2016 SOFTBALL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

5/11/16

SITUATION 1: A pitcher is standing behind the pitching plate with the ball in her glove, looking into her team’s dugout receiving the signal from her coach. Following this, she steps onto the pitching plate and looks at the catcher, then brings her hands together in front of her body. The umpire rules illegal pitch since the signal has to be taken while in the pitching position.

RULING: Incorrect ruling. As long as the pitcher pauses long enough when looking at the catcher to simulate taking the signal, there has been no violation of the pitching rule. (6-1-1b)

SITUATION 2: Pitcher takes a position with both feet on the pitcher’s plate. She brings her hands together and steps back with her non-pivot foot and delivers the pitch.

RULING: Illegal pitch. Per Rule 1-1-2 once the hands are brought together the pitcher “shall not take more than one step which must be forward toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery.” The pitcher may step backward with non-pivot foot as her hands are brought together provided the hands do not come together before she starts her backward step (6-1-2b).

SITUATION 3: The pitcher toes the back of the pitching plate (heel is up in the air) and then as they go into their windup they bring their foot down and their heel touches the ground. They are ‘rocking’ their foot.

RULING: Legal, as long as they do not move their foot, either by sliding it backward or stepping backward.

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4/29/16

SITUATION 1: During the game a coach has to remove a player due to concussion like symptoms. The injured player is replaced with a legal substitute. The coach informs the umpire that the newly entered substitute would bat for the injured player but that the DP would play defense for her.

RULING: Legal. The DP can play defense for any player. If that player is not the Flex, that player will continue to bat but not play defense (Rule 3-3-6e). The team continues to play with ten (10) players. NOTE. Should the DP play defense for the Flex, the Flex has left the game and the number of players is reduced from ten (10) to nine (9).

SITUATION 2: Substitute Green bats for Smith. Green hits a single. Before the next pitch the opposing coach brings to the umpire’s attention that Green failed to report.

RULING: The umpire would confirm that the substitute failed to report and issue a team warning to the offending team and enter Green into the game. If that team had already received a warning for unreported substitute, that substitute and the head coach would be restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game. The original player (Smith) or a legal substitute would replace Green at first base (Rule 3-6-7 and Case Book 3-6-7 Situations A & B).

SITUATION 3: Runner on second base (1 out). Batter hits a homerun over the fence. Runner from 2nd base scores. Batter approaches the plate and 2 teammates slap her hand before she touches home plate. RULING for batter? RULING for runner who was on 2nd base?

ANSWER: In Case Book play 3.6.6 G.

B1 hits an out-of-the-park home run. As she touches third base, her team comes out of the dugout to congratulate her.

RULING: Legal, but bench personnel cannot obstruct the umpire’s view of B1 touching home plate. All bench personnel should remain behind the umpire and the batter’s boxes to ensure an unobstructed view of players touching the plate. No mention of hand slaps.

PENALTY: (Arts. 2 through 10) The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. (Art. 2) A fake tag without the ball is obstruction (8-4-3b). (Art. 7) The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. (Arts. 8, 9, 10) For coaches who violate, depending on the severity of the act, the umpire may issue a warning, restrict the offender to bench/dugout for the remainder of the game or eject the offender.

If in the hand slapping the players block the umpires view of runner touching home plate, the umpire should issue a warning. Repeat is restriction to bench.

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4/27/16

QUESTION 1: Rule 6-1-1a and 6-1-1b state that a pitcher must have her hands apart when she steps on the pitching plate and take (or simulates taking) a signal from the catcher. Tonight, the pitcher had her hands apart when she stepped on the pitching plate, but she than used her pitching hand to adjust the strap on her glove. She would take / simulate taking the catcher’s signal while adjusting the strap, then put her hand in her glove to grasp the ball.

Should the adjusting of the strap be considered bringing her hands together, thus resulting in an illegal pitch?
RULING: The pitcher is LEGAL. However, if repeated, the umpire should tell the pitcher and coach that she should adjust the straps off the pitching plate since it could raise the above argument.

QUESTION 2: Last night I had a softball game where the pitcher would drag her foot away from the rubber sometimes the dragging foot would stop dragging before she let go of the ball. This would be the same as replanting and would not be legal, correct?

RULING: ART. 2 . . . About the Pitch:
   a. The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.
   b. Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.

   EXCEPTION: See Rule 6-1-1f2 - When removing self from the pitcher's position.

NOTE: "Toward" is interpreted as within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. (See "Figure")
   c. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground and within the 24-inch length. If a hole has been created in front of the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may be no higher than the level plane of the ground. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.

NOTES:
   1: It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.
   2: Techniques such as the "crow hop" and "the leap" are illegal. (See 2-16; 2-33)

QUESTION 3: I had a situation come up this weekend in a softball game that I would like clarification on. Hitting team is up with 1 out and girls on 1st and 3rd. Batter enters the batters box and takes a pitch, which was a ball. Defensive coach comes out of the dugout after the thrown pitch and says that the batter is out because she didn't report. Umpires called the batter out. Correct procedure?

RULING: Rule 3-3-4: A substitute or costly runner shall not enter the contest unreported, (3-6-7 Penalty, 8-9-7).

3-6-7 Penalty: The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender (player) shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. Art. 7: The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.

Rule 2, ART. 2 . . . Unreported Substitute. An unreported substitute is a substitute who has a legal right to participate in the game but has not reported to the umpire prior to her participation (3-6-7). All substitutions must be reported to the umpire.

A team warning should have been issued and the batter allowed to complete her turn at bat. Had this been the second unreported substitution, the unreported substitute and coach would be restricted to the bench and another legal substitute or the player whom the unreported substitute replaced would bat with a 1 ball 0 strike count.

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4/5/16

Clarification On NFHS Rules for the on-deck batter
As a reminder: The WIAA is following the NFHS softball rules for the on-deck batter. Be sure that all your coaches and umpires are following this NFHS rule. It is not optional; it is mandatory.

References:
1. WIAA Softball Rules Video – Slide #30
2. NFHS Rules Book
   Rules 2-3-3 “The on-deck batter is a player of the offensive team entitled to occupy the on-deck circle closest to her dugout, A single on-deck batter shall remain in her team’s on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up.”
   Rule 7-5-1 “The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle closest to her dugout.”

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4/4/16

QUESTION We played last night and the umpire told the batters a number of times that they must keep 1 foot in the batter's box between pitches, while taking signs from the head coach. Years ago, when I coached baseball, I knew this was a baseball rule, but I don't recall ever seeing it for softball. Can you confirm if this is a rule so I can instruct my team correctly?

RULING: Rule 7-3-1 governs this situation and at this time there is no rule that a batter must keep one foot inside the batter’s box. The 10 second rule is intended to keep game moving along.

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3/7/16

QUESTION: Can a softball coach mount a Go Pro camera on the fence to videotape the games? Does the location of the camera matter – i.e., along the first base side, behind home plate, etc.?

ANSWER: If the host site provides an area on the fence or the backstop where the camera may be mounted, there are no NFHS restrictions
prohibiting a Go Pro to be utilized. The video cannot be utilized during the contest for coaching purposes, however. Please see the NFHS Situation below:

Rule 1.8.6

ART. 6 . . . The use of electronic devices by team personnel to transmit or record information pertaining to their players or team's performance shall be permitted within the team's dugout/bench area only. Information obtained from an electronic device may be used for coaching purposes during the game.

**1.8.6 SITUATION A:**

During a game, the team manager (a) videos the game from the dugout and gives it to the coach to review footage with players in between innings; (b) videos a game from the stands and gives it to the coach during the game to review with his/her pitcher in the pitching circle; (c) videos the play and gives it to the coach to protest a ruling made by the umpire on the field.

**RULING:** (a) legal, manager is part of “team personnel” and can use electronic devices for coaching purposes within the dugout; (b) illegal, only video can be reviewed in the dugout or bench area; (c) illegal, video footage cannot be used to protest a call made by the umpire. (3-6-8; 3-6-11)

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5/19/15

**QUESTION 1:** At last night's game, the umpires would not allow our batters to use a "ring" on their bats while in the warm-up circle. Where does it state that a ring is prohibited?

**ANSWER:** The use of a ring or donut is not prohibited. Rule 1-5-3 states; "Devices added to a bat for warm-up purposes shall be commercially manufactured specifically for a softball bat and shall be securely attached...." The Case Book also has two situations addressing the legal use of a donut: 1.5.3, sit. A & C.

**QUESTION 2:** No outs. Runners at 2nd & 3rd. The hit was a slow roller to SS. The only force play was 1st base. SS faked the throw to 1st, then turned to check runner at 3rd (hoping the runner at 3rd would run home). The runner didn't. So no play was made because she wanted to keep our runner at 3rd from scoring. How would this be scored?

**ANSWER:** Fielder's choice.

**QUESTION 3:** Prior to a home teams warming up period are they allowed to:
1) use any part of the infield to take ground balls, pop ups, etc?
2) can they use the part of the infield that is in foul territory?

**ANSWER:** We have run into some teams that will use the foul territory part of the infield to take grounders, etc. (in the umpires judgment the batter did NOT offer at the pitch.)

**QUESTION 4:** Prior to the start of the suspended game, coach notifies the umpires that there will be 2 names added to the original roster.

**ANSWER:** From John Peterson: Strike. Rule 7-3-2 p. 58. If the batter attempts to bunt and is hit by the pitch it is a dead ball strike regardless of the location of the pitch.

**QUESTION 5:** Batter makes an effort to bunt the pitch (in the umpires judgment the batter clearly offers) but the ball is out of the strike zone and the batter misses the ball and the ball hits the batter. Strike or HBP?

**ANSWER:** From John Peterson: Strike. Rule 7-3-2 p. 58. If the batter attempts to bunt and is hit by the pitch it is a dead ball strike regardless of the location of the pitch.

**QUESTION 6:** Pitch is clearly out of the strike zone but within the batters box and as the batter makes an effort to avoid the pitch it hits her on the hand as she holds the bat. In the umpire's judgment the batter did NOT offer at the pitch. Strike or HBP?

**ANSWER:** From John Peterson: Dead ball, HBP. Hands are part of the body, not part of the bat. Thus, if batter is not swinging or pitch is not within the strike zone, batter is awarded first.

**QUESTION 7:** A Senior player on our Varsity Softball team broke her hand in a game early in the season. She is still in a cast, but the doctor has cleared her for all running. Coach wants to begin using her as a courtesy and/or pinch runner. I assume the cast must be padded and/or a soft cast. Do we need any type of doctor note or WIAA authorization to show umpires that the padding is legal?

**ANSWER:** I would recommend that the coach have the doctor's clearance to show to the umpires at the pre-game meeting in the event he uses her as a runner. Regarding the padding, If you follow the requirements for padding listed in 3-2-13 and it meets those standards, coach should simply tell the umpires that the padding is in compliance with 3-2-13.

**QUESTION 8:** Looking for clarification on team uniforms. My team has both black shorts and black pants. Are they allowed to each wear whatever length they want or do they have to all be matching?

**ANSWER** Not allowed. Rule 3-2-1; "uniforms of all team members shall be of the same color and style."

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5/8/15

**GAME ENDING SITUATIONS**
WIAA TOURNAMENT REGIONALS/SECTIONALS

Team A is the visiting team and Team B is the home team in all of the following situations.

**SITUATION 1:** In the top of the third inning, Team A is behind 15-0. They score 3 runs in their half of the inning. Team B comes to bat in the bottom of the third leading 15-3. They score 4 runs in 2 and 2/3 innings (2 outs in their half of the inning). The score is now 19-3.

**RULING:** The game ends due to the WIAA softball tournament mandatory 15 run/3 inning tournament rule.

**SITUATION 3:** The score is tied 5-5 at the end of the fifth inning and Team A is leading. A thunderstorm stops play prior to the start of the sixth. The umpires consult the radar and determine that they will be unable to restart the game that day.

