



May 15, 2023

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: In the bottom of the fourth inning, B3 is due up to bat but B4 bats instead, reaching first base safely. B3 now comes to bat and draws a walk advancing R1(B4) to second base. With R1(B4) on second base and R2(B3) on first base B5 comes to the plate. Before a pitch legal or illegal, the defensive coach approaches the umpire about batting out of order. The umpire rules that B5 is out for not batting in their proper position, B3 is removed from the base and B4 is returned to first base. B6 is now the proper batter. **RULING:** Correct ruling. Once a pitch was thrown to B3 it legalized B4's time at bat making B5 the next proper batter. Since this appeal was made after B3 completed their turn at bat and prior to a pitch to the next batter. B5 is ruled out for failing to bat in their proper position, B3's time at bat is negated and they are removed from the base and any runners who were not declared out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. B6 is the next proper batter with 1 out and B4 on first base. (7-1-2 Penalties 1-5)

Situation 2: In the third inning, B7 is the proper batter but B8 bats instead reaching first base safely. B7 now comes to bat and reaches base safely advancing R1(B8) to third base. B9 now comes to bat and has a 1 ball 0 strike count when the defensive coach approaches the umpire about batting out of order. The umpire rules that the proper batter is B8, but since B8 is on base they will be skipped without penalty and B9 is now the proper batter and will continue their time at bat. **RULING:** Correct ruling. Since a pitch was thrown to B9 it legalized B7's at bat and B8 should be the next proper batter. When several players bat out of order before discovery and the proper batter's time at bat occurs while they are still on base, they remain on base and are not out as a batter. The next proper batter is the player who follows that batter, in this case B9. (7-1-2 Penalties 1-6)

Situation 3: With R1 on second base and no outs, B2 hits the ball to the fence. As R1 rounds third base they are accidentally tripped by F5. The umpire signals a delayed dead ball and verbalizes obstruction when R1 is tripped. With B2 two steps away from second base, the third base coach picks R1 up and they run home where they are tagged out on a very close play. The umpire rules that since R1 was obstructed the physical assistance by the coach is ignored and R1 is out on the tag at home. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. Since R1 was obstructed between third base and home plate, they cannot be called out between these two bases, with only six exceptions as listed in rule 8-4-3b Penalties 1, Exceptions. A runner being physically assisted is not one of the exceptions listed under this rule. However, since obstructed runners must legally run the bases, once the runner is physically assisted they are out by rule. When an obstructed runner is either put out or called out by rule and:

- a) Is still between the two bases where they were obstructed and has not violated a listed exception
- b) Or they have not yet reached the base they would have reached had there not been obstruction.

In both of the above cases, the ball becomes dead and the obstructed runner and all other runners affected by the obstruction are awarded the base or bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction. In this case, B2 would most likely be awarded second base and R1 would be awarded home or third base determined by umpire judgement of which base they would have reached had there been no obstruction. (5-1-3; 8-4-3b; 8-6-5)