



## Touching All Bases

### Let's Play Ball!

Hello all! If you have not already done so, there is still time to register for the 2019 season! Training is just getting underway!

If you were unable to attend the General Meeting last week, the instructors for the weekly study sessions each have a few rule books. If you are unable to obtain one, please contain me. Please get into your rule books!

The third and last Boot Camp is February 7<sup>th</sup> and currently open for registration. Please register at [bootcampregistration2019@yahoo.com](mailto:bootcampregistration2019@yahoo.com). We need participants for these events to be successful!

As a reminder, **you will need to pass the NFHS Certification test before your name is released for assignments.**

For On-field clinic registration please send your preference to [softball@ncoa.info](mailto:softball@ncoa.info). The two dates are Feb 9<sup>th</sup> at Rocklin HS and Feb 16<sup>th</sup> at Antelope HS.

For election nominations, please email me at the address below. The positions up for re-election are:

- Group Leader / Co Group Leader
- Rating Committee 2 slots

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns at [fmoreno4901@wavecable.com](mailto:fmoreno4901@wavecable.com).

Frank Moreno  
NCOA Softball Group Leader

### Upcoming Events:

**IMPORTANT** \*REGISTRATION - Log into Arbiter at [www.ncoa.arbitersports.com](http://www.ncoa.arbitersports.com), go to the **NCOA Central Hub, NCOA Softball North link and click on the Registration tab at the top of the homepage.**

*\*REGISTRATION UPDATE (as of January 23, 2019): We have 89 officials registered to work the 2019 season. There are 11 others that have started but not completed the process. Please help someone else register to help our cause of providing the best possible umpiring for the players and coaches!*

**\*100 Point NFHS Certification Exam** - Opened Sunday, January 6, 2019 on Arbiter in the **NFHS Tier 2 Central Hub (106237) on the Testing tab.** Find Softball in the Open Tests section and have at it! The official closing date is March 31, 2019. Game assignments will start in mid-February.

*\*NOTE: You must successfully pass this exam (80%) before you receive any game assignments!*

\* **On-field Training Clinics** - Attendance at one On-field clinic is suggested for all umpires. This is where we can do on-field training to help you polish your skills, both behind the plate and in the field. Full uniforms and equipment are required for both On-field clinics and live scrimmages. We will be using video as a tool for instant feedback. Continue to check subsequent issues of this newsletter for information on registering and dates.

\***Live Approved Scrimmages** - Scrimmages are forthcoming and will be available for Self Assign on Arbiter on the **[NCOA Central Hub, Jorgensen Sports Service – Softball \(110796\) link under the Schedule Tab](#)** starting in February 2019. *Attendance of one approved scrimmage (2 games) is required by all umpires.*

\***Regional Study Groups** - Facilitated Study Groups will meet again regionally for six weeks in January – February and started the week of January 14<sup>th</sup>. ***Attendance of 4 of 6 scheduled weekly meetings are required by all umpires.*** Remember, you can only get credit for one session per week since the same material is covered at all locations in each weekly session. Mechanics again are being stressed in the study materials. Check for the specific dates and locations on Arbiter on the **[NCOA Central Hub, NCOA Softball North link](#)** and the newsletter.

\* **On-line Webinars** - Webinars will be posted on Arbiter on the **[NCOA Central Hub under the Video tab](#)** in February 2019. *Four webinar hours are required by all umpires.* This is where you can brush up on some basics such as general, one-umpire, and two-umpire mechanics, Pitching, Obstruction/Interference, and the DP/FLEX rule. The Leadership team is working hard on updating the webinars to reflect recent rule changes.

\* **Basic Skills Boot Camps** jointly sponsored by NCOA and USA Softball Sacramento are continuing with the last Boot Camp on ***February 7<sup>th</sup>***. Only new and less experienced umpires will be registered for these Boot Camps. They are being hosted by the Sunrise Recreation and Park District at their Rusch Park gym. Thanks to our own Robert Morris for all the site arrangements. Don Heyde is heading up this training element for NCOA in partnership with Mike Machovec and Dennis Hobart coming from USA Softball Sacramento.

We will be focusing only on Plate mechanics and difficult situations on the field. Self register by emailing [bootcampregistration2019@yahoo.com](mailto:bootcampregistration2019@yahoo.com).

Should you have any questions contact Don Heyde at: [hidho1953@gmail.com](mailto:hidho1953@gmail.com).

### **Important News:**

\* Training is necessary to be certified to work CIF High School games. ***You must complete 18 hours of documented training to be certified to receive game assignments. The 18 hours is a CIF mandated requirement.***

\* **Training Options** - The Training Team has adjusted training hour credits and requirements to better serve our umpires. This year these training options are required by all umpires:

- ✓ Passing score on 100 point NFHS Certification Exam
- ✓ One live Scrimmage (2 games)
- ✓ 4 of 6 Regional Study Group Sessions
- ✓ 4 of 6 On-line Webinars

See dates and details in this newsletter for the Training Hour options for 2019. It is your responsibility to plan your training and communicate to us in advance if you have issues.