**RULING:** Suspended game. Game resumes the next day from the point it was suspended.

**SITUATION 4:** The score is 6-5 at the end of the fifth inning. Play has moved to the sixth inning. The Team A does not score but prior to Team B taking the field a thunderstorm stops play. The umpires consult the radar and determine that they will be unable to restart the game that day.

**RULING:** Completed game. The score at the end of the fifth inning is the final score, 6-5, Team A with the win.

**SITUATION 5:** The score is 5-5 at the end of the fifth inning. In the sixth inning Team A takes the lead 6-5. Before Team B can bat in their half of the sixth a thunderstorm stops play.

**RULING:** Suspended game. Game resumes the next day from the point it was suspended.

**SITUATION 7:** Throughout five and half innings Team A has held a 2-0 lead. Due to weather, the umpires stop the game prior to Team B batting in the bottom of the sixth inning. Play will be unable to resume that day.

**RULING:** Team A with the win. The score is recorded as 2-0 in five innings.

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**5/4/15**

**QUESTION 1:** Can you please clarify the 15 run rule for me. I read the rules and it seems odd that it has to be brought up before the game (admitting defeat badly). If it doesn't get brought up can it still be agreed upon?

**ANSWER:** Currently, Wisconsin has game ending procedures which include the mutual agreement 15 run/3 inning and the 10 run/5 inning, which does not need mutual agreement. NFHS Rule 4-2-3 NOTES 1. States that if a state has game ending procedures, which we do, they must be used. This currently would mean that deciding to use the 15 run/3 inning after the game has begun would not be allowed. It could be changed. It would need to be approved by Softball Coaches Advisory and then the Board of Control for next season.

**QUESTION 2:** We were under the impression that the Mizuno emblem on the glove was legal. Even though it is yellow….We were told it was an illegal glove.

**ANSWER:** Legal. This is still on the WIAA website, softball Q & A, 2012, including a picture of the glove in question.

**QUESTION 3:** I have a situation, a player is listed on the line up as Ann Reed #32 playing 5 position. The coach made a mistake and the player is actually Karen Reed #32 playing 5 position. After the player hits a triple and drives the run in the other teams head coach says that kid is listed with the wrong last name, is she an illegal substitute? The coach made a mistake and wrote down the wrong last name, the opposing coach knew the kids last name and used it after she had batted, what should the call have been? The umpire was influenced by the coach and called the player out and made the runner that had scored return to first.

**ANSWER:** Incorrect application of the rule. Rule 3-1-3 applies. ART. 3 . . . The team's lineup card shall include first initial and last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and shall include each eligible substitute. Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the plate umpire during the pregame conference. PENALTY: After the lineup card has been submitted to and verified by the umpire and a change is subsequently made to a player/substitute name or number, or if a player/substitute is added to the lineup card, the umpire shall issue a team warning to the head coach of the team involved. Any further changes made to a player/substitute name or number results in the head coach being restricted to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game.

Correction is made to line-up card, coach is warned, play stands with batter/runner on third and run scored by runner who was on first.

**Several lessons to be learned from this situation:** First, as the opposing coach, good sportsmanship requires that you bring any such situation to the immediate attention of the umpires when it is discovered. Waiting until the "right" moment to use such information is nothing more then gamesmanship, which has no place in high school athletics. Second, if you as the coach are certain of a rule, make sure you have a rulebook and the rule reference. Third, umpires too must have a rulebook available. Do not be talked into a ruling based on an overzealous coach. If in doubt, get the call right by referring to the NFHS Rule Book!

**QUESTION 4:** As an umpire do I have to grant time to a batter, who is in the box, as they get ready to bat? The pitcher has the ball and is on the rubber ready to pitch. How much time/how long does a batter get to kick dirt, swing the bat and prepare themselves to bat? Do I have to grant them the time to do all of the above.

**ANSWER:** You, as the plate umpire, control the pace of the game. Rule 7-3-1 clearly states that the batter shall not delay the game…within 10 seconds after the ball is returned to the pitcher…” As the plate umpire, you may grant time-out…for a valid reason (7-3-1 EFFECTS). You may find the Case Book examples helpful: 7.3.1, sit A and B.
QUESTION 5:  If the initial DP comes in to play defense for another player (other than the flex), does that "new offensive only" player become the new DP on the line-up card? I ask for clarification for this scenario: I go to a game with 10 players and use the DP/Flex. If someone other than these two players gets hurt, I know the DP can come in to play defense, but can the flex go to the hurt player's line-up spot? In my mind yes, and the DP/Flex is gone unless the hurt player re-enters and the original FLEX goes back to the FLEX and plays defense only.

ANSWER:  Rule 3-3-6e; "The DP may play defense at any position. Should the DP play defense for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game. The DP may play defense for the FLEX and the FLEX is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players from ten to nine."

Case Book 3.3.6, sit. J; "The team is able to maintain nine players on defense, but may only bat eight (an out being recorded when the eighth spot comes to bat). Rule 3-3-8, 4-3-1f

QUESTION 6:  Want to clarify the "status of a game" from last night. School A and School B playing last night. Top of the 1st - School A batting - Bases Loaded – 1 out. Game called because of rain. Is this suspended from there? "Apparently" there was a comment made by the umpires that since the first inning wasn't finished the game would start over. Let me know.

ANSWER:  Please refer to the WIAA Softball Season Regulations, National Federation Allowed Adaptations: "…treated as a suspended game. …it will continue from the point of suspension…"

QUESTION 7:  Batter hit a ground ball to shortstop and threw the bat as she started running to first base. Not intentionally, and no malicious intent. Bat hit the catcher on the left arm. According to Rule 7-4-14, the batter would be called out for throwing the bat only if she interfered with a defensive player attempting a play. In this case, the catcher was not involved in the play; the SS misplayed the ball and the batter was safe at first. So how is this ruled, and what is the penalty, if any? Can the batter be declared out even if the catcher is not involved in the play?

ANSWER:  Please refer to Rule 3-6-3; "A player shall not carelessly throw a bat."

Penalty: Team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game."

4/21/15

QUESTION 1:  A quick question regarding the WIAA adaptation of the NFHS rule regarding helmets. The adaptation states:" NEW 10. All batting helmets are required to be school colors or neutral (white, black, gray) colors. Only school logos, reward or commemorative stickers are allowed beyond the NFHS requirement (Rules 1-6-1 and 1-7-1)." Does this mean all members of a team must wear the same color helmet, or can helmets be a mixture of allowed colors. For example, 7 players are wearing helmets that are team colors and two are wearing helmets that are white or black?

ANSWER:  The helmets are not required to be identical in color or design, but must follow the new parameters.

QUESTION 2:  Last night in a game I alternated courtesy runners for my catcher. Neither runner had been a participant in the game in any other capacity. I was told by the plate umpire that I had to use the same courtesy runner for my catcher each time, unless that courtesy runner became a substitute in the game. My understanding is that I could rotate courtesy runners. Please advise.

ANSWER:  Legal. Rules 8-9-1 and 8-9-3. Provided neither has previously participated in the game nor been a courtesy runner for pitcher.

QUESTION 3:  Runner on first, no outs. Fly ball hit well to the outfield. The runner takes off. The ball is caught and the runner has already passed second base. The outfielder throws to first. The throw is errant and goes out of play – dead ball. What base is awarded? What is the umpiring mechanic/process? Can there still be a dead ball appeal for leaving early?

ANSWER:  Please refer to the NFHS Case Book, page 57; 8.3.11, sit. A.

QUESTION 4:  At a game last week, the visiting team had a player come to bat with a red and white helmet. The home coach believed that this was illegal because the helmet was not the school colors, black, white, or beige. The visiting school colors were purple and gold. I spoke with the plate umpire and we agreed to mention it to the visiting coach. The red and white helmet was not worn again. After checking the rule book, Rule 3-2-5 addresses "Headgear" including the authorized colors for caps, visors, headbands, ribbons, etc., but helmets are not listed. Rule 1-6-1 addresses "Batting Helmets" but no color restrictions are listed other than the new non-glare surface restriction.

Are there color restrictions/requirements for batting helmets other than not allowing the mirror like surface?

ANSWER:  Not allowed. The explanation was contained in the rules presentation. It is also included in the NFHS Adaptations/State Regulations that all umpires and coaches are to run off and add to their rule books. http://www.wiaawi.org/Portals/0/PDF/Sports/Softball/softballadaptations.pdf

QUESTION 5:  We had a coaches' agreement for the 15 run, 3 inning possibility. As it turned out, the score after 3 innings was 6 to 2. After 4 innings, it was 20 to 2. Is the game over then or is the 5th inning to be played in order to apply the 10-rule run?

ANSWER:  The 4th inning should also be included in the 15 run ruling.

QUESTION 6:  First is the use of Gorilla Gold, which as advertised and a press release has been approved by NFHS to be used. The rule states a powder rosin and drying like substance. Does Gorilla Gold meet that criteria?

Second, according to our official this evening, our pitcher cannot have the Gorilla Gold towel in her pocket. He questioned it's legality and then stated that any such material must be kept on the ground. According to the rule book the material cannot be on the hat, thigh, and glove. I stated the pocket was legal by definition. He said no as long as he has been officiating the material must be on the ground.
We stopped using the material for tonight and did not continue the discussion. I am asking for the correct interpretation and clarification from the WIAA.

ANSWER: This has been asked quite often and the answer can be found in the Softball Q & As (from a few years ago) which are posted on the WIAA Softball webpage:

Question 3: Is Gorilla Grip allowed?
Answer: From the NFHS staff: “Yes, Gorilla Grip is legal and should remain in the back pocket or on the pitcher's person. It also comes in the form of a wristband the players can wear. (6-2-2).”
If using such a compound, the pitcher must wipe her hand/fingers prior to coming in contact with the ball.

ANSWER: If presented, this device does not meet the spirit and intent of this rule.

QUESTION 7: Can a softball pitcher wear sunglasses while pitching?
ANSWER: There are no NFHS or WIAA rules that prohibit a pitcher from wearing sunglasses.

QUESTION 8: What's the correct or incorrect way to appeal a runner miss base?
ANSWER: Please refer to NFHS Rule 2-1, pages 15-17.

4/14/15

QUESTION 1: Is it a rule or a “guideline” that the home team takes infield first, followed by the visiting team? We arrived at a game and were told by the home team coach that as the visiting team, we were taking infield first and they were going second. I have an issue with this as we adjust our travel and warm-up time knowing that as visitors we will have extra warm-up time off the field while the home team is taking infield. Please advise.

ANSWER: Please refer to the WIAA Softball Season Regulations, page 29:
"Pre-game warm-up shall consist of 35 minutes. 35 minutes prior to the start of the game the home team will take the field. The field is defined as the entire enclosed field (live ball area). 20 minutes prior to the start of the game the visiting team will take the field. 5 minutes prior to the start of the game the pre-game meeting will be held and the field will be prepped for play. Recommended for regular season. Required for WIAA tournament games."

QUESTION 2: Does a scheduled 5 inning softball game count as a game toward the seeding process for tournaments?
ANSWER: Only double headers may be scheduled as 5 inning games. There are no 5 inning single games allowed, unless the 10 run rule is in effect. A 5 inning double header game may be used for seeding and included in the overall W/L record.

QUESTION 3: An area high school softball coach asked me to attend one of her practices so I can help her pitchers with their pitching mechanics. Is a non-coach (private contracted instructor) allowed to give instruction to players at a practice or game, whether the instructor is paid or not paid?

ANSWER: Coaches not licensed to teach must meet WIAA coaching certification provisions whether paid or unpaid and be approved by the school's Board of Education. It is permissible to allow a person one day of instruction during the season as a guest lecturer. (Guest lecturers (one time appearance) - Senior High Handbook, p. 58)

QUESTION 4: Is there a specific rule governing non-catchers catching for pitchers in regards to equipment etc.

ANSWER: NFHS Rule 1-7-3; "Any non-adult warming up a pitcher at any location within the confines of the field shall wear an approved catcher's helmet and mask combination and throat protector."

