



March 11, 2024

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: With R1 on first base, B2 a left-handed slapper is at bat. B2 moves forward in the box with the pitch but is stationary after the ball reaches the catcher. F2 throws toward first base making contact with B2 who is still within the batter's box near the front of the box. The umpire rules that since the batter did not have any movement after the pitch reached the catcher that hindered their ability to make a play on the runner they are not guilty of interference. **RULING:** Correct ruling. It is allowable for the batter to move within the batter's box while the pitch is on its way to the plate. However, it is not allowable for the batter to have any movement after the pitch reaches the catcher that results in hindering the catchers attempt to play on a runner. (7-4-4c)

Situation 2: With R1 on second base, B2 a right-handed batter is at bat. As R1 is attempting to steal third base, B2 adjusts their footing in the batter's box moving more toward the back of the box. F2 is attempting to throw to F5 at third base ready to apply a tag to R1 but hesitates and does not throw as B2 has moved into their throwing lane. The umpire rules interference as B2 has moved in a manner that hindered F2's ability to make a play on R1. The offensive coach objects claiming that F2 must throw to third for there to be an interference call made. **RULING:** Correct ruling by the umpire. The batter's box is not a safe haven. The batter is entitled to their position in the box in a situation like this, however if the batter moves after the ball reaches the catcher in a manner that, in the umpires judgement, hinders the catcher's ability to make a play on a runner they are guilty of interference. In this case, the ball is dead, B2 is ruled out and R1 is returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference. (7-4-4c)

Situation 3: B1 bunts the ball toward the first base line and is running to first base completely in fair territory. F2 fields the bunt and is prepared to throw to first base but does not throw as B1 is in their throwing lane approximately fifteen feet from first base. The umpire rules interference on B1 as they were outside the three-foot lane and interfered with F2's ability to throw the ball to first base. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. In order for there to be interference by the batter-runner for not being within the three-foot lane there must be a throw to first base. As the rule is written the batter-runner would be called out if, in the umpire's judgement, they interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. In order to interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base there must be a throw and that throw must have been able to be caught by the fielder at first base if not for the actions of the batter-runner. (8-2-6)