roster who she could be confused with (like J.C. Smith, meaning Jacquelyn, and another player is named Jane Smith). That said, this does not extend to allowing nonspecific nicknames instead of first names such as "Speedy" Smith or "Lefty" Jones. If a coach wants those monikers, the player should be listed as J.C. "Speedy" Smith.

Rule 5, Section 10

An institution's promotions staff wants to have a cannon discharged to celebrate the scoring of runs similar to the celebration they have for scoring in a football game. Is that considered a noisemaker and therefore disallowed? If allowed, must it be fired only when the ball is dead?

The artificial noisemaker rule (5.10) does NOT apply to this situation as it refers to student-athletes, managers, coaches and athletic trainers and it sounds like this would be done by or at the direction of games management staff.

So, specifically, the NCAA softball rules do not preclude the use of a cannon. That said, you might want to educate the users that it should not disrupt the flow of the game nor disrespect the opponent and add a guideline that it may only be used for about 10 seconds once play has ceased following the scoring of runs (that's the guideline for bands in Rule 5.13). Dead ball, live

ball really doesn't work all that well because most runs are scored while the ball is live (a batted ball put in play that scores a run is far more common than a dead ball, out-of-the-park home run). But they should wait until play is over, fire the cannon, and then the next batter steps in the box. Firing it while the ball is being fielded or thrown and a run is scoring would be as unsporting as waiting until the next batter is getting in the box and preparing to hit. One additional thought is that it should be mentioned in the pregame meeting so that umpires and opponents are aware of this tradition you are starting and will not be startled by the noise.

Rule 6, Section 5.2
Rule 10, Section 1.3
Rule 10, 18.1 AR

Can you explain the apparent contradiction between 6.5.2/10.1.3 and the new section 10.18.1 AR, both regarding positioning of the catcher?

10.18.1 AR describes the situation when the catcher leaves her position for no apparent reason AND the time allowed between pitches expires...the effect is a ball on the batter.

According to 6.5.2 and 10.1.3, the catcher must be within the catcher's box from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitch is released...and the effect is illegal pitch.

This is a rulebook mistake and should be resolved by adding the following exceptions to 6.5.2 and 10.1.3:

1. When time is granted by the umpire (no effect).
2. When the catcher violates the time allowed between pitches rule (see rule 10.18).
3. When the batter is positioned in front of the batter's box, the catcher may move closer to the plate without effect. At all times, the catcher must avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter legally has the right to the entire batter's box (no effect).

*Additional Remark--*1 and 3 are long time discrepancies that should have been noticed and corrected earlier. 2 is needed to accommodate the new time between pitches standard.

Rule 6, Section 5.6.1
Rule 8, Section 5.2.2
Rule 10, Section 19.1
Rule 11, Section 3.2.5

If a pitcher makes six total warm-up throws or pitches, what is the penalty?

If the pitcher takes five warm-up pitches and then throws the ball to first base, enforce 6.5.6.1 (first time warning, second time ball, third time ejection of head coach). But if the pitcher takes six warm-up pitches, enforce 8.5.2.2/10.19.1/11.3.2.5 (award a ball to the first batter faced).

*Additional Remark--*the award for this violation does not escalate similar to 6.5.6.1

Keep in mind pitches are thrown to the batter, warm-up pitches are thrown to the plate and all other throws (overhand, underhand or sidearm) can be released in any direction. In all cases, if the pitcher pitches more than five warm-up pitches, the rules she violates are 8.5.2.2/10.19.1/11.3.2.5. If she violates the pitch/throw combination, she violates 6.5.6.1.

What is the intent of "continuous manner" wording?

The intent of the committee in using "continuous throws" is to have the pitcher pitch and then throw to first base or throw to first base then pitch but not to alternate a pitch then a throw, then a pitch, then a throw nor to add in any extraneous activities like fielding balls before throwing to first base. The rationale for this rule addition is to keep the game moving in a predictable way that allows for the desired warm-ups yet also provides some safety to other participants who can now position themselves to avoid being hit by errant throws between innings.

