

NYSSO RULES UPDATE – 4/07/2024

PACE OF PLAY

By rule, teams get 1 minute or 5 warm-up pitches between innings. They are limited to whichever comes first. The time starts at the recording of the 3rd out. Remind the teams of this during your pre-game coaches' conference. Go to the defensive dugout during the first inning a politely and appropriately encourage them to move things along. Both sides are entitled to their 1 minute. There is no "hurry up" offense or defense. Base umpires are directed to stand in fair ground off the first base line near the "lip" of a proper softball field. The only exception to this is if the umpire is in immediate danger of getting hit by outfield warm-ups. Defenders merely warming up is NOT an excuse to go hang out near the three-foot running lane. There is no prohibition against using a timer between innings, although one is not required in NYSSO. Perhaps using one may be eye-opening for just how poorly we manage this rule. As always, use common sense, good judgment and thoughtful reasoning when invoking a rule for its intended purpose. Whether conditions, who leads off, who was left on base when the inning ended, etc. are all things to pay attention to and be mindful of when keeping the game moving.

Additionally, there are restrictions on the batter when she comes to the plate. *Unless an exception applies, the batter must remain in the box, with at least one foot, between pitches.* The math is simple: If you allow an additional five seconds between pitches and you allow 90 seconds between each half-inning, you have added 30 minutes onto the length of the game. Rule 7-3-d states: after entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot between pitches and while taking signals and practice swings.

Exceptions: The batter may leave the box:

1. When the ball is batted fair or foul.
2. On a swing, slap or check swing.
3. When forced out of the box by a pitch.
4. On a wild pitch or passed ball.
5. When a play is attempted.
6. When time has been called.
7. When the pitcher leaves the 8-foot circle or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.
8. When the count reaches three balls and the next pitch is a strike that the batter thinks is a ball.

Effect: If the batter leaves the batter's box and delays play, for any other reason than 1-8 above:

1. The ball is dead.
2. The umpire may warn the batter or
3. Call a strike.
4. Any number of warnings and called strikes can be made with each batter.

Note: No pitch has to be thrown.

R/S 5 goes on to say: This rule is not intended to penalize the player, but is used to speed up the game. The batter can still get a signal with one foot in the box and take practice swings. If the batter leaves the box illegally, a warning should be given. Any number of warnings on the same batter may be given. A strike should not be called without a warning. One, two or three strikes may be called on the same batter under this ruling.

GORILLA GOLD

The original Gorilla Gold towel, unaltered, is permitted. USA Softball approved this item in 2009. This towel is beige in color and is the "all sport formula." The "tackiness" does not transfer to the ball.

The Gorilla Gold Golf, which is a white towel, is not permitted. This is very tacky and transfers to the ball, so it is not permitted.

Altering the approved towel is illegal. A "once legal" towel that is now transferring to the ball is prohibited.

OFFICIAL GAME

If a game is stopped prior to becoming an official game, whether due to a time restriction, darkness, weather, etc., then the game will be resumed from exactly where it left off. Allow for proper warm-ups when the game resumes. Always keep a clear and accurate line-up, especially when the game may be resumed with a new umpiring crew and the line-ups will need to be transferred to them.

If the game has become official by rule, then the game is considered completed unless there is a predetermined tournament / post-season rule in place.

Note: NYSSO is aware that at least one conference/league with a section has a rule that violates this rule. NYSSO has brought this to the attention of the NYSPHSAA Softball Chairperson. There is no NYSPHSAA waiver allowing a game to be completed restarted. As such, the rule as written in the rulebook shall be enforced regardless of any contrary writing.

ON-DECK BATTER

Rule 7-1 addresses the on-deck batter. There may only be one. At the start of the inning, the on-deck batter is the leadoff batter. She is restricted to her own on-deck circle. All other offensive players belong in the team area / dugout. The exceptions to on-deck batter location only apply once a batter is in the box batting. They do not apply to start the inning.

OBSTRUCTION

Under USA Softball rules, an offensive player must actually be hindered or impeded for obstruction to be ruled. Mere presence or positioning does not equal obstruction. This has not changed. This was the requirement even 20 years ago before elimination of the "about to receive a thrown ball" element that no longer exists.

OBSTRUCTED RUNNER TAGGED OUT

For over a decade, NYSSO has asked umpires on the annual exam what happens when an obstructed runner is tagged out before reaching the base to which she was protected. The question was invariably missed by a significant portion of our membership each year. Mechanically, when an obstructed runner is tagged out prior to reaching the base to which she is protected, the umpire shall call "time" or "dead ball." The umpire does that because the ball is dead. Then, the umpire does one of two things: (1) award a base moving forward; or (2) return the runner to the previous base if the umpire is positive that the runner would not have reached the next base had she not been obstructed. Do not simply point to the next base, including if the runner ultimately gets to the bag after being tagged out. Use the proper mechanics. Other runners may be affected by killing the play. The appropriate base awards need to be made for those runners as well.

INFIELD FLY + INTENTIONALLY DROPPED BALL

NYSSO Test Clarification: If an infield fly is intentionally dropped, the ball remains live. This is because the batter-runner is already declared out and thus the runners are not placed in jeopardy.

FORFEITING A GAME

NYSSO Test Clarification: Either/any umpire may forfeit a game if warranted. Forfeiting a game is not limited to the discretion of the plate umpire or umpire-in-chief.