

# **RULES UPDATE**

3/17/2025

## **COACHES' HELMETS**

- Do adult base coaches need to wear a protective helmet while coaching the bases?
  - Yes. The rule remains the same as previous years and must be enforced in the same manner. This is not a rule book regulation or a softball waiver, but rather an NYSPHSAA mandate.

## **SOFTBALLS**

- Do softballs require the NFHS stamp to be used this year?
  - No. Just as they did not require the ASA/USA stamp in previous years when the game was played under that code, they do not require the NFHS stamp now.
  - However, for the state tournament, NYSPHSAA will supply softballs with the NFHS stamp.

## **CATCHER'S BOX**

- What do we do if a field has permanent catcher's box lines that are not regulation?
  - The catcher must be permitted the full width of the catcher's box (7'5" – even with the outer most lines of the batter's boxes) regardless of how the lines are drawn on the field.
  - However, as long as the depth of the catcher's box is at least 7' (regulation for many softball codes), then those lines can be used for enforcement of rules purposes.
  - Fields whose lines are not permanently marked should have the depth drawn at 10'.

## **COACHES' UNIFORMS**

- Where do we stand on enforcing the coaches' uniform requirements?
  - Per NYSPHSAA, this rule, and all other "administrative" type rules, is to be enforced as written. Umpires may use discretion at the start of the season as coaches work their way into a new set of rules. Step one is knowing what the rule says and understanding it correctly. The last thing we want is an umpire strictly enforcing a new rule and then not even applying the rule correctly.
  - If you encounter an issue with a coach's uniform during the first week of your season, advise the coach, note it in their rule book, and advise your chapter representative (who should then advise everyone else). Assuming they aren't playing a double-header, there's no reason the coach can't comply for their second game.

## **PACE OF PLAY**

- Pace of Play: We have to undo the damage we created over the years by failing to enforce the time between innings rule. This has been a concern for several years within the states previously playing under NFHS rules. This will not happen overnight. The key points are first learning what 60 seconds actually is, reminding the coaches in the pre-game meeting and encouraging everyone to move it along between innings. Umpires should be working towards compliance, not playing "Gotcha!" by imposing a ball or strike penalty on the 61 second. There are plenty of ways to help manage compliance and umpires with good game-management skills should be able to do so without immediately and repeatedly imposing penalties.

We went over many rules differences and waivers. The learning does not end there. Umpires must get into the rule book and learn all the penalties associated with violations of the rules. It's one thing to know what can't be done, it's another to know how a violation can be brought to your attention and what penalty gets imposed.

Please keep sending in your questions. As we continue to compile questions and answers, we will distribute them.