Rule 6, Section 16.4.1
Rule 6, Section 16.4.2

Can the new rule regarding air travel and setting a drop dead time be applied to non-conference games?

While it is easier to administer as a conference policy, the rule can apply to any game, if it is mutually agreed upon in the pregame meeting.

Rule 6, Section 19.2

Is the score of a forfeited game always 7-0 as stated in the Umpire Manual?

The NCAA Softball Rule Book specifies that the score of a forfeited game is 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault; however, in the exception that follows the rule, it is noted that if the game is regulation, the score and all game stats shall stand and be credited as played IF the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit.

This is an Umpire's Manual oversight. On Page 64, it only specifies the score shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault but there is no mention of the rule book exception.

Rule 8, Section 3.3
Rule 8, Section 3.4

The runner at second base is #10, and #12 is at first base with no one out. The offensive coach announces to the umpire #14 will run for #10 and then uses a conference to talk to the batter, the substitute and the original two runners. When the offense breaks the huddle, #14 replaces the trailing runner (#12) instead of lead runner (#10) as reported. What is the remedy when properly appealed before the next pitch?

The remedy will depend on the question posed to the umpire by the offended team.

If the defense asks "is #10 supposed to be at second base?" You have an unreported reentry.

The officially reported substitute for #10 was #14; however, #10 can reenter for her own substitute (assuming she had not been out of the game already). Impose the penalty for unreported player as determined by the time of the report.

If the defense asks “is #14 supposed to be at first base?” #14 is an illegal player. She was not a starting player and was officially entered as a substitute for #10. She cannot enter the game a second time (as a substitute for # 12) so impose the penalty for illegal player as determined by the time of the report.

If the defense asks “are both players incorrect?” impose both penalties as determined by the time of the report.

Rule 10, Section 8
Rule 12, Section 20

Runners on first and third bases with one out. The runner on first base leaves early, the pitcher throws an illegal pitch and the batter successfully executes a suicide squeeze bunt. What is the effect and does it depend on the order of violations?

The order and type of violation is significant in determining the effect.

- 1) **If the runner from first left early and then the illegal pitch occurs** (for example, the pitcher violated the pitching lane rule), the ball is immediately dead when the runner loses contact with first base. So the illegal pitch and the suicide squeeze never actually occurred. The runner at first is out, the runner on third is returned to third base and the batter is returned to the batter’s box with the same count she had prior to the pitch.
- 2) **If the pitcher throws an illegal pitch** (for example, the pitcher uses resin and does not wipe her fingers before pitching) **and the runner on first base leaves early**, the plate umpire will signal delayed dead ball and allow play to continue. The base umpire will declare the ball dead when the runner leaves early which stops play before the suicide squeeze. Now that action is stopped, enforce the effect for both violators because they were unrelated to each other...penalize the runner at first for leaving early by calling her out. Finally, enforce the penalty for illegal pitch which is to award a ball to the batter and advance the runner from third to score.
- 3) **If the pitcher throws an illegal pitch** (for example, the pitcher takes two steps forward toward home plate) **and the runner on first base loses contact with the base on the first step but before release of the pitch**, the plate umpire will signal delayed dead ball and allow play to continue. The base umpire will declare the ball dead when the runner leaves early which stops play before the suicide squeeze. Now that action is stopped, penalize the first violation that caused a second violation...because the batter did not reach first base safely and all runners did not advance, the offensive coach may choose the result of the play (dead ball, runner on first is out for leaving early, runner on third remains there) or the effect for an illegal pitch (ball awarded to the batter and each runner advances one base).

Additional remark--this is different from previous interpretations and other governing bodies. The NCAA Softball Rules Committee makes the distinction because in the second instance, the violations are unrelated to each other and in the third, the pitching violation caused the base running violation.

Rule 10, Section 18, AR3
Rule 11, Section 23.3

Can the batter, after stepping out of the batter’s box without being granted time, run back into the box and legally hit the ball?

Yes, because time was not granted, if the batter realizes her mistake and gets back in the box, she can legally hit the ball.

The effect for the batter leaving the batter’s box and the 10-second count expiring is listed as a strike on the batter, is this an intended rule change, and, if yes, it conflicts with a presentation in the umpire clinic and the effect for 11.23.3 in the softball rule book.