QUESTION 5: Last year, there was an umpire that would not let our girls wear a hat under their batting helmet as they stated this would "alter" the helmet. Is it legal to wear a baseball cap under your batting helmet?

ANSWER: Girls MAY wear a ball cap under the batting helmet. This is not a violation of NFHS rules.

QUESTION 6: The pitcher dragged her glove hand on the ground as she pitched the ball. He stated that the opposing coach wanted it called an illegal pitch, but Steve did not observe any "hitch" in her pitching motion. While not biomechanically efficient, he did not observe anything illegal.

ANSWER: Legal. While biomechanically inefficient, there is nothing in the NFHS Rule Book which would make this illegal.

QUESTION 7: Do WIAA rules require that a senior player be on the varsity softball team? Can a senior be placed on the JV softball team?

ANSWER: There are no WIAA rules which regulate what team a senior must play on. This is a conference or school decision.

QUESTION 8: At the end of 6 complete innings, score is not tied, called because of darkness – suspended or complete?

ANSWER: Complete game. NFHS Rule 4-2-2 and NFHS Allowed Adaptations, page 29 of the WIAA Season Regulations.

4/15/15

From the NFHS: SOFTBALL SHOE DEVICE: An inner sole shaped device that is attached to the front sole of a softball shoe to extend the toe of the shoe does not comply with the NFHS Softball Rules. The device alters the manufacturer’s design of the shoe (1-8-5; 3-2-10), which is a required piece of equipment (3-2-11). It is not a device that has been approved by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee (1-8-1). If presented, this device should be ruled as illegal equipment and shall be removed before participation is allowed (3-6-1).

The use of such a device does not allow the pitcher to adequately meet the spirit of the pitching rule that governs the action of the pivot foot while pitching the ball (6-1-2c). This device does not meet the spirit and intent of this rule. Use the link below to see the non-compliant device.
NON-GLARE HELMETS: Rules 1-6-1 and 1-7-1 contain language that addresses the issue of helmets with a glare or mirror-like finish. This rule addresses the issue of batting helmets and catcher’s helmets with a finish that is chrome-like, reflective like a mirror and remind you of the silver and gold Christmas balls. This rule is not intended to address the painted helmets with a glossy finish. The glossy finish, on painted helmets in most cases, meets the intent of the NFHS softball rule. There are very few of the batting helmets and catcher’s helmets, with mirror-like surfaces on the market, because most manufacturers agreed to stop making them.

QUESTION 1: In regards to the 15 run, 3 inning game, my questions is, is this to be enforced at all levels; Varsity & sub-varsity, do Conferences have the ability to not comply?
ANSWER: This is not a new rule it has been in place for many years. Please refer to the WIAA NFHS Allowed Adaptations: "By conference agreement or mutual agreement by both head coaches prior to the start of the game, a game may end after three innings if a team is 15 or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat (Rule 4-2-3)." The NOTE is new and refers ONLY to the WIAA Tournament Series: "NOTE: The 15 run rule must be used in all WIAA tournament games except the State Tournament games (quarterfinal, semifinal, and championship)."

QUESTION 2: Our field is not playable due to snow and neither is our opponent's. We both have legal fields but they just aren't ready yet. Do we need a waiver to play on another field that does not meet the outfield fence dimensions?
ANSWER: No, a waiver is not necessary. Please refer to the State Association Regulations: "If neither team has a legal field the game will be played at the home team's field."

QUESTION 3: Is there a regarded distance from the pitchers mound to the outfield that has to be dirt?
ANSWER: The skinned infield is recommended to be 60 feet. The NFHS Rule Book has a complete diagram of the recommended layout of the softball diamond. Please refer to pages 8 and 9 of the rule book.

QUESTION 4: Just to confirm, metal spikes are allowed in softball, correct?
ANSWER: Yes, Rule 3-2-11.

QUESTION 5: I have a question that pertains to a softball bat. I have a coach that is unsure on a rule and when looking the rules up, it seems to be a little subjective. Is this item legal?
ANSWER: http://www.amazon.com/Markwort-Knob-Cuff-Bat-Taper/dp/B00GVIE9BG

Legal per NFHS Rule 1-5-2a; "Devies, attachments or wrappings that cause the knob to become flush with the handle are permitted." Also, refer to the NFHS Case Book, 1.5.2, sit. A; "This is legal provided the device is against or over the knob (not used as a choke-up device) and securely attached."

QUESTION 6: We would like to purchase the Pyroflite bat warmer. Is this legal?
ANSWER: Illegal, Rule 2-4-2. This would be considered an altered bat; "...artificially warming the bat barrel".

QUESTION 7: Our conference is wanting to play jv softball games the same night after the varsity games. Is this ok? It might be only 3-4 innings, but with the lovely Wisconsin weather, we thought it would make the most sense. I had an athletic director tell me that it was illegal to do this, so I am just clarifying.
ANSWER: Not allowed. All games, at all levels must be 7 inning games, time limit games, or if a double header may be 2-5 inning games. (See page 29 of the Softball Season Regulations, National Federation Allowed Adaptations). If would be permissible to play the varsity game first and then play the subvarsity, hoping to get 7 innings in but if called due to darkness the game would not be required to be completed.

QUESTION 8: If we paint our batting helmets to all be the same color, is this considered "altering" the helmet?
ANSWER: You will need to contact the vendor you purchased the helmets from or the manufacturer to determine if painting the helmets would invalidate the warranty. Each manufacturer addresses this issue differently.

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2014 SOFTBALL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

5/7/14

Please note that the WIAA has received numerous questions regarding the following: (CLARIFICATIONS)

CLARIFICATIONS
*"The number of innings for one or both games in a doubleheader may be scheduled for five innings." (Page 29 of the Softball Season Regulations)
*"Currently, it is expected that sub varsity games be played according to the NFHS Rules in regarding to substitutions. There is not a provision for "free and unlimited" substitutions.
*"No game may be scheduled (but a game may be rescheduled if postponed) after either of the schools involved has begun WIAA tournament series competition." (Page 28 of the Softball Season Regulations)
*Scrimmages may be held at any time, even after the start of the WIAA tournament series.
*All levels of softball must have two licensed umpires for interscholastic competition. If you are unable to secure a second umpire, the event may be a scrimmage which would count against the maximum number of games allowed. A scrimmage prohibits a score in the book or scoreboard and a format other than three outs per inning. (Pages 27 and 28 of the Softball Season Regulations)
QUESTION 1: In a softball game last week, I was using the DP/Flex option. My flex was my pitcher. In the 4th inning I pulled my pitcher (flex) and replaced her with a player from the bench, a legal substitute. I then moved my right fielder to 3rd base and my 3rd base player to shortstop. The DP then played right field and the original shortstop then came out on defense BUT retained her batting privileges. The batting order DID NOT change, just the flex player on defense and players moved fielding positions.

   Now: hitter-only. Abbot has not left the game.
2. Peterson DP (9) Enters game defensively in Right Field. Continues to bat.
3. Thurwachter Left Field (7) (7) No change
4. Otterson Center Field (8) (8) No change
5. Thompson Third Base (5) (6)Moved defensively to Shortstop
6. Smith First Base (3) (3) No change
7. Jones Catcher (2) (2) No change
8. Nelson Right Fielder (9) (5) Moved defensively to Third Base
9. Tao Second Base (4) (4) No change
10. Mayer Flex-Pitcher (1) (1) Mayer replaced by Murphy. Mayer has left the game.

Substitute: Murphy

ANSWER: (from John Peterson) As diagramed above,
3. There are still 9 defensive players.
4. The batting order has not changed.
5. The Flex position in the order is occupied by the pitcher (1). The starting pitcher was Mayer and she was replaced by Murphy. Straight substitution as permitted in Rule 3-3-5f. Mayer has left the game.
6. The DP enters the game defensively and plays right field (9) as permitted in Rule 3-3-5e.
7. Former right fielder (9) moved to third base as covered in Rule 3-1-6. Defensive changes can be made at any time (subject to restriction of pitcher under 3-3-2 Note). This is not a substitution.
8. Former third base player (5) moved to shortstop as covered in Rule 3-1-6. Defensive changes can be made at any time (subject to restriction of pitcher under 3-3-2 Note). This is not a substitution.
9. Former shortstop is no longer playing defense but hitting only as permitted in Rule 3-3-5e.

All changes are legal. No violations.

QUESTION 2: We may have a allegedly (with no proof), a fan/parent calling plays and possibly pitches from the bleachers- is this a rule violation? Could we confront him about this? Or is this an 'in-house' issue and no different than fans yelling anything "throw home!" etc...

ANSWER: This can be quite a complex issue. First, you need to be certain the individual is "coaching" (calling pitches and/or plays). If they are indeed doing this, and the players are following their directions, the individual then could be considered a coach. If none of the players are paying any attention to them then I wouldn't worry about it. As you stated, they are similar to fans who yell all kinds of directions in the heat of the moment. Rule 2-59 now defines "Team Personnel" who must be "...located in the dugout,...". Having someone actually involved in coaching and not in the dugout raises the question of whether or not this individual has had contact with the athlete(s) out of season during the school year, which is not allowed. I would advise working with your administration to determine a course of action.

QUESTION 3: At a recent junior varsity game, the first baseman was a senior. Are there rules that would prohibit her from playing on the JV team?

ANSWER: This is either a local school or conference decision. WIAA rules would not prohibit her from playing at a sub varsity level.

QUESTION 4: Is there a penalty for throwing a bat after a hit goes into the field? One situation is the bat does not hit anyone. The second is: the bat is thrown back and hits the catcher?

ANSWER: Rule 3-6-3; "A team member shall not carelessly throw a bat."

PENALTY: "Team warning to coach and next offender on that team restricted to the dugout for remainder of the game."

Rule 3-6-16; "Team personnel shall not deliberately throw bats..."

PENALTY: "The umpire shall eject the offender from the game, unless the offense is judged to be of a minor nature. If minor, the umpire may warn the offender and eject if the offense is repeated." Umpires' judgment as to whether this was intentional. The rule does not distinguish between hitting someone or not.

4/28/14

Question 1: I was told by our conference commissioner that playing 5 inning double headers for softball was prohibited. When did this change?

Answer: Remains legal. There has not been any change. Please refer to page 29 of the Softball Season Regulations: "The number of innings for one or both games in a doubleheader maybe scheduled for five innings."

Question 2: Can you umpire a JV softball game with one umpire?

Answer: Please refer to page 28 of the Softball Season Regulations; "Two WIAA licensed officials (umpires) are required for all interscholastic competition." This is all levels (varsity, JV, & freshman).

Question 3: If you have a JV game and varsity game on the same night, does that count for two games if someone plays in both games?

Answer: Please refer to page 28 of the Softball Season Regulations; "A student may not participate in more than 26 games, but playing in
Question 4:  
Last night in a varsity softball game in the Big 8 Conf. both teams had players that had eye black extending down their cheeks in various patterns and a couple of players had several stripes of it. Are we to enforce the eye black like we do in football? I told them they could only have one stripe under their eyes. All complied, but indicated that other umpires had allowed it. What is correct?

Answer:  
There is currently no restriction on the use of eye black BUT, this is an example of a misuse of the product. Eye black is used to reduce glare not to be used as face paint. Coaches are strongly encouraged to monitor the use of eye black. The reason football has a rule is because players abused the use of eye black. Do we want another rule in softball?

Question 5:  
Can teams still use the international tie breaker for non conf games if decided before the game starts?

Answer:  
Please refer to the Softball Season Regulations, page 29; "The International Tie-breaker may be used, with prior agreement/announcement, for all regular season games (mutual agreement by both teams) and regular season tournaments (host decision).

Question 6:  
What about the 15 run mercy rule after 3 complete innings, is that allowed?

Answer:  
Please refer to the Softball Season Regulations, page 29; "By conference agreement or mutual agreement by both head coaches prior to the start of the game, a game may end after three innings if a team is 15 or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat (Rule 4-2-3).

