



### **2017 MHSAA Softball Items & Reminders**

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1. Online rules meetings will launch on January 30 and will close on April 13. The head varsity coach **MUST** complete a rules meeting or the coach is prohibited from coaching at any level in the MHSAA tournament. Assistant varsity coaches and subvarsity coaches must also complete the rules meeting requirement, or have their Athletic Director attest to them doing so.
2. Bats: For the 2017 softball season, National Federation playing rules again require that all non-wood bats must display the **ASA** certification mark to be a legal bat and not appear on the USA/ASA “banned bat” list.
3. MHSAA tournament sites and groupings are posted on MHSAA.com.
4. Again in the 2017 season, umpires are still required to inspect bats and helmets prior to the game.
5. Health & Safety: Information regarding concussion protocols and heat & hydration policies can be found by [Clicking Here](#).
6. Umpires are required to collect, and coaches submit a lineup card to the plate umpire at the pre-game conference. Umpires must maintain a line card throughout the game and all substitutions, including CR must be reported to the plate umpire. If a DP/FLEX is used it must be on the lineup card properly at the time of the pre-game conference when lineups become official.
7. Again in 2017, the season maximum is 38 games for a team and individual during the regular season. The “point system” is no longer in use. A school may not schedule more than 38 regular season games. MHSAA Tournament games do not count toward the 38-game maximum.
8. **2017 MHSAA Tournament Dates**
  - Districts: May 30, June 2-3
  - Regionals: Saturday, June 10
  - Quarterfinals: Tuesday, June 13
  - Semifinals: Thursday & Friday, June 15-16 - Secchia Stadium, East Lansing
  - Finals: Saturday, June 17 - Secchia Stadium, East Lansing

## **2017 NFHS Softball Rules Changes**

**1-5-2c:** The taper is the transition area which connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. The taper shall have a conical shape. Language requiring the taper to be of a solid surface has been removed.

**Rationale:** This change brings the NFHS in line with other rules codes concerning the surface of the taper.

**3-2-1:** While uniforms of team members shall be of the same color and style, state associations permit players to participate while wearing a different style uniform for various reasons, including inclement weather.

**Rationale:** There may be circumstances in which state associations make accommodations relative to inclement weather, religious exceptions, or other situations.

**3-2-7:** Exposed undergarments, if worn, are considered part of the official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be a solid single color: black, white, gray or a school color.

a. For individual players, exposed upper-body undergarments do not have to be the same color as exposed lower-body undergarments.

b. For all team members, exposed upper-body undergarments shall be the same solid single color, and all exposed lower-body undergarments shall be the same solid single color.

c. Garments other than team uniforms such as arm sleeves, leg sleeves, and tights are permissible. Anything worn on the arm or leg is a sleeve, except a brace, and shall meet the color restrictions.

**Rationale:** Multi-color undergarments and sleeves are a distraction and create a possible safety concern. This rule establishes solid color requirements similar to other NFHS sport rules.

**3-2-15 NEW:** All equipment shall be inspected by the umpire, and is to be placed outside the dugout/bench prior to the start of the game.

**Rationale:** Placing all equipment in one location at one time is a more efficient method to conduct this inspection.

**3-6-7 PENALTY:** Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported. 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 for a second violation.

**Rationale:** Language clarifies when the coach is restricted to the dugout/bench.

## **2017 NFHS Major Editorial Changes**

6-2-2; 7-4-8 NOTE; 8-1-2; 8-2-4 EXCEPTION

## **2017 NFHS Point of Emphasis**

1. Pitching
2. Uniforms
3. DP/FLEX Simplified



# 2017 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

**Publisher's Note:** The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented.

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**CORRECTIONS:** 1-5-1d – Meet the 2004 ASA Bat Performance Standard, bear either the 2000 or 2004 certification mark (Figure 1-6) and not be listed on the USA Softball Non-approved bat List with ASA Certification Marks as found on [www.usasoftball.com](http://www.usasoftball.com).

3-2-7c – Garments other than team uniforms – such as arm sleeves, leg sleeves and tights – are permissible. Anything worn on the arm or leg is a sleeve, except a brace, and shall meet the color restrictions.

**SITUATION 1:** (a) In the first inning, Team A has a courtesy runner replace F1 on first base without notifying the plate umpire. Team B notifies the plate umpire that the runner was unreported. (b) Later, in the third inning S1 comes up to bat in place of B3 for Team A without being reported. Team B again notifies the plate umpire of the unreported substitute. (c) Again, in the sixth inning Team A has S2 take the position of F7 without informing the plate umpire. After a pitch to the first batter, Team B notifies the plate umpire that S2 is an unreported substitute. **RULING:** In (a), Team A would be given a team warning for the unreported courtesy runner. In (b), since this is the second violation of an unreported player, both S1 and Team A's head coach would be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. In (c), since this is a repeat violation of an unreported player participating in the game, both S2 and Team A's new head coach would be restricted to the dugout/bench area. (3-6-7 Penalty)

**SITUATION 2:** (a) F1 has a powdered rosin bag which she squeezes in her

hand then places back on the ground prior to stepping on the pitcher's plate. Once on the pitcher's plate she goes directly to the ball without wiping the drying agent from her hand. (b) F1 takes a comparable drying agent (Gorilla Gold) from her pocket and wipes her hand on it several times, then places the towel back into her pocket. Once on the pitcher's plate, she goes directly to the ball without wiping her hand. (c) F1 touches the dirt infield with her hand then steps onto the pitcher's plate and goes directly to the ball without wiping off her hand. (d) F1 picks up a hand full of dirt and rolls it around in her hand, then drops the dirt and steps onto the pitcher's plate and goes directly to the ball without wiping off her hand. (e) F1 picks up a handful of dirt and places it onto the ball rubbing the dirt into the ball. **RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b). The powdered rosin and the comparable drying agent are permitted based on their ability to not transfer to the ball. Wiping these substances off the hand prior to touching the ball is not necessary. Legal in (c) and (d). Dirt is not considered a foreign substance. Therefore, it is not necessary to wipe off the hand before going to the ball. Illegal in (e). Rubbing dirt onto the ball is considered defacing the ball and is not permitted. (6-2-2, 1-3-6)

