

Softball Rules Changes - 2018

By NFHS on November 01, 2017 *softball*

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2-65-2, 8-1-1c, 8-4-3a, 9-6-2: The coach, pitcher or catcher of the defensive team may request an intentional walk either before or during the pitch count. **Rationale:** This change to allow intentional walks was enacted to align fast pitch and slow pitch rules, to keep up with current trends of the sport, and also to maximize the flow of the game.

3-2-7c: Language was added to address the use and placement of the wristband playbook/play card and defines this item as a piece of equipment. It also addresses restrictions on color. **Rationale:** The wristband playbook/playcards are worn on the forearm and considered equipment, not a garment. Therefore, these items are not required to adhere to the color restrictions addressed in 3-2-7c.

3-2-15, 10-2-3a: This change removes the responsibility of the umpires to inspect equipment prior to the start of the game. Rule 4-1-2d already requires head coaches to verify that their players are legally and properly equipped. **Rationale:** The responsibility to verify that players are legally equipped rests with the coach and administration of the school. Rules 7-4-2 and 10-2-3l provide the authority to umpires to penalize for equipment violations.

3-7-1 NOTE, 6-2-5 NOTE 2: Added language provides umpires with the authority to allow a reasonable number of warm-up pitches to an incoming pitcher due to circumstances that require a pitcher to be removed by rule. **Rationale:** Currently there are no guidelines for warming up the incoming pitcher under these circumstances. The default number of pitches used by the umpires is 5 unless there is inclement weather. The note will give guidance to all parties involved.

6-1-2b: The pitcher may now step back with the non-pivot foot at any time prior to the start of the pitch. **Rationale:** This is a change to assist the developing pitcher.

Major Editorial Changes

3-6-12, 10-1-6: Language provides clarity and consistency for restriction of alcohol and tobacco use by participants and officials.

8-1-2: This change requires the batter to make an attempt to avoid being hit by a pitched ball in the area between the plate and the batter's box. This portion of the rule had been inadvertently omitted.

Points of Emphasis

- 1.Coaches responsibility to verify players are legally equipped
- 2.When batter must attempt to avoid being hit by a pitch
- 3.Courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or catcher