Question 7:  
In pregame warm up (infield practice), can the team pitcher for the team that is taking infield be throwing warm up pitches from the mound to her catcher while the rest of the team is doing infield?

Answer:  
Yes, there are no WIAA or NFHS rules which prohibit this.

Question 8:  
Last night we had a game and the opposing coach would stand where the outfield grass and infield meet so that she could try and look into our pitcher’s glove as she took her grip and call out the pitches to her hitters based on the grip she was seeing. She was at least 15 feet out of the box at the time of the pitch and was calling out last names, numbers, etc…. I know it was coded message to her hitters as to what pitch was coming. I see in the rule book, 2-13, says that the coach is restricted to the coaches box prior to the release of the pitch. I cannot find what the penalty is for not following this rule. Could you please tell me the penalty and what rule number it is? My assumption is that it is a team warning and then restricted to dugout the second time.

Answer:  
From John Peterson: The rule references are 2-13 (page 19) and 3-6-13 (pages 37-38) and figure 1 on page 7. Figure 1 shows coaches box with three lines which restricts the coach from getting too close to home, too close to fair/foul line and too far past third. We are lucky to get lines but that is the area to which a coach is restricted until the pitch is released. For safety reasons, I would never enforce the line that restricts coach from standing further away from the plate than third base, provided he/she is not closer to fair/foul line than 8 feet.

I agree the coach should be warned. Any further violation would result in restriction to bench. If assistant takes over, he/she should be reminded that a warning has already been given, so they would be restricted to bench on first violation. I am not aware of any rule that requires a coach (or player) to occupy the coaches box(es), so if all coaches are restricted to bench the box(es) could be empty.

Question 9:  
The pitch is called a strike and the umpire gives the count verbally "one ball, two strikes". Without explanation, the batter walks to and enters the dugout. What is the ruling? What can be done to manage this situation?

Answer:  
I would give the benefit of the doubt to the batter. The batter is not out for leaving the field of play. Call the batter back to the plate and re-announce the count.

Question 10:  
When the pitcher touches their mouth then the ball, the rule book says the call an "immediate illegal pitch". What is the signal? How is this rule applied? How is call different if she has not yet stopped on the pitching plate? If time is out?

Answer:  
The signal for an illegal pitch is a "Delayed dead ball". When a delayed dead ball is called the batter is awarded a ball and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out. (Page 48-49 PENALTY). Please reference the NFHS Case Book, 6.2.2, sit. B, RULING: "Any time F1 licks the fingers on her pitching hand, she shall wipe them before touching the ball, otherwise an illegal pitch shall be called. The umpire shall declare the ball dead immediately." In that Case Book play the pitcher is not ready to pitch and the ruling is to call ball dead immediately and enforce illegal pitch penalty.

Question 11:  
The FLEX player is listed correctly on the lineup card in the ten spot as the pitcher. In the top of the first inning (or at any other time during the game), the DP reaches base. Once the DP has safely reached base, the FLEX (pitcher) is substituted in for the DP and then a courtesy runner is brought in to run. Legal? Does it matter that the FLEX (pitcher) is not the one to reach base, and how might this affect the use of a courtesy runner?

Answer:  
From John Peterson: Not legal. Per Rule 8-9-8 (Courtesy Runner, page 71, which states: "The pitcher or catcher must bat and reach base legally (or earn their way on base) in order to be eligible for a courtesy runner." Since the DP is not playing defense when she earns her way on base she is neither the pitcher or the catcher and is thus not eligible for courtesy runner. However, had the visiting coach reported at the pre-game meeting that the DP was going into pitch or catch she is, per Rule 9-9-2, the pitcher of record and once on base IS eligible for a courtesy runner. The DP/pitcher must face at least one batter (one pitch) in bottom of first. If she does not, the courtesy runner becomes substitute and DP/pitcher must re-enter.

Question 12:  
The FLEX player is listed on the lineup card at 1st base. Knowing that the DP can play in the field for anyone other than the FLEX and it does not count as a substitution, can the DP start the game as the pitcher although not listed on the lineup card as the pitcher? And, when the DP reaches base, can a courtesy runner be used for her if she was pitching in the half inning prior to her at bat? In other words, is the courtesy runner being used for the P position, or the person pitching at that time even if they are not listed on the lineup card as the pitcher?
Question 2: From John Peterson: Complex question. Answers: Yes, DP can start the game as pitcher. Yes, courtesy runner can be used after top of 1st since she has actually pitched. Courtesy runner is running for player who is either pitcher or catcher.

First, as described above, the DP can enter defensively and pitch. This can happen anytime during and after the pre-game meeting. If that happens the FLEX has left the game and must re-enter.

Second, since the DP was entered into the game defensively, courtesy runner is allowed. In top of 1st inning only, she must then pitch to a batter in the bottom of the 1st.

Third, the courtesy runner is running for the player who is the pitcher or catcher. As rule states, after the top of the first it is the player who last played at that position.

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Third, the courtesy runner is running for the player who is the pitcher or catcher. As rule states, after the top of the first it is the player who last played at that position.

-5/10/13

*Please note that the WIAA has received questions regarding confusion between NFHS pitching rules and ASA rules. The following are the NFHS rules which appear to be in question: 6-1-1 "Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher’s plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24 inch length of the pitcher's plate."

CLARIFICATION: NFHS rules do not require both feet to be on the pitcher’s plate. 6-1-2b “Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.”

CLARIFICATION: If the hands have not been brought together, the pitcher may take a step backward with the non-pivot foot.

*Information was sent to all athletic directors several weeks ago regarding the ability to make-up games once the WIAA Tournament series has started. Please see the following from the WIAA Softball Season Regulations:

“No game may be scheduled (but a game may be rescheduled if postponed) after either of the schools involved has begun WIAA tournament series competition.”

*Each year questions arise regarding scrimmages. Scrimmages may be played at any time, even after the WIAA Tournament series has begun. A scrimmage does not have to be scheduled prior to the start of the tournament. Schools receiving a bye in the tournament may use their scrimmage if they have one remaining.

*RefRanking situation: The umpire’s name is not listed for our game. SOLUTION: In order to access the Rank All Officials link, you have to select a season from the drop down menu. The link does not become active until you tell it what season you want. Once the season is selected, if the official is not on your schedule, scroll down and the Rank All Official link will be at the bottom of your schedule. The list is alphabetical by last name and includes everyone in the state. If you want to rank someone click the “Pick Event” link in the far right column and you will be taken to their rank page.

Question 1: Runner on third is off with the pitch and stops 15 to 20 feet off the bag. Catcher throws it back quickly to the pitcher in the circle while the runner is still off the base. The runner at third makes a fake towards the plate with a couple of short steps and then took two shuffle steps backwards towards third stopped, still 15 to 20 feet from third. The pitcher looks away and the runner broke for the plate. The pitcher throws to home with and errant throw, the catcher has no play. My understanding of the rule was that when the runner at third made the fake towards the plate she committed to go because the ball was already in the circle. And because she did go to home she was open for a play, which was mishandled by the defensive team. If she would have returned to third at that time she should have been declared out because of the move toward home committed her to go to home. Since she went to home I did not call her out. Should I have called her out for the fake to home or sent her back to third because of the shuffle steps to third. Or is there another ruling I am not considering at this point?

Answer: From John Peterson: The Runner is out under Rule 8-7, Look-Back rule. Once the pitcher has the ball and is standing inside the circle (both feet on within the lines), the runner(s) must immediately return to their base or advance to next base. Only caveat is that if the batter has become a batter-runner the Look-Back rule is not in effect until the batter-runner touches first base. I assume in the play below, the batter had not become a batter-runner and therefore the runner should be called out. If the batter in this play was batter-runner then the runner can do anything they want as far as stopping, running, dancing etc. See Case Book 8.7.1 Situations A and C on page 65.

Question 2: At a recent game the host school was playing music over the loud speakers both between innings and between batters that I, as the plate umpire, could not communicate with the coaches when they were making line-up changes. Do I have the authority to ask that the music be turned off or down?

Answer: Yes. NFHS Rule 10-2-2 gives the plate umpire authority over any rules matters not specifically mentioned in the rule book.

Question 3: I out in the top of the 7th inning with runners on first and second. The next batter hit a pop up to our second baseman and she was clearly under the ball and the infield fly rule was called. The batter is out and the runners advance at their own risk. Our second baseman caught the pop up and threw the ball to second to our shortstop, who was clearly on the bag. The throw beat the runner and it should have been a double play and then we are out of the inning. Instead the base umpire first said that the runner needs to be tagged on the infield fly rule. When the runner was not tagged he called her safe. I questioned the call that she doesn't need to tag her and that the ball beat her to the base and it should be a double play. The umpire then changes his mind and says that the shortstop straddled the bag and didn't touch the base. What is the correct call on this play?

Answer: From John Peterson: The coach is correct regarding the rule on infield fly. The definition is under Rule 2-30. Also under Rule 8-2-9. Case book has plays under both these rules. Situation B on page 15 is similar to his play. In this play the ball is live. The batter is out which removes any possible force play on the runners. It does not remove the possibility of an appeal that a runner failed to retouch a base after the fly ball is caught or left her base early. In these cases the runner can be tagged out (if off her
base) or put out by touching the base she left early. This is one example of a "live ball appeal" under Rule 2, Section 1, Article 3a, page 14. It is possible that the umpire was thinking that since the force was removed the runner on first was safe when the shortstop touched second. He didn't realize it was an appeal of R1 who left second early. My thinking is supported by the umpire's comment that a runner had to be tagged on an infield fly, which is correct under the rule. Since the force is removed, runners who attempt to advance have to be tagged. However, to repeat, runners who leave early on a caught infield fly can be called out if they do not retouch the base or leave early. This could have and should have been corrected when the coach came out to question the call. It is unfortunate that the two umps did not confer to get this call right.

Question 4: Our game was suspended due to rain in the third inning. We will be making up this game. Do we need to start over?
Answer: Please refer to the Softball Season Regulations; “If the game is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension...”

Question 5: I was wondering if you would be able to clarify PRACTICING eligibility with a travel team during the WIAA Softball season.
Q: Are Varsity, JV, or Freshman players allowed to PRACTICE during the WIAA softball season with their summer travel team? Q: Are Varsity, JV or Freshman coaches allowed to coach a PRACTICE during the WIAA Softball season with their summer travel team? I understand fully that they are in no shape or form allowed to play in any scrimmages or games during that time.
Answer: Athletes may practice with non-school teams during their high school season. If a high school coach also is the coach of a summer team and has the same athletes on that summer team, it would appear that they could be practicing for 7 straight days. This is not allowed per WIAA rules. I always encourage summer team coaches to communicate with the athletic director and high school coach regarding their practiced plans. We have received reports from parents that their daughter(s) who are pitchers have suffered from overuse injuries when trying to accommodate both their high school and summer team's practices. Please communicate and use caution.

Question 6: Runner on 3rd, and batter walks, goes right past 1st and onto 2nd. Ruling? Legal?
Answer: Legal. Rule 8-7-4; “Responsibilities of batter-runner after completing a turn at bat...including a base on balls...” 8-7-4a; “A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop, but then must immediately, without stopping, return to first or attempt to advance to second base.”

Question 7: I am the Conference Commissioner of the XYZ Conference and have been asked by one of my schools to confirm if a new bat they recently purchased has been added to the approved list for their use so they are not taking a bat out of play that is considered legal. One of my umpires did remove it from a recent game until the determination could be made. The coach was very polite, professional and understanding of the situation and after the game contacted myself for confirmation. They recently purchased a Demarini CF5 wtdxclp 2333-13 33”/23oz bat that they listed on the Demarini approved list of bats, but when reviewing the ASA approved bat list testing they do not see it listed there. They are thinking the ASA approved list may have been put out before the testing was done and certification issued on this specific model at a later date, hence why it may be missing the required stamping. Can you please let me know if this has been approved for use at the High School Level? I will then follow up with the Athletic Director (copied on note) to pass along the message to his coach so we can help avoid any future issues. I am under the impression that without the stamping the bat unfortunately cannot be used as NFHS uses the ASA restrictions as far as bats go.
Answer: A bat without the ASA seal will not be allowed for use in a high school game. There appear to be several models with the CF5 model number in the second column on the ASA approved list. Does the bat have a "name"? Several bats have the model number and then some type of name (Hope, Insane, Black). I would advise that they contact the vendor the bat was purchased from. Whoever indicated that the bat was legal for use in either ASA or NFHS games was incorrect.

