



April 11, 2022

## NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

**Situation 1:** With R1 on first base and no outs, B2 hits a base hit that F7 quickly fields. R1 is obstructed by F6 after rounding second base. Seeing the umpire signal obstruction, R1's coach instructs them to continue on to third base where R1 is tagged out two steps from third base. B2 advanced to second base when they saw R1 attempting to obtain third and is standing on second base when R1 is tagged out. When R1, the obstructed runner, is tagged out the umpire signals and verbalizes dead ball and awards R1 second base, sending B2 back to first base. The offensive coach objects saying that R1 has to be awarded third base since B2 is standing on second base. The umpire informs the coach that in their judgement R1 would have only obtained second base had there not been obstruction so that is where R1 is placed and B2 is returned to first base. **RULING:** Correct ruling. NFHS softball rules always awards the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgement, had there not been obstruction. In a lot of situations awarded bases result in advancement of runners, but this is a case where the proper award is returning runners to a base they had already obtained. When we think of this play, F7 has the ball just a few feet behind third base and R1 is obstructed just a few steps past second base. It is logical to believe and for the umpire to judge that if there was not obstruction R1 would have only obtained second base. The only reason R1 attempted to advance to third base was due to their coach instructing them to do so once they saw the obstruction call. Knowing that R1 could not be put out, (as long as they did not commit one of the exceptions in Rule 8-4-3b PENALTIES 1), between the two bases where they were obstructed (second and third) the worst case their runner faced is being returned to second base. However, having the runner continue to third provides them the chance to safely obtain third base if there was a bad throw or missed tag. As previously mentioned with the protection of obstruction between second and third bases the worst case is they are tagged out and returned to second base. Speaking to B2, had there not been obstruction R1 would have stopped at second base and B2 would have been at first base, so returning B2 to first base is the proper placement in this situation as it is the base they would have reached had there not been obstruction. (8-4-3b)

**Situation 2:** B1 steps into the batter's box with the toes of their left foot on the ground outside of the line that makes up the batter's box. The umpire instructs the batter that they must be completely within the lines of the batter's box in order to be in proper batting position. **RULING:** Correct ruling. The batter must be completely within the lines of the batter's box to be legally prepared for the next pitch. Within the batter's box includes the lines of the batter's box, if B1 moves their foot back so that no part of their foot is past the batter's box line they are legally within the batter's box for the start of the pitch. (7-3-1)

**Situation 3:** B1 swings and makes contact with the pitch while their foot: In (a) is touching home plate; in (b) is still partially in contact with the batter's box line and also in contact with home plate; in (c) is in contact with the ground completely outside the batter's box; in (d) is partially in contact with the batter's box line and the other part on their foot is in contact with the ground outside of the batter's

box. **RULING:** Illegal in (a, b and c), the batter is out whether the ball is hit fair or foul. The batter is out if they make contact with the ball while either foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or while any part of their foot is touching home plate. Legal in (d) as long as part of their foot is still within the lines of the batter's box they are still considered to be within the batter's box. (7-4-8)

**Situation 4:** With bases loaded and no outs, B4 is at bat. R1 and R2 both leave their base prior to the ball leaving the pitcher's hand. The umpire calls a dead ball, no pitch and rules both R1 and R2 out.

**RULING:** Incorrect ruling. A runner failing to keep contact with their base prior to the ball leaving the pitcher's hand is an immediate dead ball. As soon as the first runner lost contact with their base the ball becomes dead, they are ruled out and any other runners are returned to their bases. (8-6-18)