There is a significant distinction emphasized by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee. If the batter, pitcher and catcher all assume their appropriate positions and then, without being granted time, the batter leaves the batter’s box but the pitcher delivers the pitch in the allowable time, the pitch is a ball or strike, depending on its location in the zone. This is NOT a change from the past.

However, if the batter, pitcher and catcher all assume their respective positions and then without being granted time, the batter leaves the batter’s box AND the time between pitches expires while she is out of the batter’s box, the effect is a strike even though the pitch was never thrown. The rationale is to now always penalize the batter for leaving her position and allowing the time between pitches to expire.

However the effect in 11.23.3 is confusing without this additional section which needs to be added to match 10.18 AR3: “If the batter, pitcher and catcher all assume their respective positions and then without being granted time, the batter leaves the batter’s box AND the time between pitches expires while she is out of the batter’s box, the effect is a strike even though the pitch is never thrown.”

- Rule 10, Section 19 **During an offensive conference, can the pitcher play catch with other players on the field? Does it have to be overhand or can she throw underhand?**
Yes, the pitcher can play catch as long as she is ready to play when the offense and umpires are ready. There is no provision for warm-up pitches during a conference in 10.19 so all she can do it throw overhand, sidearm or underhand to a teammate (i.e., not from the pitcher's plate nor thrown to the plate).
- Rule 11, Section 15.4 **If a batter is so fooled by the pitch that she swings the bat out in front of the plate and is able to bring the bat back before the pitch gets there and actually hit the pitch, what do you have?**
By Rule 11.15.4, the ball is dead, the batter is declared out and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
However the text in the Umpire Manual, Page 76, incorrectly indicates the ball is live and you have a legally batted ball.
- Rule 11, Section 16.1
Rule 14, Section 2.15 **If a pitch hits a batter and is also ball four, is it scored a walk or hit by pitch?**
Rule 11.16.1 specifies that a batter is hit by a pitch when the pitch is neither swung at nor a strike but hits the batter while she is in the batter's box. In addition, 14.2.15 reads "hit by a pitch is an award of first base granted by the umpire to the batter who, during their time at bat, was hit by a pitch, including a pitch that would have resulted in a base on balls." Therefore, most often, it is scored as a hit by pitch. However, if the batter makes no attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch or initiates the contact with the pitch and the umpire would not have awarded the batter first base based on the contact, the batter is awarded first base on ball four and it is scored as a base on balls. There are umpire mechanics specified for each of these awards to assist the scorekeeper in the proper call.
- Rule 12, Section 9.1
Rule 12, Section 27.3 **Bottom of the seventh, tie game, two outs with runners on first and second bases. The batter hits a slow roller to the first baseman who fields the ball barehanded between her feet, then turns around and dives for first base. She reaches to touch first base with the ball for the force out and as the ball touches the base, it squirts loose. The runner from second crosses home plate before the first baseman can regain possession of the ball. Does the run score or is the batter-runner out on the force out?**
The batter –runner is out. There is no time frame that the ball must be held. If the defensive player has control of the ball when she touches first base, the base dislodging the ball is irrelevant. Similarly, if the first baseman fields a ground ball, has secure possession, and instead of diving to tag the ball to the base, she takes a few steps parallel to the foul line and touches first base with her foot. At the instant she steps on the bag, the batter-runner's foot lands half on the bag and half on the first baseman's foot causing them both to get tangled up, fall and the ball slips out. Nothing intentional, just a wreck immediately after contact with the base on the force out. The runner would be out on the force even though the baserunner caused the ball to come loose.
- Rule 12, Section 9.19
Rule 12, Section 12.5 **First batter of the game. Count - one ball, two strikes, the next was a borderline pitch, which was called a ball. The batter moved quickly to her dugout, put the bat away and sat down thinking she was called out on strikes. Should she be called back to complete her turn at bat or is she out for abandoning her position in the batter's box?**
The batter should be called back to the plate to complete her turn at bat similar to the situation where a batter, thinking she was awarded first base on a base on balls, abandons the batter's box and moves toward first base. The rule book citations regarding abandoning a base refers to a base runner, not batter and a base, not the batter's box.
- Rule 12, Section 21.6.3 **Runner on first base following a single. The pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle when:**
- 1) **with only a single foot on the base, the runner lifts it off the base to clean off the bottom of her cleats, thus breaking contact with the base. She does not attempt to advance. Because there is no advantage gained, should the umpire ignore the violation?** No, the runner should be called out unless she asked for and was granted time by the umpire.
 - 2) **the runner walks off the base to groom the dirt area she churned up as she ran out her single. She does not attempt to advance, so should the umpire ignore the violation?**
As in the earlier situation, the runner should be called out unless she asked for and was granted time by the umpire.
- In both these cases, the umpire should enforce the rule without assigning intent of the runner or whether or not a significant advantage is gained. It is much cleaner to call all aspects of the game based on the