Question 8: A situation that happened the other night. They had a sub up to bat that didn't report, we realized it and brought it to the attention of the plate umpire. The girl had a 1 and 1 count on her. The umpire said she wasn't out because she didn't become a runner yet and if we would've waited for her to get on base then she would've been called out. They let the girl she was subbing for come back in and hit with her 1 and 1 count. By my reading of the rules she should've been out as soon as she was in the batters box and the pitcher took her place on the rubber. Please comment.
Answer: Rule 3-6-7, page 37, Penalty: "The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game."

Question 9: Is gorilla gold legal for pitching and batting purposes?
Answer: Yes, per NFHS interpretation.

Please note: The WIAA has received reports that there may be confusion regarding the new NFHS Rule 8-1-2, Penalty 1. Comments from John Peterson regarding this rule: The rationale for the rule change was to remove judgment by umpire that the batter "tried to avoid getting hit" by the pitch when the ball is entirely in the batter's box. The judgment regarding whether a batter obviously tried to get hit has always been in the book but now it applies only when the ball is not entirely in the batter's box. It can still be sticky judgment call. My criteria regarding "obviously" is when batter moves into path of pitched ball. It could also include a batter who holds her arm still on a change up hoping to get hit. It wouldn't apply when a batter is attempting to get out of the way. Lastly, a batter is awarded first only when the pitch is out of the strike zone or not swung at. I have had one example of batter who moved into a pitch that was outside of the strike zone, so I awarded a dead ball - ball and kept her at bat. With a dead-ball strike the batter also remains at bat unless it is strike three.
QUESTION 1: We had a softball game suspended due to rain. We were the home team and XXXX was the away team. It was the top of the 3rd inning with 2 outs, they had already scored 4 runs in the 3rd inning when play was halted. We are going to complete that game when we play at their place Tuesday evening. My understanding of the suspended game is we pick up the game where we left it...but my question is this...shouldn't the game be backed up to start the top of the 3rd over? It is an unfair advantage for XXXX to have scored those runs in rain conditions that we did not get to bat in.

ANSWER: This is a suspended game. Please refer to the WIAA Softball Season Regulations, page 29; “If the game is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension.”

QUESTION 2: R1 & R2 on first and second with no one out. B1 bunts a hard bunt to F3. She fielded the ball cleanly. The throw to first was late and B1 was safe. The first baseman threw the ball to the pitcher who was in the 16’ circle. Here is where it gets interesting. B1 thought she was out and left the base, walking five to six feet towards the first base dugout, when the coach (in the third base box) hollered out, “You are safe, get back on the bag.” No throw was made, batter returned to first, and no call was made. Discussing after the game, with the ball in the circle, the runner left the bag. No attempt to advance was made. Looking further, if this was a ‘designed play’ to draw a throw and the R2 scores from third from the advance, the offense has gained an advantage. What would the call be?

ANSWER: Determining if these were a “designed” play cannot be a part of the ruling. Provided the runner has not entered deadball territory, she would not be considered to have abandoned the base (8-6-19). Therefore the defense takes the risk if they choose to throw to first to attempt a play on the runner.

QUESTION 3: Our home field has a grass infield, but is fully fenced in with the fence at 230’. Is it considered a legal field?

ANSWER: While not preferred, a grass in-field is legal. You would not be able to host a sectional championship on this field though (per WIAA Softball Season Regulations, page 32).

QUESTION 4: I have a FLEX and a DP in my starting lineup with the DP batting in the 8th spot. Later in the game can I enter my FLEX into the lineup and then have my DP play the field for the person that the FLEX now bats for in the lineup? So my FLEX now bats 7th in the lineup and my DP who still bats 8th now goes into play left field. And my left fielder is out.

ANSWER: Illegal. Rule 3-3-6g: “Placing the FLEX into one of the first nine positions for someone other than the DP’s position is considered an illegal substitution.”

QUESTION 5: Last week we had a team with a DP in the 7th batting spot, batting for the pitcher who was the FLEX in the 10th spot on the card. In the 3rd inning the DP walked and went to first. The coach then entered the FLEX (the pitcher) for the DP at first, which is OK, but then he entered a courtesy runner for the pitcher (the FLEX). He said he could do this. I don't think this is correct.

ANSWER: From John Peterson: Illegal. Rule 8-9-2: “The pitcher or catcher must bat and reach base legally (or earn their way on base) in order to be eligible for a courtesy runner.”

QUESTION 6: My daughter plays softball at the high school level. She also plays on a summer travel team. We know that she cannot play or scrimmage with the travel team until her high school season is over. The question I have is, can she go to the scrimmage not to play but to support the girls playing who are not in high school? Should she just stay away completely so that there isn’t even a question about a rule violation? She really wants to be a good teammate but she also wants to stay true to her high school teammates and not cause any trouble for them. Thanks for your time and help with this gray area.

ANSWER: I would recommend that your daughter speak with her coach to let him/her know that she plans on attending the club team scrimmage but will be there only to watch. Make sure that your daughter understands that she cannot participate, even if the club team is short of players. This has happened a few times with the result that the player has lost their eligibility.

QUESTION 7: Team A is going to play a double header. Team A’s coach fills out a lineup card for both of the games to be played. He mistakenly hands the lineup card for the second game of the double header to the umpire but had given Team B’s scorekeeper the correct lineup for the game that was about to begin. In the top of the first inning, A-3 bats to lead off the game and doubles. She moves to third base on a sacrifice bunt. After the sacrifice bunt play is over Team B’s scorekeeper points out that A-3 batted in the leadoff spot but is listed as the #3 batter on her lineup card she was given. According to that lineup card Player A-3 is due to bat next but she’s standing safe at third. Team B appeals batting out of order after the second batter in the order was put out. Now what?

Additional information: The second batter, who sacrificed #3 to third, is correct batter in second slot. Before the next batter comes to the plate, the error is detected and coaches and umpires meet to discuss.

ANSWER: From John Peterson: #3 was out of order but second batter completed her turn at bat and since she was the correct second batter there is no penalty to Team A. The correct batter should be the batter who follows #3 on the lineup card submitted to the umpire. Thereafter, Team A follows that lineup card submitted to the umpire.

QUESTION 8: In our game on Saturday, the other team's pitcher was charged with an illegal pitch. We had a runner on first base. The umpires said that the runner did not get second base on the illegal pitch, although they did call a ball on the batter. I don't think that is correct unless I missed a rule change. Please let me know if I'm mistaken.

ANSWER: Incorrect call. Rule 6-1-1 PENALTY: "The batter is awarded a ball and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out.”

QUESTION 9: In the softball Case Book, Situation 3.3.1 says that a team warning to the head coach shall be made for any additional subs to be added to the sub list or for a player number change and the coach restricted to the dugout on the second addition/change. Our question is what is the penalty if the head coach adds multiple subs and/or number changes? If for TWO additional name changes, is the head coach restricted to the dugout, and if for three additional changes, is he/she ejected? Does the penalty pertain to the number of changes made per occurrence or to the number of occurrences made (ex: two changes in the 3rd inning for a warning and another change in the 5th inning for his/her restriction to the dugout)?
ANSWER: From John Peterson: Please refer to Case Book situation, 3.1.3, page 18 that covers this situation. The rule was written to cover each occurrence rather than each violation. Thus, coach could have several errors on lineup card with only one penalty at the time the errors are brought to the attention of the plate umpire. If after the correction another violation is discovered later, then the coach's penalty is moved to the second step (Rule 3-1-3 penalty). First step is warning, second is restricted to bench and third would be ejection (per Rule 3-6-20).

QUESTION 10: I know we can play rescheduled games after the tournament series begins. I don't think our fields will be ready for our invitational on Saturday. Can we reschedule the invitational for Saturday, May 18? And, if any of the teams from the original field can't come that day, could we fill the field with another team or teams?

ANSWER: The invitational can be rescheduled for a date after the tournament has begun. Only the teams originally scheduled to attend can play in the rescheduled tournament. You aren’t allowed to add teams since only games on their original schedule can be rescheduled once the WIAA Tournament begins.

QUESTION 11: Last season, we twice had the same situation come up in a game and we had two different interpretations. A slapper in the box makes contact with the ball on a bunt. After making contact (a bunt) the momentum of the batter carries the batter 2-4 feet in front of home plate where the defensive players are waiting to field the ball. The ball is fielded by the third baseman, but the runner has made contact with the first baseman who is in the field of play and 3-4 feet away from the baseline. The first time the runner was called out, and the second time the runner was awarded first base. What is the correct call? When the runner was called out she was called out for being outside the base line or running lane. When the runner was awarded first base it was called obstruction.

ANSWER: From John Peterson: The running lane from home plate to first base begins 30 feet from home plate. There is no restriction on a batter running to first until she reaches the running lane. Rule 8-2-5, page 61 covers running lane. A batter-runner who does not run in the running lane is liable to be called out if she interferes with a throw. The case book covers this situation under 8-2-5 Situations A, B, C & D (pages 51-52). Rule 8-4-3b (page 63) covers Obstruction. Runner is entitled to advance when "a fielder not in possession of the ball and not making an initial play on a batted ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases (bolding added)." Obstruction is delayed dead ball and the ball remains alive until and when the batter-runner is thrown or tagged out before reaching first base. Then a dead ball is called and the obstruction enforced. Thus, ruling should be: obstruction on F3, award batter first base if she is thrown or tagged out. The batter-runner could only be called out if she interfered with F3 who is making an initial play on the batted ball.

QUESTION 12: I have not been able to access the Non-Approved Bat List on the WIAA web site. Please advise.

ANSWER: You must be logged in to the WIAA website. The link, http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp, takes you to the ASA page. On this page you’ll see a box that says BATS and a red button that says GO. Click on the GO button. This takes you to the page with the lists of approved and non-approved bats.

QUESTION 13: I didn't think teams could agree to 5-inning doubleheaders, international tie-breaker, and/or time limits at the varsity level. Please advise.

ANSWER: Please refer to the WIAA Softball Season Regulations, page 29: National Federation Allowed Adaptations, letter f. “The International Tie-breaker may be used, with prior agreement/announcement, for all regular season games...” and letter h. “The number of innings for one or both games in a doubleheader may be scheduled for five innings.”

5/11/12

Question 1 I was umpiring a game last night in XYZ and the pitcher came out to pitch the second game wearing an orange hooded sweatshirt, that had a legal size number on the back. The rest of the team were wearing regular legal black jerseys. In this case would rule 3-2 art. 1 apply, "Uniforms of team members shall be of the same color and style”? XYZ’s team colors are orange and black. Legal or illegal?

Answer Please refer to the Case Book, page 19, 3.2.1; “In (a), a player asks to wear a jacket over her uniform while running the bases. RULING: Legal in (a). The same interpretation would be applied to a school color sweatshirt.

Question 2 Last night we had a player who received a cut on her finger while running the bases. When the 3rd out occurred she was still on 3rd base and needed a little more time to make sure the injury was not serious and to stop the bleeding before entering the game. We replaced her with a legal substitute. I thought that if a player is injured, specifically to stop bleeding it did not count against her toward her second re-entry. She was able to finish the game but we were told if she left the game again she could not re-enter. Is blood time, (wrestling term) not in consideration for a substitution or does it count as a regular substitution?

Answer Rule 3-3 (substitution) does not include any special consideration for injuries. The umpire was correct in his ruling regarding the second re-entry.