**SITUATION 3:** (a) Team A has a batter who is wearing an optic yellow batting helmet. (b) Team B's catcher is wearing a helmet that is optic yellow and has the appearance of having been custom painted. **RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b), provided the helmets are not broken, cracked or dented, and comply with all other NFHS requirements. (1-6, 1-7)

**SITUATION 4:** (a) B1 hits the ball to F5 who fields the ball and throws to F3. B1 reaches first base prior to the throw, but misses first base stepping completely over the base. F3 catches the throw from F5 touching first base as B1 is two steps beyond first base. (b) R1 is on first base when B2 hits a fly ball past the outfielders. As R1 is advancing to third base, she misses second base. F8 retrieves the ball and throws it to F4 who is a couple of steps toward the outfield behind second base. The throw from F8 is high and F4 jumps to catch the ball landing on second base with possession of the ball. F4, seeing R1 trying to advance home, turns and throws the ball to F2. Should the umpire determine that the defense has made a valid appeal? **RULING:** In (a) and (b), these are not valid attempts to execute an appeal. The fielder's actions must be able to be recognized by the umpire as an effort to make an appeal, and/or the fielder must verbally inform the umpire she is executing an appeal. Since the fielder's actions were not interpreted as a request for an appeal and the player made no verbal request for the umpire to rule on an appeal, the umpire should not consider these appeal plays.

**SITUATION 5:** (a) With R1 on first base, B2 hits the ball to F5, who throws the ball to F4 at second base to retire R1. F4, seeing that B2 is already at first base, does not throw to F3. F3 is off first base and starts requesting the ball from F4. After having control of the ball, she touches first base and looks at the base umpire pointing at B2 and first base before B2 returns to first base. (b) On a base hit to the outfield, R1 misses second base on her way to third base. After the ball is returned to

the infield, R1 is on third base and B2 is on first base. F5 has the ball and is about to throw to F1 when F4 asks for the ball and touches second base while looking at the base umpire. Should the umpire determine that the defense has made a valid appeal? **RULING:** In (a) and (b), these are valid appeals. In these cases, the fielder's actions are easily recognized as a request for the umpire to rule on the appeal.

**SITUATION 6:** At the pregame conference Team A is using the DP/FLEX option, but when the umpire inspects the lineup, she finds that the FLEX has no defensive position listed and the DP is listed as F1. **RULING:** The plate umpire should not accept the lineup as it is not valid. All starting players must have a position listed. Since the main purpose of the DP position is to play offense, the DP's starting position is listed as DP and she must be listed in one of the top nine positions in the batting order. Since the main purpose of the FLEX position is to play defense, she must have a defensive position assigned in the starting lineup. She must be placed in the 10th position in the lineup and identified as the FLEX player, and have a starting defensive position. After the lineup has become official at the plate conference, Team A can then have its DP pitch for the FLEX, and in this case the FLEX will have left the game and have one re-entry.

**SITUATION 7:** With F2 in the position to receive the pitch and B1 in the batter's box ready for the pitch, F1 is standing behind the pitcher's plate and receives a sign from her coach in the dugout. She then steps onto the pitcher's plate, immediately bringing her hands together and then starts her pitch. The plate umpire calls "no pitch" ruling that F1 was trying to return the pitch too quickly (quick pitch). **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. The correct ruling is illegal pitch (6-1-1b). A no-pitch ruling (the ball is returned too quickly) requires the pitch to be legal, and the umpire judges that the pitcher attempted a quick return of the ball before the batter had taken a batting position, or was still off balance as a result of a previous pitch. (6-2-4b)

**SITUATION 8:** While standing behind the pitcher's plate, F1 looks at her coach who verbally says 356. F1 and F2 look at their wristbands, then F1 steps onto the pitcher's plate, looks at F2 and pauses, then brings her hands together and starts her pitch. (a) The plate umpire calls an illegal pitch because F1 did not nod at F2 indicating she had accepted a signal from F2. (b) The base umpire calls an illegal pitch as he was able to see that F2 did not give a signal to F1. **RULING:** Incorrect rulings in (a) and (b). By rule, F1 must simulate taking a signal from F2. To simulate taking a signal, F1 is only required to look at F2 and pause while on the pitcher's plate with her hands separated. (6-1-1b)

**SITUATION 9:** When the umpires arrive at the field, Team A's equipment is out in front of its dugout ready for inspection. (a) Team B's equipment is not out and ready for inspection. The umpires remind Team B's coach of the new rule requiring the team's equipment to be out of the dugout ready for inspection. (b) The crew returns to inspect Team A's equipment. When the inspection is complete, they notice Team B's equipment is still not out and ready for inspection. (c) Continuing their pregame inspections, the umpires walk the field looking for areas that may require special ground rules. After they complete their walk of the field, Team B's equipment is still not out of the dugout and ready for inspection. **RULING:** In (a), since there is no time requirement for teams to have its equipment ready for inspection, the umpires should alert any team that does not have its equipment outside of the dugout that they are ready to start inspecting equipment, without issuing a warning. The teams should then be given adequate time to comply. In (b), Team B's coach receives a warning for his team's equipment not being outside of the dugout and ready for inspection. In (c), since this is a second offense for not having the team's equipment ready for inspection, Team B's head coach is restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game. (3-2-15)