



May 9, 2022

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: With R1 on third base, R2 on second base and one out, B5 hits the ball off the end of the bat that dribbles down the first base line in fair territory. As B5 is running toward first base, F3 fields the ball and is attempting to tag B5 who retreats toward home to avoid the tag. The umpire calls a dead ball, ruling B5 out and placing R1 back on third base and R2 back on second base even though R1 had touched home plate prior to B5 stepping back toward home plate to avoid or delay the tag. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. A batter-runner stepping back is a dead ball ruling and all runners return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. If R1 had touched home prior to B5 stepping back their run would score on the play and R2 would be placed on the last base touched at the time of the interference. (8-2-5)

Situation 2: With R1 on third base, R2 on second base and two outs, B5 hits the ball off the end of the bat that dribbles down the first base line in fair territory. As B5 is running toward first base, F3 fields the ball and is attempting to tag B5 who retreats toward home to avoid the tag. The umpire calls a dead ball, calling B5 out and ruling that since R1 had touched home plate prior to B5 being called out that their run scores. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. A batter-runner stepping back is a dead ball ruling and all runners return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. Even though R1 had touched home plate prior to B5 being called out, their run would not score in this situation. This out recorded on B5 is the third out of the inning and a run will not score if the third out is made by a batter-runner before touching first base. (8-2-5, 9-1-1 EXCEPTION a)

Situation 3: With R1 on second base and R2 on first base and two outs, B5 hits a line drive to the fence. R1 misses third base on their way to scoring, R2 legally touches all bases on their way to scoring and B5 ends up safe at third base. When the ball is returned to F1, F5 requests and is granted time to properly appeal R1 missing third base. The umpires rule that R2's run scores since it happened prior to the appeal that resulted in the third out of the inning. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. No run shall score on a play where the third out of the inning is declared on an appeal play resulting in a force out. (9-1-1 EXCEPTION d)

Situation 4: With bases loaded and two outs, B6 hits a ground ball to F4 who attempts to tag R3 as they approach second base. R3 seeing F4 with the ball gets into a rundown between first and second base, allowing time for R1 and R2 to score. Finally, R3 is tagged with the ball one step from second base for the third out of the inning. The umpires rule that since R3 was tagged out this is a timing play and R1 and R2's runs count since they touched the plate prior to R3 being put out. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. R3 was forced to advance to second base when the batter became a batter-runner. This play is a force out regardless if R3 is tagged out or a fielder holds the ball while touching second base prior to R3 reaching second base. No run will score on a play where the third out of the inning is made by another runner being forced out. (2-24-1, 2-38-3, 9-1-1 EXCEPTION b)