objective actions that are displayed rather than to try to assign value or intent and then decide if the action warrants a penalty. For some, that might seem “nitpicky” but it does provide predictable, consistent application of the rules without having to judge intent OR whether or not a “real” advantage is gained. That said, it is good preventative umpiring to anticipate these possible actions. For example, if the area around the base is churned up at the conclusion of play, the umpire can signal “time” in anticipation of the player’s desire to smooth the ground. If the player simply walks off the base without requesting time, you have no violation as time is already called.

Bottom line, however, is that players are responsible for adhering to the playing rules and the NCAA Softball Rules Committee does not favor the slippery slope of encouraging umpires to ignore rule violations when they think there is no intent to violate the rules or conversely penalize players only when it is apparent that they intentionally violated the rules.

Additional remark-- the Umpire’s Manual contradicts this intent of the committee. Specifically, on page 112 of the Umpires Manual, under preventative umpiring, the text says do NOT penalize a player who, while dusting herself off, loses contact with the base. Since the runner has no thought of attempting to advance to third, simply call time because no real or perceived advantage is given to either team.

Rule 13, Section 1
Rule 15, Section 2.2

Following a walk-off, game ending, close play at the plate, the losing coach runs out of the dugout to argue the call at the plate. The coach relentlessly argues, even after the plate umpire explains the final call. After the coach tells the umpire crew that they were horrible and ruined the game, the plate umpire ejects the coach. Since the final out had already been recorded, what is the coach ejected from?

Rule 15.2.2 specifically starts the umpire’s jurisdiction when he/she arrives on the field and ends it when he/she leaves the field after the game. So, if the coach’s conduct occurred while the umpire had jurisdiction, and it would have resulted in an ejection had it occurred during the game, the umpire should issue a post game ejection. The violator shall serve the ejection in his/her team’s next scheduled and played contest. In all cases, the ejecting umpire shall notify the head coach of the effect for post game ejection and follow all procedures in 13.1 for an ejection. If the affected team has a subsequent game the same day at the same site or in the same tournament, the on-site administrator should also be notified.

Additional remark-- In the first thirty incident reports filed in the 2010 season, 3 have involved post game ejections unfortunately making this interpretation immediately relevant and necessary.

Rule 14, Section 16

Runner on third base with one out. The coach calls for a suicide squeeze but the batter misses the ball on the bunt attempt. The runner from third leaves on release of the pitch, is caught in a rundown, and eventually putout. Since the first throw by the catcher is to the trailing base (third, in this case) would it be scored a pick off or since she was trying to advance, would it be caught stealing?

It would be scored as caught stealing. The general rule is to determine the action of the runner at the beginning of the play and apply the appropriate scoring. If the runner would have been credited with a stolen base at the conclusion of a successful play, she would be charged with caught stealing if unsuccessful. If the runner was merely leading off with the pitch, her options would be return safely or be picked off. Unlike baseball, the location of the first throw is not relevant to the decision.

Umpire Manual Notes

Under responsibilities of the National Softball Umpire Coordinator (Pages 18 and 19) add Division II and Division III to the bullet point of coordinating assignments for the National Championships.

The last paragraph in 5.8 Warnings actually belongs under 5.9 Protests

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