Question 3 Question for softball regarding a runner and their lead on first base. We had a situation where we had a runner on 3rd base with 2 outs and the batter walked. The batter (runner) rounded first took 4 steps and stopped. The pitcher was not yet in the circle. The runner at 1st placed her hands on her knees and stood there. The pitcher kept walking to the pitchers circle but was not there. She ignored the runner. The field umpire then called the runner out for making an attempt towards 2nd and then returning to 1st base. When I asked he said putting her hands on her knees was an implied move to 2nd so when she went back to 1st he called her out. Personally, I don't see how this possibly could have been called. Their was no attempt by the runner, throw or movement by the pitcher, or anything else involved. The umpire then told me between innings its only the 2nd time in 15 years he ever made that call. I am thinking he shouldn't have made it at all. I understand the movement or attempt if its made but my runners are taught not to do that as they will probably steal on the next pitch anyway.
From John Peterson: “Umpire error. Rule 8-7-1, Look-back rule will be in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle (2-45: both feet within or partially within circle).”

Question 4
I have a runner on 1B and pinch hit for my pitcher. On 2-1 pitch, the runner attempts to steal 2nd base and is thrown out for the 3rd out. My question is since the batter would start the next inning with a fresh 0-0 count, did her at bat count as an entry the previous inning or could I have my pitcher back up to bat without having considered her even being out of the game and we will still have the ability to sub for her and reenter her in the game or would the above situation count as a substitution and reentry.

Answer
From John Peterson: “Rule 3-3-3, page 32. A substitute is in the game when the substitution is recorded by the plate umpire. If not announced, a substitute has entered the game when the ball is live and a batter takes her place in the batter's box and the umpire declares the ball live. Thus, in Situation 2, the substitute was in the game and if the pitcher is re-entered into the game the substitute has had one entry. Since a substitute can reenter, this player could have been used to hit for the pitcher (same spot in the batting order) in a later inning.

Question 5
I have a situation that needs to be resolved. It happened on May 8 at the ABC vs XYZ Varsity softball game. Bottom of 6th inning, two outs, runner on 3rd, score Iola 3, Bonduel 2. Lightning is spotted, teams are asked to go off field, time 5:45 pm, while waiting, more lightning, rain starts falling lightly, still waiting, heavier rain comes down, field is considered unplayable. Question: Is game suspended at point of interruption? Or is game done? Score of game before 6th inning was XYZ 2, ABC 1. XYZ did score in top of 6th making it 3-1, of course ABC scores 1 run in bottom of 6th before the weather changes things. Rule books were opened and after checking with Wisconsin adaptations. No one was sure what the ruling should be, coaches agreed to wait and see what officially has to be done. Just want to make sure.

Answer
Please refer to Rule 4-2-2; "If a game ends because of weather conditions, or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire it is a regulation game provided: a) five full innings have been played; or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns. b) play has gone beyond five full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team, in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent’s score, in which case, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.” In your game, the score would be recorded from the end of the 5th inning and be considered a complete game. XYZ 2, ABC 1.

Question 6
In a recent game, two runs scored but as our team was celebrating the umpire took the ball from the catcher and ruled our first runner out for failing to touch home plate. That was the third out and ended the game. I thought the defensive team had to appeal a missed base?

Answer
The umpire does not have the authority to rule on missed bases without an appeal from the defensive team. Please refer to Rule 2-1-2; "Types of Appeals: a) Missing a base, either advancing or returning.” Also, 2-1-9; "Plate and Missed Tag. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is then made by tagging either the runner or home plate, the umpire should then make a decision on this appeal play." There are also references to this situation in the Umpires Manual.

5/4/12

Question 1
In the bottom of the 5th, #13 the starter reached base. #3 then pinch ran for #13. This was announced to the umpire and also to myself, both of us made the corrections on the line up cards. After the inning I was not told of #13 re-entering the ball game, nor was my assistant. In the bottom of 7 with 2 outs I noticed #13 was now batting. In my scorebook I obviously had #3 as the correct hitter. The girl got a hit and tied the game. I went out in a calm manner and asked to speak with both coaches myself, both of us made the corrections on the line up cards. After the inning I was not told of #13 re-entering the game when the ball is live and a batter takes her place in the batter's box and the umpire declares the ball live. Thus, in Situation 2, the substitute was in the game and if the pitcher is re-entered into the game the substitute has had one entry. Since a substitute can reenter, this player could have been used to hit for the pitcher (same spot in the batting order) in a later inning.

Answer
From John Peterson: “Rule 3-3-3, page 32. A substitute is in the game when the substitution is recorded by the plate umpire. If not announced, a substitute has entered the game when the ball is live and a batter takes her place in the batter's box and the umpire declares the ball live. Thus, in Situation 2, the substitute was in the game and if the pitcher is re-entered into the game the substitute has had one entry. Since a substitute can reenter, this player could have been used to hit for the pitcher (same spot in the batting order) in a later inning.

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Question 3
Is Gorilla Grip allowed?

Answer
From the NFHS staff: “Yes, Gorilla Grip is legal and should remain in the back pocket or on the pitcher's person. It also comes in the form of a wristband the players can wear. (6-2-2)”
Question 4  Teams are starting to use the wristbands designed for use by football quarterbacks to reference their plays. Are these legal in softball? Concerns about the amount of time being spent by the defensive players referencing the called play.
Answer  From the NFHS staff: “It would be allowed as long as it is not distracting to the batter.

Question 5  In a recent game, an umpire declared over half our team’s gloves illegal. This is the glove:

![Glove Image]

Answer  Legal. Is not in violation of Rule 1-4-1c; “…marking that gives the appearance of the ball.”

Question 6  In a game the other night the assistant coach had her iPad on the field while coaching first base. In our umpire association meetings they emphasized that electronics could not be on the field or in the dugout so I asked that she keep it off the field. After the game I did some further investigation and in the softball case book it says that if used strictly for keeping statistics they can be used but if used for coaching or recording they cannot be used. As an umpire how are we to know when an iPad is being used to keep statistics and when it is used for coaching and it would be easy to be keeping statistics and then record a player pitching or batting. There is also a gray area to say you are using it for statistics such as keeping hitting charts on the opposing team and then using those statistics for coaching purposes.

So when is an iPad allowed and when is it not allowed?

Answer  You have the correct reference: Case Book, 3.6.10, sit. B; “The umpire notices that the coach, while in the coach’s box is using a) a palm pilot for recording statistics. RULING: Legal in a). Materials/devices used for scoring purposes are permissible.” I would suspect that if a coach is using his/her ipad to film it would be apparent to most everyone there. During the pre-game meeting remind coaches that if they are using some type of electronic device (ipad) while in the dugout or coaching box, its to be used to keep statistics only. There is not an expectation that umpires need to constantly monitor coaches to keep them from using these devices to coach.

4/30/12

Question 1: Could you tell me which rule covers the following? Trying to figure out the number of bases to award. Runner on first pitched ball gets away from the catcher and goes into dead ball territory before the runner gets to second and as the runner gets to second. Is this rule 5-1-g3 because the dead ball area is a fence door to the team bench area?
Answer: Please refer to Rule 8-4-3c page 64 “(FP) a wild pitch or passed ball lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.” Penalty: The ball is dead and all runners are awarded one base only.” Refer also to the Dead Ball Table; 1 base from the time of the pitch.

Question 2: Per efforts to use speed-up rules in games, is it required to run for catchers when there are two outs? I thought there was something in the preseason video and documentation that this rule was being used to emphasize keeping games moving. However, I checked both Softball and Baseball rule books and they only state that courtesy runners may be used for pitcher and catcher as part of adopted speed-up rules.
Please clarify this for me for both baseball and softball and this one is probably a good one to add. I know a lot of travel leagues and 14 and under leagues do use this rule so that catchers can get back and get ready to catch the next half-inning.
Answer: There is not a requirement that catchers have a courtesy runner in softball. It was not a part of this year’s video presentation and I am not aware of any discussion at the national or state level for instituting this requirement.

Question 3: The opposing pitcher at our game last night on every pitch would step on the rubber with both hands on the ball, take her sign and then pitch. I waited to after the 1/2 inning and addressed the issue with the home plate umpire who then wanted me to share my concern with the base umpire, which I did. The next inning the pitcher continued as before. I asked the base umpire about it and he said he couldn't see it and referred me to the home umpire. Between innings I asked the plate umpire about the pitch and he said he would address the issue with the opposing coach, which he did. It was his opinion that the pitcher's procedure did not give her an advantage and he wouldn't call an illegal pitch. Subsequently, the pitcher did correct her pitch most of the time. Occasionally, she would fall back into her incorrect habit and nothing was called. At no time did the umpire tell me that her procedure was not illegal, just that it didn't give her an advantage. Knowing that there were a lot of other more pressing issues in the game, I didn't make an enormous issue of the pitcher's procedure; I only mentioned it when walking off the field between innings and dropped the subject when it was apparent that the illegal pitch would not be called.
Answer: Rule 6-1-1a; “Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position...and with the hands separated.” You have correctly identified the issue. Nowhere in the NFHS or WIAA rules does it state that illegal pitching should be ignored if, in the umpire’s opinion, “no advantage is gained”.

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4/30/12
Question 4: Is there a rule in SB for a batter throwing their bat after contact is made with the ball. It is not done on purpose, but by accident. After the swing, contact, and before running the bat flies out of the batters hand.

Answer: Rule 3-6-3; “A team member shall not carelessly throw a bat.” PENALTY: “The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.”

See also, Rule 3-6-16; “Team personnel shall not deliberately throw bats, helmets or any other piece of equipment.” “PENALTY: The umpire shall eject the offender from the game, unless the offense is judged to be of a minor nature. If minor, the umpire may warn the offender and eject if the offense is repeated.” Also, Case Book 3.6.16, sit. B; “RULING: b) The umpire will warn the team for a carelessly thrown bat, and if the act is repeated, any subsequent offenders on that team will be restricted to the bench/dugout for the duration of the game.”

Question 5: In a recent softball game a player was involved in a collision at first base. The home team had a licensed athletic trainer on site and she evaluated the player for symptoms of a concussion. The LAT declared her eligible to return to play. Who exactly is allowed to clear players for return to play?

Answer: Rule 3-3-9; “Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion…shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.” The WIAA accepts either a physician or a Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT) as an appropriate health-care professional.

Question 6: I have a player on my team who just got a sub-dermal implant. Is this allowed? What if she screws a stud onto the implant?

Answer: The sub-dermal implant is legal since it is contained beneath the skin with no exposed surfaces. By adding a stud, it would be in violation of Rule 3-2-13.

Question 7: I attended a softball game and during the game the pitcher for the varsity team got on base. The varsity coach called over to the junior varsity coach to send a player over to pinch run for the pitcher. Is this legal?

Answer: There are three components involved in this situation:
1. Is the JV player’s name on the line-up card? Rule 3-1-3
2. Is the JV player attired the same as the varsity players? Rule 3-2-1
3. Is the JV player adhering to the individual participation limitations? WIAA Softball Season Regulations, page 48; “A student may not participate in more than 18 individual games and two multi-game dates. Playing in one inning of a game does not count toward the maximum number of games.”

If the player complies with these three components there would not be any violation.

Question 8: If a pitcher is wearing a mouth guard, when she removes it would she be required to wipe her fingers prior to touching the ball, the same as licking her fingers?


Question 9: When is a game forfeited for a team being late? Is there a difference between a team just not arriving at the game site with no advanced information that they may be running late or a situation where the team bus has a mechanical problem that will result in the team being 30-45 minutes late?

Answer: Rule 4-3-1 gives authority to the umpire to forfeit a game if a team is “late in appearing or in beginning play after the umpire calls “Play Ball”. I would advise that if a team has made contact that they have been delayed, no forfeit should be awarded. If no prior contact has been made every effort still should be made to accommodate the late team since the goal is to play the game.

Question 10: When a team is on the field for pre-game warm-up, is it permissible for the pitcher to stand on the pitcher's plate and pitch balls to the catcher who then practices throwing out base runners?

