

6. Experimental Rule Results

A. Florida – 43-foot pitching distance. The statistics provided by Florida were reviewed.

7. Review Correspondence

The committee reviewed other various pieces of correspondence.

8. Review Summary of 2008 Questionnaire and Statistical Survey

The committee reviewed the softball questionnaire results and the softball statistics completed by member state associations.

9. Discussion/Voting of:

A. Proposed Rules Changes:

Prop.	Rule Reference	Proposed Rule Change	Passed	Failed	Discussed No Action
1	1-1-2b	(F.P.) The rear tip of home plate and the front edge of the pitcher’s plate shall be 40 feet <u>43 feet</u> for female fast pitch softball and 46 feet for male fast pitch softball. Rationale: As noted in the 2006-2008 FHSAA surveys, there is an overwhelming response to change the NFHS pitching distance rule to 43 feet. The rationale to support this rule change is centered on the following key factors: 1. Minimize the potential for injury 2. Level the playing field between offense and defense 3. Streamline with other rules codes (NCAA, ASA Gold, etc.) 4. Streamline with boys baseball which pitches at the same distance as NCAA & MLB.		X	
2	1-2-1	Requiring a double first base for all interscholastic contests.		X	
3	1-2-1 New	Requiring the use of break-away or releasable bases.		X	
4	1-3-3	Reducing the COR (coefficient of restitution) of fast-pitch softballs (current max is .47).		X	
5	1-3-3	Reducing the compression of fast-pitch softballs (current max is 375 lbs).		X	
6	1-3-3	Adding to the softball specifications a requirement that the dynamic stiffness of softballs not exceed 7,500 lbs/inch when tested under current proposed ASTM test methods. Effective January 1, 2010. Rationale: This standard will better control the use of multi “C.O.R.” softballs and should bring more consistency to the softball marketplace without lowering the current static compression of 375 lbs/inch. Please note, static compression and dynamic stiffness are completely different measurements, so these numbers should not be compared. Makes NFHS softball specifications consistent with ASA.	X		
7	1-6-3	Requiring adult and non-adult base coaches to wear protective head gear (currently, only non-adults are required to wear protective head gear).		X	
8	1-8-4	Prohibiting defensive player equipment (i.e., face/head		X	

		protection) to be discarded and requiring it to be worn throughout the entire half inning.			
9	2-8-2	Change the definition of a bunt attempt to: Any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn – pulled backward and away from the ball.	X		
10	3-5-2	Any member of the team at bat who has not been <u>restricted or ejected for unsporting behavior</u> may not occupy each coach’s box while that team is at bat. The person in the coach’s box may address base runners or the batter. Rationale: I believe if a person is put in the dugout for a form of unsporting behavior the penalty should be the same as if ejected.			X Editorial See below
11	6-1-1	Requiring the pitcher to start with two feet on the pitcher’s plate (currently, only one is required).		X	
12	6-1-4d and Note	The pitcher may use any windup desired provided she does not make more than one <u>and a half clockwise</u> revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the pitching arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip. NOTE: One revolution is interpreted as “not two revolutions,” provided the pitching arm is dropped to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion. Rationale: More and more pitchers are pushing the rule to the limit trying to gain an advantage by deceiving the batter. This also makes it very difficult for the consistent enforcement of the rule by the umpires when using two revolutions as the limit.	X		
13	6-2-3 Penalty	Change the penalty for a pitcher exceeding the required 20-second time limit to a ball awarded to the batter as follows: ART. 2...The pitcher shall not...judges to be distracting to the batter. PENALTY: (Art. 2, 3) An illegal pitch shall be called immediately. The batter is awarded a ball, and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out. ART. 3...Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch. <u>PENALTY: (Art. 3) The batter is awarded a ball.</u> Rationale: Separating the penalties for 6-2-2 and 6-2-3 makes a violation of the time to pitch by the pitcher consistent with Rule 7-3-1 which awards a strike on the batter for failure to be ready within 10 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher. It is consistent with the Case Book Ruling under Rule 6.2.3 and is consistent with the change to the NCAA rule book which clarifies that a violation of the time to pitch is a ball on the batter, not an illegal pitch.	X		

14	7-1-1	Each player of the team at bat shall become the batter and shall take her position within the batter’s box (on either side of home base) in the order in which her name <u>number</u> appears on the lineup card as delivered to the umpire and opposing team prior to the game. (4-1-2)		X	
15	7-1-2	After the 1 st inning the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name <u>number</u> follows that of the last batter who completed her time at bat the preceding inning. Rationale: Most coaches and scorekeepers don’t know the names of the players from the opposing team. When they are trying to determine if a player is the correct batter they use the number of the player listed. If the incorrect number is batting, they believe they are out of order. To be told that – no that is the right kid by name – but I wrote the wrong number down by their name doesn’t seem correct. Currently there is no penalty if a coach puts the wrong name with the wrong number. It would be much easier to keep track of players by using the correct number – not name when determining correct batting order.		X	
16	8-2-5 Pen	Arts 5 through 8 and runner(s) must return to last base touched. <u>ALL runner(s) must return to base occupied at time of pitch.</u> Rationale: Although this happens in very rare circumstances it can change the game completely. R1 on third, 1 out. Squeeze is on B2 bunts and interferes with throw to first. At the time of the interference R1 has touched home. As rule is now, the run will score even though B2 has committed an illegal act. If this were in the latter innings it would make a great impact on the game. I am aware in all other situations runner(s) are allowed to remain at the based they reached at the time of the interference. However, when the winning run may score it has a greater impact on the game.		X	

