Ohio High School Athletic Association        Jerry Fick
Softball Interpreters Bulletin               Director of Officials Development – Softball
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• Reminder – coming up this week - the OHSAA will be holding its annual clinic for softball postseason umpires on Sunday, May 7. This year’s meeting will be at: Thomas Worthington High School - 300 W Granville Rd - Worthington, 43085-3527. Registration will be at 12 Noon with the clinic starting at 1230PM and ending by 4PM. While umpires being invited to this clinic are those working the three and/or four umpire systems in our tournaments, any of our umpires are welcome to attend. There is no charge and no pre-registration is necessary. Attendance at this clinic is optional. There is no OHSAA meeting attendance credit. We look forward to our usual good turnout of tournament officials. Please park in the stadium/student parking lot which is between the school (west end), pools, football stadium, and baseball field. We will start our meeting in Room 185 near the southeast corner of the school and later move to the auxiliary gym for the activity portion of the meeting. The auxiliary gym is located near our assigned parking area.

• Other Tournament News – There are a few things to remember as we prepare to enter tournament play. First, for tournament games our game ending procedures change and a game interrupted by weather is a suspended game. Games go seven innings, unless extra innings are needed, the ten run rule applies, or the teams mutually agree to end a game early. Also remember that the games can take on additional significance and at times people can be a little more excited. Be sure to check in with the site manager when you arrive at the site – know who that person is and if there are issues enlist the assistance of the manager as needed.

• Also for the tournament – many of our umpires will be work with new partners and in larger crews than normal. Arrive at the game site early and expand the pregame conference. This should happen regardless of crew size. While this is important it’s not the time to determine what mechanics we are going to use or not use and what deviations we will have. Review the mechanics and remember that we expect everyone to be working in accordance with our NFHS Mechanics (same as USA Softball). Thanks to everyone for their cooperation!

• More Tournament News - We will have some changes this year. First, our regional semifinals will be played as a doubleheader on Wednesday, May 24 - 2 and 5PM. Finals will be at Noon on Saturday, May 27. Second - Each four umpire crew assigned to work a state game will also be assigned as a four umpire crew for a regional game as well. This will allow that crew to work two weeks in a row as a crew of four with the umpires working the same positions each week. While twelve regional games will be worked by four umpire crews the remaining thirty-six regional games will continue to be worked by crews of three. By the way, this means that we
will have 156 (versus 144 in the past) umpires working regional games. This will make it very important that we are all on the same page with both three and four umpire mechanics and we will cover these at our tournament clinic. **Congratulations to everyone selected for OHSAA tournament contests at all levels.**

- **Reprinted from the last bulletin – Equipment/Jewelry - Question** - Is it permissible for a player to have a medical piercing or a medical earring in her ear if taped or not taped and she has a medical statement from her physician. I’m told that they are put there normally for chronic migraines. **Ruling** - No - not permitted under Rule 3-2-12. There are exceptions in this rule (medical alert and religious) that allow certain types of jewelry but this is not one of them. We should not be inventing additional exceptions. **This item caused some confusion as there sometimes are extenuating circumstances where the OHSAA may accommodate a student athlete who has some type of disability.** When this occurs the OHSAA issues a letter to the school detailing the permitted accommodation. These letters are signed by one of the commissioners and should always be honored by our umpires and member schools.

- **Question** - I have encountered several teams in our area having batting practice while the game is in progress. They either have a player lobbing a ball to a batter who hits into a net or the batter places a ball on a batting tee and hits into a net during the game. This takes place outside and behind the dugout. I have told them that rule 3-6-6 does not allow them to be outside the dugout/bench area during the game involved in this activity. One coach informed me that in 36 games this season I am the only umpire to object to this activity. **Ruling** - First, we have a rule that a school can only play 27 games and the penalty is that the school is ineligible for the tournament. You may have some fun with the coach on that one. Second, to take the question a little further we need to look at the definition of confines of the field (Rule 2-15). This includes the field, dugout/bench, and any enclosed or clearly marked area designated as a warm-up area that is adjacent to the field and within the view of the umpires. There is a great liability to everyone when players are permitted to warm up in areas that are reserved for or shared with spectators. This is the purpose of this rule. The keys are (1) It makes no difference what the warmup activities are - pitching, batting, fielding, running. (2) All these can only be done in any enclosed or clearly marked area designated as a warm-up area that is adjacent to the field and within the view of the umpires. The activity being done does not drive the situation - it is where it is being done.

- **Question** - If there is a play at 1B, say a grounder to the shortstop, and no throw pulls the first baseman off first, she must use the white bag for the put out, right? If she only puts her foot on the colored part of the bag, the batter-runner is safe? If the B-R is safe in that situation, what is the mechanic, especially if the throw beats the runner by several steps? Do we just hold off on the call until the B-R touches, then signal safe? Or do we call her out in our ordinary timing, and wait for an appeal by the offense? It seems to me that if we just hold off on the call until the B-R touches, we are signaling to the defense that they’ve touched the wrong base and giving them an advantage. It’s like the reverse situation where the B-R misses first but beats the throw, and we signal safe so as not to tip off the defense. **Ruling** - Under Rule 8-10-1 the defense must use the white portion in the play you describe. However this would not be an appeal play. We would handle the mechanic just as if the fielder did not touch the base at all. The umpire needs to wait until the runner arrives and then call safe. To explain the call you could then point and say something like "off the white base."
• Question – Can small children be permitted in the dugout? I’m concerned for their safety and Rule 2-17 says the dugout is reserved for team personnel. Also, it seems the kids rush out of the dugout, without helmets to pick up bats and balls. Ruling - Rule 2-59 defines team personnel as all school representatives and gives several examples. While it is conceivable that the school could consider these youngsters to be school representatives I doubt that the school would want to open up this liability to itself. Also if the youngster violates Rule 1-6-3 and enters the field it is a warning to the coach and the offender on the first offense with a subsequent violation resulting in neither one being permitted on the field.

• Question - Batter sets up in the front of the box. Batter takes her stride as the pitch is delivered. Batter gets hit in the front knee by a pitch, which is clearly going to be a ball, but the batters front foot was out of the front of the box due to her stride. Does the Batter gets first base or ball on the batter and batter stay at bat? Ruling - This batter would be awarded first base. Rule 8-1-2-c does not create an exception for being out of the box. Note there could be an exception under Rule 7-2-1-h if the pitched ball is prevented from entering the strike zone.