Answer: During warm-up pitchers do not have any prohibition regarding pitching. The situation you have described is legal. When you can’t find a prohibition in the rule book or WIAA Softball Season Regulations it would be legal.
Question 11: When one team is on the field for pre-game warm-up, it is permissible for the other team to have players standing parallel to the third base line or first base line (about 3 feet from the line) watching their opponent warm-up?
Answer: The following language is from the Softball Season Regulations. When one team is taking the field for warm-ups, the other team should not be on the field.

Pre-game warm-up schedule is being recommended for regular season games and is required for the WIAA Tournament Series, with the exception of the actual State Championship games.

35 minutes prior to the start of the game, the home team takes the field. 20 minutes prior to the start of the game the visiting team takes the field. 5 minutes prior, the pregame meeting is held and the field is prepped for play. The field is defined as the entire enclosed field (live ball area).

The language above would prohibit the situation you have described.

4/18/12

Question 1: Tonight I had a question from a coach about bats. Here is the question; he recently ordered new bats for his team and the bat company asked if he wanted them rolled. He of course read the rules where it says this was illegal. His question was: What is rolling of a bat and why would a company ask him if he wanted his new bats rolled if it is illegal?
Answer: Rolling a bat is a method of breaking in the bat to create more exit speed of the ball off of the bat. A machine is used to "roll" the bat, thereby making the wall of the bat barrel thinner.

You are correct that this is illegal. Its a very expensive process and greatly shortens the life of the bat. So if you are paying $250 for a bat and then have it rolled you may be investing $500 for a bat that won't last long.

Question 2: Is it permissible for a pitcher on varsity to receive pitching lessons from an outside source (college coach, or “pro”) during the season?
Answer: Please see the following from the WIAA Rules At A Glance:

D. NONSCHOOL PARTICIPATION
Rules indicate athletes may not participate in nonschool competition during the school season, in the same respective sport. WIAA rules do not prevent athletes from practicing with non-school teams or from receiving private skills instruction during the school season. However, they may not participate in any nonschool competitions or races, including scrimmages, against other teams. This restriction applies to normal nonschool games as well as “gimmicks,” such as reduced numbers competition (3-on-3 basketball, 6 player soccer, etc.), specific skill contests (punt, pass, and kick, shooting contests e.g., free throws, 3 point), fun runs (including “banditing”), etc. Additionally, a student who was a member of a school team during the previous year may not delay reporting for the school team beyond the school's official opening day of practice in order to continue nonschool training or competition. (RE – Art. VI)

Keep in mind that this individual may not coach the athlete during an actual high school game.

Question 3: I had a question come up with the recent cool spring weather. Can a player legally have a hand warmer in her back pocket? I'm thinking of the kind I'd take hunting for my kids to keep their hands warm. Is the ruling any different if the player is a pitcher?
Answer: Legal. I am not aware of any prohibition against a hand warmer.

Question 4: In a recent game, the defensive coach asked for an intentional walk to be issued to the batter. The umpires allowed this to happen without any pitches being thrown. I didn’t think this was legal in fast pitch.
Answer: Illegal. The coach and umpires were reading NFHS Rule 2-63-2 Intentional Walk (Base on balls) (S.P). S.P. stands for slow pitch. It is not a fast pitch rule.

The slow pitch rules are included throughout the NFHS Rule Book and are marked with S.P.

Question 5: I was covering a softball game last night. With a runner on first and two outs, a batter swung at a third strike in the dirt. The ball got past the catcher, both runners advanced and were safe. After the play, the umpire called the batter out because first base was occupied and ended the inning.

I'm not familiar with softball rules, but in baseball with two outs, I'm pretty sure the batter can run to first base even if it is occupied. If the bases are loaded, for instance, the catcher can just step on home plate for the force out.

Answer: Incorrect call. Rule 8-1-1; ‘The batter becomes a batter-runner with the right to attempt to score by advancing to first...when: Rule 8-1-1b; “The catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch, or anytime there are two outs.”

Question 6: Pitcher had a glove with white on it. Is it legal? Not just the laces, some of the panels were white.
Answer: Please reference the NFHS Case Book, 1.4.1, sit. B. I would interpret your situation similar to this one. If the glove in question has white panels, along with brown (you didn’t indicate) it would be legal as per Rule 1-4-1a & b. Now that only optic yellow balls may be used the reference to “distracting” would no longer apply.

Question 7: Situation: 1 out, runner on first. Batter lined foul and ball was caught by first baseman (out #2) in foul territory. Runner had begun to advance on the hit, but attempted to return to first base. The first baseman stepped on the orange half of first base while the runner began to slide. The first baseman also tried to tag the runner but failed to do so before the runner returned to the white half of first base. The field umpire ruled safe. The fielding team coach appealed the play, and I ruled runner was out (#3) and inning over because the fielder contacted the orange half of the bag before the runner returned to the white half.

Answer: Correct call. Rule 8-10-3 and Case Book 8.10.2 Regarding the appeal (from John Peterson); It is not strictly an appeal play, but covered under Rule 10-1-4 page 78, “If there is reasonable doubt about some decision being in conflict with the rules, the coach or captain may ask that the correct ruling be made.” However, proper mechanics for this situation is provided in the next sentence, "The umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision."
Thus, the umpires should have conferred and the calling umpire should have reversed his/her call.

Question 8:  Is "Gorilla Grip" allowed?
Answer:  Yes, there is no prohibition with the exception of the pitcher; Rule 6-2-2.

Question 9:  I’m a coach. Am I allowed to use an app on my smart phone (RightViewPro) from the dugout?
Answer:  Prohibited. Rule 3-6-11: “Electronic communication devices, television monitors and/or replay equipment shall not be used for coaching purposes during the course of the game.”

Question 10:  Two runners round third, one immediately behind the other. The first runner slides at home and is tagged out. The second runner, in an effort to avoid the first runner who is still lying on the base line, slides towards the inside and swipes the plate with her hand. Would the second runner be out for going out of the baseline?
Answer:  Please refer to Rule 2-3-2. “A base runner who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession shall be declared out.”

Question 11:  In a game we had last Friday, a batter laid down a bunt in fair territory. She dropped the bat and went to first. The bat was lying in fair ground, and the bunted ball ended up rolling into the bat. The umpires said that because the bat was lying still, and the ball moved into the bat, it was still a live ball, and no out was recorded. When I looked at Rule 7-4-13, I got the impression that anytime the ball hits the bat a second time, whether intentional or not, in fair territory, the runner should have been called out.
Answer:  In NFHS rules, 7-4-13, only the bat moving into the ball is covered. So the ruling by the umpires was correct. If contact is made in fair territory, it’s a live ball. In foul territory, a foul ball.

Question 12:  We have an assistant coach whose responsibility is to work with pitchers and catchers as well as keep the book on game days. In our game at XXXXX last evening, she has done as she always has...sit between our dugout and home plate, but outside the fence. As well as keep the book from here, she also relays signals to our catcher (again not from immediately behind the plate, but down the line adjacent to our dugout). In the 5th inning, the opposing coach drew this to the attention of the home plate official who then issued us a warning and said this was an illegal activity. Is this true as we move forward in the season, especially since we will definitely see the same home plate official again? Or are we allowed to have this staff member outside the fence giving signals to our catcher if she is not immediately behind the plate?
Answer:  The ruling is correct. Please refer to Rule 3-6-6; "Only the batter, runner, on-deck batter, coaches in the coach’s box, bat/ball shaggers or one of the nine players on defense are permitted to be out side the designated dugout/bench or designated warm-up areas. Also, in the Case Book: 3.6.6, sit. A, B, and D all have similar situations. In this situation, the umpire should have asked the head coach if the scorekeeper was also coaching (in this case sending the signals in). If so, the scorekeeper/coach would need to move to the dugout. No warning would be issued unless the scorekeeper/coach or other dugout personnel were out of the dugout. If the scorekeeper were simply keeping score, they would not be required to adhere to Rule 3-6-6. This is important to note, as occasionally parents, non-school pitching coaches, and others have been observed signaling or coaching from the stands, backstop area, and fences. All coaches and all coaching must be from the dugout or the coach’s boxes when the team is on offense.

Question 13:  Our new jerseys have a manufacturer’s logo on the sleeve. It’s the legal size. At the bottom of the jersey on the tail there’s another logo, like a tag from the store that we bought the jerseys from. Is it legal to have two logos?
Answer:  Not allowed. Rule 3-2-3; “…may bear only a single manufacturer’s logo/trademark/reference that does not exceed 2 ¼ square inches…” In this case, keep the jersey tail tucked in!

Question 14:  While working a game recently I asked the coach for their bat list. He just looked at me. Aren’t coaches supposed to have the bat list?
Answer:  The Softball Season Regulations, State Association Regulations state: “Both head coaches and the umpires are responsible for being in possession of a current non-approved bat list from the ASA website. The link to this website is:
http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp You’ll find both the approved and non-approved lists here.

Question 15:  At a game recently, the umpires had checked our bats and approved them but when one of my players stepped to the plate the opposing coach yelled that she was using an illegal bat. The game came to a halt while the umpires rechecked the bat. It turns out that the Louisville Slugger FPC305 Catalyst (-8), which is illegal, looks very similar to the Louisville Slugger FPC305 Catalyst (-10), which is legal. Any suggestions on how to avoid this type of situation?
Answer:  Make sure you have the illegal bat list with the colored pictures of the bats and show this to the umpires when they are checking your bats, in particular your legal Louisville Slugger. Coaches are reminded that yelling across the diamond is not an accepted way of communicating a question to the umpire.

Question 16:  I have encouraged our pitchers to use both the "windmill" and "slingshot" deliveries against a hitter, with the intention of disrupting the hitter's timing. I would give the umpires a "heads up" about that prior to the game, so that they wouldn’t be caught off-guard and also to avoid any potential controversy during the game. A few umpires have told me that would be an "illegal pitch", since the pitcher must use the same delivery to the hitter during an at-bat.
Answer:  Rule 6-1-2 does not list this as an illegal pitch.

5/3/11

Question 1:  Can the flex run for the DP when the DP reaches base? Is it a charged substitution?
Answer:  Please refer to the NFHS Case Book, page 25, 3.3.6, sit. E. *Team A is using 10 players in its lineup, with the DP Jones batting third. FLEX Smith is playing right field and is a very fast runner. In the first, third, and sixth innings, DP Jones gets to base and,
in each case, the FLEX Smith is put in to run. Is this legal?"  RULING: "It is legal for the defensive position player (FLEX) to do this since she never left the game. However, it would be illegal for the starting DP-Jones to return to bat in the sixth inning. This is a violation of the re-entry rule.

Question 2: I did a varsity softball game and the home school coach gave me three new balls for the game. In the top of the first inning the first ball and a second had been put in play, but not the third. Between the top and bottom of the inning I asked my partner if I had to require the pitcher of the visiting team to throw the unused ball. He didn't know so I gave the pitcher the choice of which ball to use from the two that had been put in play. Should I have taken the third ball from the coach and did I handle the balls correctly with the pitcher?

Answer: Please refer to Rule 6-5-1; "The pitcher has a choice of balls at the start of each half inning unless both balls do not get put into play. In that case, the pitcher in the bottom of the first inning must throw the unused ball. Thereafter, the ball in play should be returned to the 16 foot circle after every half inning." You might also refer to the Case Book, 6.5.1.

Question 3: Since the flex can bat for the DP, could she have been an unreported sub for the DP and then just batted out of order? Then the next legal batter should have been whoever followed the DP. Warning for an unreported sub and the DP has left the game. All other rules for batting out of order apply.

Answer: Please refer to the NFHS Case Book, page 25, 3.3.6, Sit. D.

