



IGHSAU Softball Umpire Newsletter

2018 Vol. 6



Cathy's Corner: Message from IGHSAU Softball Coordinator of Officials

The softball season is past it's halfway point. The teams are fighting for regional seeding positions. Umpires must continue to be diligent in their rules and management of the game. The softball season is heating up in more ways than one!

Tournament Dates to remember:

Regional Dates	
1A/ 2A	July 2, 3, 6, 9
3A	July 3, 6, 9
4A/5A	July 5, 7, 10
State Tournament	July 16-20

On July 2 and 3, when 1A, 2A and 3A start post season, 4A and 5A are still playing regular season. We have a shortage of tournament eligible umpires, so you may be asked to work multiple post season nights. Keep Arbiter up to date!

Evaluations: Evaluations continue as the season progresses. We are not accepting any more requests for evaluations as we are booked solid. Those who have asked – we will make every attempt to watch your game to provide input. If there is a rainout, I cannot guarantee it. These evaluations are to make YOU a better umpire. Again, we are not only watching those who have asked – we are looking for post season ready umpires. Use proper mechanics, know the rules and most of all use proper game management. Umpire every game as if I were watching!



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General comments:

Take care of yourself: The summer has started hot and humid. You must take care of yourselves. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. This weekend will bring mid 90's again. Bring snacks for between games – don't count on the school providing you food and water. If they do, great, but prepare yourself. If you bring water or towels to the field, and I highly recommend it, place them outside the fence. The ball will not interfere with any play if your water is outside the fence.

Professionalism and Approachability: Keep your arms relaxed and at your side between innings and when talking to a coach. Hands on hips and crossed arms give the perception of being unapproachable. If there is a question, one coach and one umpire should be talking. Partners - do not allow several coaches to talk to your partner at the same time. If, after the coach asks his/her question, your need to go to your partner for help, make sure you are asking a specific question. Partner then gives an answer. The original calling umpire will give the decision of the call is to be changed or upheld. When you break your huddle, know what you are going to say, where the runners belong, and the batter's ball and strike count.

Wearing Proper Uniform and Equipment: Uniforms continue to be an issue. Faded heather gray (pink) pants should be replaced. There are several online uniform vendors. Shoes should be all black. Sunglasses should have dark frames, not red or yellow. I was at Image Sport a few days ago and they are out of some shirt sizes but if they are out of your size, you may bring in your own shirt and they will embroider a logo on it for \$10. They need time to prepare the shirt, so allow enough time to be ready for post season.

Ejections: If a coach or player is ejected, umpires must file a report with me Cathy@ighsau.org. Coaches and ADs also send a report to the IGHSAU and appropriate action is decided by the IGHSAU.

Sign the scorebook: Coaches are required to give their input on umpires. If you do not sign the books, I receive an email asking who worked the game. Results will be available to you after the season, however, I have access to these current coach ratings and will use the coaches input for post season and future training.

Team equipment: When equipment is in the playing field after a play, leave it be. If you reach to pick up a bat, you may miss an important part of the play – touching a base, a bobbled ball, etc. The teams can handle their own equipment.



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Rules Review:

Eye black: This has been a major issue this year. A few years ago, the IGHSAU had a memo stating players cannot wear eye black. This is not the case this year. The rule book allows eye black, but it must be worn as intended. It is eye black, not red or green, no glitter, no words or numbers and not streaked down the cheek. A single streak below the eye. And black.

Illegal pitches: Call the illegal pitch. Call it early. Do not let the coach talk you in to the illegal pitch – know if it is illegal on your own rule 6. Do not let the coach talk you out of the illegal pitch, either. Continue to call leaping and stepping back (an exception to the NFHS rules adopted by IGHSAU) or stepping forward off the pitching plate. The teams need to correct this prior to regional play – which starts soon!

Specific note: the pitcher must step onto the pitching plate with their hands apart. Then they must take a signal or simulate taking a signal. At the very least there must be a noticeable pause. Do not let them pitch unless the batter is ready. You must be ready as the umpire, too. Work with the catcher to slow down her signals so the pitcher does not quick pitch.

Look Back Rule 8.7

ART. 1 . . . The look-back rule will be in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.

ART. 2 . . . The runner(s) may stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.

ART. 3 . . . Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, she will be declared out if she leaves the base.

ART. 4 . . . Responsibilities of the batter-runner after completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the 16-foot pitching circle, including a base on balls or a dropped third strike are as follows:

- a. A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop, but then must immediately, without stopping, return to first or attempt to advance to second base.
- b. A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first or attempt to advance to second base.
- c. A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly toward second base and stops is committed to second and must attempt to



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advance non-stop to second base.

d. A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base is committed to first and must return to first base.

e. A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return to first base.

PENALTY: (Arts. 2, 3, 4) The ball is dead. "No pitch" is declared when applicable, and the runner is out. If two runners or more are off their bases, when one is called out, the ball is dead and other runners are returned to the last base touched. Only one runner may be called out.

EXCEPTION: The runner will not be declared out if a play is made on another runner (a fake throw is considered a play), the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the 16-foot circle, or the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

8.7.1 SITUATION A:

R1 is on third base when B2 receives ball four. R1 comes off the base on the pitch. The catcher throws the ball directly back to the pitcher in the 16-foot circle. Can R1 remain off third base until B2 has reached first?

RULING: Yes. The look-back rule does not go into effect until the batter-runner has touched first base and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the 16-foot circle. At that time, all runners on base must immediately move forward or return to their base.

Post Season:

IGHSAU Softball is only a few weeks long. We have our names of umpires eligible for post season. The regional advisors have given me names of umpires who they think will represent well at the State Tournament. I will choose from this list and assignments are being determined now. Post season assignments will be released on June 25-27. Keep your Arbiter up to date!

NEW IN 2018: All regional finals and semi-finals will be using 3 umpires. Practice your 3 umpire skills! Set up a practice session with your umpire friends and have fun!

Questions, rule questions and comments should be directed to the IGHSAU Softball Coordinator of Officials: Cathy Creighton at cathy@ighsau.org.

Work hard, keep yourself in top shape, stay hydrated, and work every game like someone is watching!

Cathy