B. Proposed Editorial Changes

Prop	Rule Reference	Proposed Editorial Change	Passed	Failed	Discussed No Action
1	1-1-1	ART. 1... The softball field <u>shall be level</u> and contain an infield diamond and an outfield area that may or may not be enclosed by a fence. Rationale: Nowhere do we indicate the field shall be free of obstructions.	X		
2	1-1-9	ART. 9 . . . Any game started on a non-regulation facility shall not be protested for this reason. Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the pitching distance, or base distances <u>or batter’s boxes</u> are incorrect, the correction shall be made immediately. The game shall continue and shall not be protested for this reason.	X		

		Rationale: include batter’s boxes; wrong dimensions can affect pitching.			
3	1-3-3	Do we need to look at the weight and circumference of the ball to be more in line with ASA? ASA – At least 6.75 ounces and at least 12.0 inches NCAA – Same as NFHS Rationale: Manufacturers have asked us to look at our tolerances.		X	
4	1-3-6	ART. 6 . . . Any <u>defacing</u> , treatment or device that would change the ball specifications listed in 1-3-3 are prohibited and render the ball illegal. Rationale: Pitchers (players) are not permitted to deface the ball – if they do, it is taken out of play. Nowhere in our rule code is this practice mentioned.	X		
5	1-4-2	ART. 2 . . . Gloves/mitts may be a maximum of two colors unless judged by the umpire to be distracting. Glove lacing and manufacturer’s logo are not considered one of the two colors permitted. Glove lacing may be any color other than that of the ball. A glove/mitt worn by players that is entirely gray, white or optic in color is illegal. A gray, white or optic colored circle on the outside or inside of the glove/mitt that gives the appearance of a ball or is judged to be distracting by the umpire is illegal. <u>One American flag (2 inch x 3 inch maximum) is permitted on the glove.</u> Rational: More and more gloves have American Flags as part of the glove design; current rules would require that those colors be included in the two maximum.	X		
6	1-5-4 Exception New	ART. 4 . . . All bats shall meet the 2004 ASA Bat Performance Standard, bear either the 2000 or 2004 ASA certification mark, and not be on the ASA non-approved list as found on www.asasoftball.com. Exception: <u>Bats entirely made of wood are permitted and need not bear an ASA mark.</u> Rationale: Wooden bats meet the bat performance standards but no provision is mentioned in the rules book for their use.	X		
7	1-6	Do we need to put a maximum size/dimension for manufacturer’s logos on batting helmets?			X
8	1-6-1	ART. 1 . . . A batting helmet with a permanently affixed NOCSAE stamp and legible exterior warning label is mandatory for each batter, on-deck batter, players/students in the coach's boxes, runners and retired runners. The exterior warning label (<u>which includes both sides of the bill</u>) may be affixed to the helmet in either sticker form or embossed (at the point of manufacture). Rationale: We have been asked to define “exterior.”	X		
9	1-7-1	ART. 1 . . . The catcher shall wear a catcher's helmet and mask combination that meets the NOCSAE standard. The helmet shall bear the permanent NOCSAE seal. A throat	X		

		<p>protector that is part of or attached to the mask shall extend far enough to adequately protect the throat. An attached throat protector shall be commercially manufactured, properly attached, unaltered and worn properly. Plastic visors attached to the catcher's helmet are prohibited. <u>If an eye shield is worn attached to the catcher's helmet, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.</u></p> <p>Rationale: We need to include that an eye shield on a catcher's mask must not be tinted (as with batting helmets).</p>			
10	2-4-3	<p>ART. 3 . . . Banned Non-approved Bat. A bat that does not meet ASA specifications and has been placed on the current banned non-approved bat list (www.asasoftball.com).</p>	X		
10.1	2-11	<p>Add language from 10-1-4 Note to definition of a checked swing.</p>	X		
11	2-47-3	<p>ART. 3 . . . Initial Play. A fielder is considered to be making an initial play on a fair batted ball when she:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Has a reasonable chance to gain control of a ground ball that no other fielder (except the pitcher) has touched. Has a reasonable chance to catch the ball in flight after it touches another fielder. Fails to gain control of the batted ground ball and is within a step and a reach (in any direction) of the spot of the initial <u>play contact</u>. <p>Rationale: Divide into sub-articles for clarity. We also need to provide protection to a fielder that contacts a ball in flight and it is on the ground within a step and a reach of that player.</p>	X		
12	3-2-1	<p>ART. 1 . . . Uniforms of all team members should be of the same color and style. <u>State associations may on an individual basis permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons.</u></p>	X		
13	3-2-7	<p>ART. 7...Exposed undergarments, if worn, are considered part of the official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be in either school colors or colors of black, white, or gray or a solid school color.</p> <p>Rationale: By allowing multiple colors there could be many different combinations of designs of the undergarments that detract from a uniform look.</p>	X		
14	3-3-10	<p><u>A coach or athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has an amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the game until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition.</u> If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual does not have to leave the game. The</p>	X		