## Other News:



### \*RULES CORNER

#### **2019 NFHS Softball Rules Changes**

**1-1-7, 2-22-4, Table 5-1, 5-1-1o:** The media shall be prohibited from being in live-ball area. The home team or game management may designate an area for the media in dead ball territory.

**Rationale:** Clarifies that game management may designate a media area in dead ball territory.

**1-5-2a:** The knob may be molded, lathed, welded or adjustable, but must be permanently fastened.

**Rationale:** Clarifies that an adjustable knob is permissible, provided the knob is permanently fastened by the manufacturer.

**1-8-4:** Defensive players are permitted to wear a shield on their face/head protection in the field, but it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

**Rationale:** In an effort to promote risk minimization, tinted eye shields are prohibited for defensive face/head protection.

**6-1-1 PENALTY, 6-1-2 Thru 4 PENALTY, 6-2-1 PENALTY, 6-2-7 PENALTY:** In the case of an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded a ball. The penalty that permitted base runners to be awarded one base without liability to be put out is removed.

**Rationale:** The new language creates more balance between offense and defense. The batter should receive the award rather than runners already on base.



### \* Points of Emphasis

#### **2019 NFHS Softball Rules Points of Emphasis**

**Pitcher Simulating Taking a Signal** - While on the pitcher's plate and prior to bringing her hands together, the pitcher must take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher. A signal may be taken from a coach either by hand signals, verbal call, or by looking up on a wristband with a playbook/playcard. The signal obtained from the coach can be taken while on the pitching plate or while standing behind the pitcher's plate prior to taking a position on the pitcher's plate. By rule, the only requirement is that no matter where or from whom the actual signal is obtained, the pitcher must take a position on the pitcher's plate with the hands separated and ***simulate*** taking a signal from the catcher. Requiring the pitcher to take position on the pitching plate and simulating taking a signal from the catcher prior to bring her hands together allows the batter to prepare for the start of the pitch. If the pitcher does not pause after stepping onto the pitcher's plate to simulate taking a signal from the catcher prior to bringing her hands together, an illegal pitch should be called.

**Proper Technique When Sliding** - One of a coach's responsibilities is to help reduce risk and injury to players whenever possible. This includes teaching proper sliding techniques as well as educating players on executing a legal slide (Rule 2-52). Ensuring that players utilize proper technique when sliding will help reduce the potential injuries seen when a slide is performed. Ensuring that the slide is performed legally will also reduce the risk to the defender when a tag is being applied to a player sliding into a base.

## **Head Coach Listed on Lineup Card -**

Although not a requirement by rule, it is considered a best practice that the head coach list his/her name on the lineup card submitted at the pre-game conference. By listing his/her name on the lineup card, it assists both the umpire and other team if communications dealing with the game are required.

**Illegal Pitch Penalty** - The NFHS Softball Rules Committee voted to remove the advancement of runners when an illegal pitch is called. Since the intent of an illegal pitch in softball is to deceive the batter, the committee felt that only the batter should receive an award when an illegal pitch occurs. The change to the penalty for an illegal pitch will result in a ball being called on the batter, but runners will only advance if forced as the result of the batter being awarded first base. Exceptions to the penalty for an illegal pitch in Rule 6, Section 1, Article 1 have also been modified in order to be in compliance with the new penalty and ensure that runners are no longer advanced as a result of an illegal pitch.



## **For Your Toolbox**

### **Article #1 - BANG-BANG PLAYS AT FIRST**

*(An article from Referee.com publication)*

Calling close plays or “whackers” at first base will determine how you are perceived as a base umpire. Do you want to be a better base umpire on whackers as soon as your next game? It can be done with proper preparation. Focus on adopting the following strategies for improved umpire success. When they are mastered, you will also become a more credible and accepted base umpire.

#### **Setup along the baseline**

Take a position 18-21 feet beyond first base in foul territory next to but not touching the foul line. You can use the standing set position by

leading with your right foot on the initial step toward home as the pitcher releases the ball and landing on your left foot as the ball nears the plate. With that method, you will be ready to push off your left foot into fair territory to cover any possible play on a fair, batted ball.

#### **One step fair (1SF)**

By moving just one step into fair territory, it is easier to compare the arrival of the ball and the runner at first base. The 1SF positioning allows the umpire to see the play in slow motion.

1SF is also a great calling position for any errant throws to first base. For a throw that pulls the first baseman off the bag toward home, the umpire can remain stationary and easily look between the fielder’s swipe tag and the batter-runner.

On a bad throw to the outfield side of the bag, there won’t be a swipe tag so the umpire has to focus on the fielder’s foot before making a call.

#### **Snap-thud**

A knowledgeable umpire understands that umpires must use their hearing along with their vision to get those eyelash plays right.

