



April 22, 2024

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: Team A is playing defense. F5 has a first baseperson's glove on while playing third base. B1 hits a ball that F5 fields the ball and throws B1 out at first base. Prior to a pitch to the next batter, Team B's coach objects to the use of this glove by F5 and wants the out removed. The umpire rules the use of the glove/mitt is legal and the out stands. **RULING:** Correct ruling. The catcher shall use a glove/mitt of any size. Gloves/mitts worn by all other fielders shall conform to the maximum specifications detailed in Figure 1-5 and listed in Rule 1-4-2a-c. As long as the glove/mitt complies with these specifications, it is legal for any fielder to utilize during the game. (1-4-2, Figure 1-5)

Situation 2: With R1 on second base and no outs, B2 is at bat with a 1 ball 2 strike count. The next pitch is low and the batter swings at the pitch and misses. The pitch hits the dirt and gets behind F2 who retrieves the ball and moves toward third base to hold R1 at second base. B2 has backed up to remain clear of F2. As R1 returns to second base and the ball is returned to F1, B2 returns toward the batter's box. The umpire states "That was strike three" and waits to see the player's reaction. B2 begins moving toward their first base dugout, as soon as B2 steps into the dugout the umpire rules them out. **RULING:** Correct ruling. In this situation, there are a number of possible outcomes. The batter-runner could attempt to advance to first base on the dropped third strike, or the defense could attempt to make a play by throwing to first base to retire the batter-runner on the dropped third strike. Or, as happened in this case, the batter-runner could simply return to their dugout and not attempt to advance to first base. When this occurs, the batter-runner is not out until they enter the dugout/bench area on a dropped third strike. (8-1-1b, 8-2-4)

Situation 3: Team A is at bat with no outs and R1 at second base and R2 at first base, B3 hits a hard shot just a few feet inside the first base line. F3 is playing in front of first base, F4 is playing close to second base and F9 playing deep in right field. The ball passes F3 but they are unable to get a glove on the ball, it then strikes R2 on the foot as they are leading off the base and advancing to second base on the hit. Since the ball had passed an infielder and no other fielder had the opportunity to make an out the umpire allowed the play to continue and did not rule R2 out. Team B's coach insists that the runner is out since they were touched by a batted ball while not in contact with the base. **RULING:** Correct ruling by the umpire. If the ball has passed an infielder prior to contacting the runner and no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out and the runner did not intentionally contact the ball there is no violation and play should continue. (8-6-11, 8-6-12, 8-8-4)