		length of time that is considered reasonable is umpire judgment. The re-entry rule would apply to players taken out of the game for this rule. If there is an excessive amount of blood on any part of the uniform, that part of the uniform shall be changed before that individual may participate. (See Communicable Disease Procedures) Rationale: Approved NFHS SMAC language for blood on the uniform in all sports.			
14.1	3-5-2	Any member of the team at bat who has not been <u>restricted</u> or ejected for unsporting behavior may not occupy each coach's box while that team is at bat. The person in the coach's box may address base runners or the batter. Rationale: I believe if a person is put in the dugout for a form of unsporting behavior the penalty should be the same as if ejected.	X		
15	4-3-1f	ART. 1 . . . A game shall be forfeited to the offended team by the umpire when a team: f. cannot provide 9 players (F. P.), 10 players (S.P.) or 11 players (S.P. if an EP is used) to start the game. Rationale: Some states consider this a "no contest" not a forfeit. Do we need to make any changes or add a Note?			X
16	Dead Ball Table	Add illegal slide (8-6-13) to table as new No. 30.	X		
17	6-2-3 7-3-1	ART. 3... Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher <u>to prepare for the next pitch</u> , she has 20 seconds to release the next pitch. ART. 1 . . . A batter shall not delay the game by failing to promptly take her position in the batter's box within 10 seconds <u>after the ball is returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch</u> , or by stepping out of the box when the pitcher is on the pitcher's plate. PENALTY: (Art. 1) If a pitcher is committed to delivering the pitch has brought the hands together, the batter leaves the box at the risk of having a strike called while being out of position. For failure of the batter to be ready within 10 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the umpire shall call a strike. If it is the third strike, the umpire shall call time and declare the batter out.	X		
18	8-6-5	ART. 5 . . . <u>Any offensive team member</u> , Anyone other than another runner, physically assists the runner while the ball is in play . Rationale: The intent of this rule is to penalize the offense, not the defense, for assisting a runner.	X		
19	8-9-1 thru 6 Penalty & 8-9-7	PENALTY: (Arts. 1 through 6) A player who violates the courtesy runner rule is an Illegal substitute as in 3-4. ART. 7 . . . A courtesy runner must be reported to the plate	X		

	Penalty	umpire. PENALTY: (Art. 7) If a courtesy runner fails to report, she is considered to be an Unreported substitute as in 3-3-4 and 3-6-7 Penalty. Rationale: As currently stated, penalties could be confused; should be separated.			
20	10-2-3a	a. conduct the pregame conference as in 4-1-2. Inspect equipment, including <u>batting and catcher's helmets</u> , bats, with a bat ring, inspect the condition of the field, define the dugout/bench areas, if necessary, designate the official scorekeeper (9-2-2). Rationale: Batting helmets are not included in what shall be inspected by the umpire.	X		
21	Signal E.	E. Strike/Out. Bring the hammer in to a 90 degree angle. Leave wording the same, just show a better hammer. Rationale: A better picture of the signal.	X		

C. Case Book/Interpretation Changes

The committee discussed interpretations of specific case situations.

D. Points of Emphasis

1. Pitching
2. Obstruction/interference
3. DP/FLEX

10. Subcommittee work

Committee members were divided into subcommittees and worked on their assigned duties.

11. Video clips needs

Committee members were asked to provide a potential list of video needs for the new officials education website.

12. 2009 Questionnaire

A. Part II Suggestions:

1. Is the DP/FLEX rule generally understood by coaches?
2. Is the DP/FLEX rule generally understood by umpires?
3. Has there been an increase in the number of teams using the DP/FLEX option?
4. Has there been an increase in illegal pitches occurring?
5. Are illegal pitches being called when they occur?

B. Part III Suggestions:

1. Are you in favor of moving the pitching distance to 43 feet for next season?
2. Are you in favor of moving the pitching distance to 43 feet in 2012?
3. Are you in favor of batting 10 players in a specified order and permitting any 9 of those players, at any time, to play defense?

13. 2009 Softball Meetings

- A. Rule Interpreters’ – Wednesday, January 21, 2009
- B. Rules Committee – June 8-10, 2009

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 11, 2008.