Question 4: Last night at our JV game, we had a ball hit down the third base line that rolled into foul territory and well past the level of the temporary fence (the fence ended at the foul line) but stayed in the field of play. After the ball had rolled past the level of the fence, my LF threw her hands up (the ball continued to roll 25-30 further). The plate umpire did not rule a ground rule double, but allowed the runner to score. When I came out to ask, the base umpire believed it should be a ground rule double, stating that the temporary outfield fence line is extended. The plate umpire said it was a live ball and the HR stood. Should there be an extension of the temporary fence if it ends at the foul line? To me, it doesn't seem right that a ball hit fair to CF can be stopped by a fence, but a fair ball down a baseline could roll forever.

Answer: This should have been discussed as a “ground rule” during the pre-game conference. I believe the correct call would have been a ground rule double.

Question 5: We had a case in our game last night that I would like clarified. When we have a runner on third and a batter walks we sometimes have the batter that walked go on to second. Last night our opponent threw the ball to first base which made our player stop at the base. Since the pitcher or catcher made a play on our player can our player still go on to second after the ball is thrown back to the pitcher?

Answer: Rule 8-7-3; "Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, she will be declared out if she leaves the base" covers this situation. For additional clarification from John Peterson; if the defense throws to 1st or other infielder when batter walks, then the Look Back Rule is not in effect. Thus, the runners are not obligated to stay on the base and can leave at risk of being tagged out. If the runner on first in this play left the bag as the ball is thrown back to the pitcher (leaves the bag before the pitcher catches the throw) and the pitcher is within the circle, then that is legal and the runner can advance to second at the risk of being tagged out. The runner at third can also leave the bag prior to pitcher catching the throw in the circle. Assuming this happens, the runner(s) can stop once and then "immediately" advance or return (Rule 8-7-2, page 68). The base umpire would watch the runner at first and the plate umpire the runner at third to be sure they comply with requirements of the Look Back Rule. Look Back Rule is only in effect when pitcher has the ball within the circle. The complicating factor is what the pitcher does if the runners leave the base illegally. If she "makes a play" (including a fake throw) then the runners are released from Look Back Rule requirements. The play or fake throw creates unregulated situation where anything can happen. I have not seen any clarification from NFHS giving us guidance on when, in this situation, the Look Back Rule is again in effect. Can runners dance off base endlessly once pitcher fakes a throw? My interpretation is to reinstate the rule once no play is obvious, i.e. pitcher stops any action and runners have had time to react to her activity. Historically, in plays like these I have seen runner go one way or the other or pitcher actually throws the ball to a fielder.

Question 6: I received a question regarding the legality of bat warming bags. I wasn't familiar with this item and found that it involves using a microwave hot pack which is slid inside the warming bag. I know we've talked about bat warmers in the dugouts being illegal. Does the prohibition extend to these bags as well?

Answer: From Mary Struckoff, NFHS office; "...all bat warmers are currently prohibited in softball. The NFHS rules committee will review this rule when they meet in June."

Question 7: Runners on first and third with two outs. The batter has two balls two strikes, the pitch is made, the batter swings strike three, but the ball gets away from the catcher, the batter stands there, the runner that's on third crosses home plate on the passed ball and the batter takes off to first and gets thrown out. The run should not count correct?

Answer: Correct. Rule 9-1-1, Exception; "A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made as follows: A. by the batter-runner before touching first base”

Question 8: We are on defense with two outs and a runner on second base, first base is empty. Girl hits a ground ball we make the play and are out of the inning...Not...catcher hits batters bat with glove (runner not trying to advance on pitch and no delayed dead ball obstruction signal) So umpire, as he should, puts the runner on first for catcher interference (obstruction). I asked for time and very politely asked him to put runner back on second. He said no she gets third. Am I wrong? Rule book, page 58, Rule 8-1-1d Effect #3 Case Book Pages 38-39 5.1.2 Comment and 5.1.2 SITUATION A.

Answer: You are correct; Rule 8-1-1d. EFFECTS: 1. Delayed dead-ball. 2. At the end of action, offensive coach has option of play or obstruction penalty. If coach takes result of play, batter is out and runner stays at third (I am assuming R1 advanced on play to first. If R1 did not advance to third, then coach should choose obstruction penalty). 3. Obstruction penalty: Batter awarded first. Runner on second remains at second.
Question 9:
First and third situation where we were on the bases stealing second got too far off third on cut off play by the shortstop...third base was pulled in by fake bunt and took the throw from short only she was about four feet down the line straddling the line. The third basemen was straddling the line with no ball in possession. When I questioned the plate umpire about obstruction he stated she has the right to make a play on the ball. I explained that she must be in possession of the ball to be in the baseline and he told me again she has the right to make a play. We have been encountering a great deal of the obstruction no calls where the defender is up the line without the ball.

Answer:
1. Rule 2-36. This would be a judgment call by the umpire although, it appears that most likely obstruction would be the call. I always tell coaches that I will not comment on judgment calls unless I was actually there. Whether or not fielder is "on the line" is not a determining factor in obstruction. It is when "a fielder not in possession of the ball or not making an initial play on a batted ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases." Rule 8-4-3b. A runner may be 3 feet off the line going to home or retreating to third and she may able to pass a fielder on the line without being obstructed.

Question 10:
Are protests of games allowed?

Answer:
Please refer to page 28 of the Senior High Handbook; "The right of a school administrator to protest shall include decisions of game officials, related to errors in application of game rules, but protests a) will not be allowed in Association tournament competition as pertaining to decisions of game officials, b) must be called to the attention of the Association office no later than the following day (not including Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays), c) cannot be honored if they involve judgment situations, d) will not result in replaying or repeating any game, meet match, event, or race or any portion of any game, match match, event, or race and e) cannot supersede or bypass procedures for questioning officials outlined in the official rule book of a sport."
4/14/11

Question 1:  Our team currently has both varsity and junior varsity teams. Due to injuries we only are able to field 18 total players for both teams. Can we get a waiver to allow us to continue to field both teams?
Answer:  Yes. Please refer to the Softball Season Regulations, page 28; "In emergency situations a waiver may be requested. With written approval from the WIAA and the conference, schools with 18 or fewer players, attempting to provide two levels of competition may allow an individual players(s) to participate in a maximum of three innings in any one game without counting toward this game maximum." Requests should be from the athletic director and sent to Tom Shafranski at the WIAA.
tshafranski@wiaawi.org

Question 2:  I have a question about pitching. We went to the UW-Stout clinic and they talked about the no step back rule. The rule book states on page 47 Art. 2 any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. Just looking for some clarification to the step back rule-I assume that this is the case.
Answer:  Yes, you are correct that the NFHS Rule Book states; "Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together."

Question 3:  I had a quick question for you, was in a discussion today regarding 8th graders playing WIAA sanctioned sports with high schoolers. Basically my question was is an 8th grader allowed to play for a high school team?
Answer:  From the Senior High Handbook (page 35); "A student is eligible...if he/she is...carried on the attendance rolls as...Grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 student in that member school." Eighth graders are not eligible to compete on senior high school teams.

Question 4:  Our recent softball game was stopped because the game, after completion of the third inning, had reached a 15 run difference. I tried to relay that this must either be a conference ruling or mutually agreed upon by the coaches prior to the start of the game but the umpire stated it was a rule.
Answer:  You are correct. Please refer to the Wisconsin Adaptations for softball which can be found on the Official's, School Center and in the Season Regulations; "By conference agreement or mutual agreement by both head coaches prior to the start of the game, a game may end after three innings if a team is 15 or more runs behind and has completed it turn at bat (Rule 4-2-3)."

Question 5:  Could you please clarify an infield fly ruling? Runners are on first and second with one out. A fly ball of moderate height is hit to the second base side of the second baseman and deep enough that the second baseman turns her back to home plate, turns toward the outfield and runs to catch the ball. She does not get to it, does not get a glove on it, but it lands on the dirt. Is this situation considered infield fly? I was under the impression that it had to be a playable ball that the fielders could not make a decision to not catch a ball in an effort to attempt a double play. This was quite clearly not the case as all runners advanced without a play on them. Any information and clarification would be greatly appreciated.
Answer:  As is the case with many softball situations, its difficult to give an exact answer. The situation you describe requires an interpretation or judgment of the umpires that were officiating the game. Since I was not present it would be unprofessional of me to state whether the correct call was made or not. Rule 2-30 states; "Infield fly rule is, when declared by the umpire, a fair fly that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort..." This gives the umpires the ability to determine whether, in their opinion, the fly ball should be called an infield fly or not.
Question 6: During the course of the game one of my players illegally batted (she was the flex). She recorded the first out of the inning, the next batter reached base. When the third batter of the inning stepped into the batter’s box the opposing coach questioned the flex batting. The umpire then called the batter now on first out as a penalty. This doesn’t seem to be the correct ruling.

Answer: From John Peterson: Please refer to Rule 3-3-6g, page 33. "placing the FLEX into one of the first nine positions for someone other than the DP's position is considered an illegal substitution (emphasis added). The illegal substitute shall be removed from the game and restricted to the dugout/bench. See Rule 2-57-3 and 3-4 for additional penalties." 2-57-3, page 27 is definition and includes FLEX who enters the game in the wrong position in the batting order. 3-4, (page 34-35) covers this situation with penalty.

*Illegal offensive players may be discovered:
  a. When in the batter's box, the ball is live and/or before the batter-runner reaches first base, or is put out and before a pitch is delivered to the next batter of either team (emphasis added).*

Since the illegal batter was not discovered before a pitch to the next batter, there is no penalty.

Had the defensive team coach appealed the illegal batter before the next pitch, then the penalty would have been:
1. Illegal player (FLEX) is out and restricted to the dugout/bench.
2. The lead-off batter, who should have batted has lost her turn at bat and Batter #2 in the order would bat with one out.

Case book (page 25) has several plays:
Situation F. Discovered at bat - penalty imposed
Situation G. Flex bats for player other than DP, Ruling states Illegal batter. The Flex can only bat in the DP batting position. The FLEX-B. Smith is called out IF at bat or on base, disqualified and replaced with a legal substitute. (3-4-1a;m 3-3-6g)
Situation H. Flex enters game as a runner. Same wording as above, The FLEX-B. Smith is called out IF at bat or on base, disqualified and replaced with a legal substitute. (3-4-1a;m 3-3-6g)

It is interesting to note that illegal players can be discovered after a pitch has been thrown causing them to be restricted to dugout/bench, but not in this situation because the FLEX, although illegal, wasn't in the batter's box or on base.

Question 7: Where can I find a list of legal and illegal bats?

Answer: Please access the main WIAA website (not the School Center). Go to “Sports”, select “Softball” from the pull down menu. Scroll down the left side to “Season Rules and Regulations” and click on “Non-approved bat list” which will take you to the ASA website.

Question 8: I recently worked a junior varsity game where the coaches told me during the pre-game meeting that they were going to use “free substitutions” or maybe bat 12 girls in an inning. I did not allow this. Was I correct?

Answer: There is nothing in the NFHS rules or WIAA adaptations which would allow free substitutions or batting 12 players in an inning. Doing so would mean this is not an actual game and that it has become a scrimmage.

Question 9: Here's a situation that confronted us at the start of a JV softball game last week -- one that I haven't seen addressed anywhere in the written materials or videos. The coach of the visiting team said his athletic director told him it would be a 5-inning game (apparently via an agreement with the host AD). Not so, the home team coach declared. She said it should be a full length game (it turned out to be a 10-run rule game in 5). Who has the authority to make this decision, the coach or the athletic director?

Answer: There is no such thing as a 5 inning game (per NFHS and WIAA rules) unless the game is scheduled as part of a double header. In the example you have given, neither the coaches nor the athletic directors have the authority to pre-determine this game will be 5 innings. The only other option is the possibility of using a time limit as per page 29 of the WIAA Softball Season Regulations. If this is a non-conference game, the athletic director of the host school who should have issued the contract would have the authority to determine a time limit game which would be indicated in the contract signed by the visiting school athletic director. If it is a conference game there should be a standard contract that all schools in the conference use or set standards for play that all schools in the conference adhere to. Umpires should be informed when they sign their contracts as well.