From your 1SF position, track the ball two-thirds of the way to first base before focusing on the home plate-side of the bag while keeping the ball in your peripheral vision. That’s your focus point because the batter-runner always aims for the home plate-side of first.

Then, listen for the snap of the ball in the fielder’s glove and the thud of the runner’s foot on the base. Combine your visual information with the snap and the thud. If the snap beats the thud, the runner is out.

Before making your call, flash your eyes to the glove to be sure the fielder has control of the ball.

### **Throws from right field to first**

To be a top softball umpire, try to be aware of snap throws to first on sharp hits to right field. That occurs most often with the bases empty, but it can occur in other base configurations. From position A, never cross in front of the throw, so move one step fair. Or, only when absolutely necessary, drop-step into foul ground for the best position on the play.

### **Was batter-runner's lead leg straight or bent?**

When making calls at first, be aware of the lead leg on the runner's final step. That method is known as the "bent leg theory." On close plays, many runners extend their lead leg in a locked position in their last lunge for the bag. A straight-locked leg means the runner hasn't yet reached the bag so consider her out on a real whacker. Once her knee bends it means the runner has hit the base and could (but not always) have beaten the throw.

### **Wide throws to first**

On a wide throw to first on the home side of the diamond, the one-step fair technique allows the umpire to remain stationary with only having to flash their eyes to the fielder's glove and have a perfect view of any possible tag. Umpires who move farther into the diamond toward a 90-degree angle must move immediately and quickly toward the foul line to have any hope of seeing the tag.

For a throw that pulls the first baseman toward the right field side of first, just slide a couple of quick steps toward home as you won't have a swipe tag. At that point your only concern is whether the fielder keeps her foot on the bag. Moving slightly toward home dramatically improves your angle on the fielder's foot.

### **Article #2 - DP/FLEX: Four things to keep in mind on the field**

One of the most confusing elements of administering the game for coaches and umpires is the DP/Flex option. Every good umpire needs to master this rule, and there is a lot to master! Study this in the book, understand the concept of going from 10 players down to 9, and back to 10, and earn the confidence you need to handle it on the field.

Once you have read the rule several times, you might find it helpful to keep in mind these four concepts (or to put them in your lineup card holder if you are a newer umpire) when you take the field:

1. When the FLEX either hits or runs for the DP, the player who is the DP leaves the game. That player can re-enter the game one time, just like every other player. Confirm with the coach that they are "going down to 9 players."
2. When the FLEX moves back and forth between the DP slot and the FLEX slot, the player who is the FLEX has NOT left the game and has not been substituted for.
3. If the FLEX does not play defense, the player was the FLEX has left the game, subject to the re-entry rule. Coaches need to report to the umpire that they are either taking the FLEX out of the game and going down to 9 players, or that they are substituting a new player for the FLEX and staying at 10 players.
4. When you have a DP/FLEX, any 9 of the 10 players in the lineup can play defense at any time. So "Yes coach, the Flex and the DP can play defense at the same time," leaving somebody in the batting order as a hitter only (also referred to as the "temporary DP"). You do not need to track this, but you do need to

make sure the FLEX is one of the 9 on defense.

Hopefully these four concepts, a clean lineup card and clear understanding of the re-entry rules will enable you to master the DP/FLEX rule, help you field question from coaches, and build your confidence as an official.



## WEEKLY QUIZ

*Each newsletter will include a 10-15 question true/false quiz for your enjoyment. Answers are included in the same issue.*

1. The maximum legal height (from the bottom tip of the heel to the highest point) of a glove is 14 inches.
2. When the ball goes out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their baserunning responsibilities before a dead-ball appeal is made.
3. A player who has been rendered apparently unconscious during the game may resume participation that day when cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.
4. When a ground rule is in conflict with a playing rule, the ground rule shall be enforced.
5. The ball becomes dead immediately when a batted ball, while on or over foul ground, first touches the catcher's glove or hand.
6. The pitcher shall not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without having possession of the ball.
7. The batter-runner shall be declared out when she hits an infield fly, when the infield-fly rule is in effect, even if it is not initially called by the umpire.

8. A runner is considered to be in the three-foot running lane when she has one foot touching inside the lane and one foot touching on the line.

9. The run scored by the runner starting at second base for the tie-breaker procedure shall be charged to the defensive team, not to the pitcher.

10. An umpire's decision involving fair/foul call or a safe/out call may be appealed by requesting assistance from another umpire.

**Answers:**

- |          |   |      |                         |
|----------|---|------|-------------------------|
| 1. ANS:  | T | REF: | 1-4-2a                  |
| 2. ANS:  | T | REF: | 2-1-3b (2)              |
| 3. ANS:  | F | REF: | CIF State Article 3-1-3 |
| 4. ANS:  | F | REF: | 4-1-3                   |
| 5. ANS:  | F | REF: | 5-1-1d (2); 2-25-2      |
| 6. ANS:  | T | REF: | 6-1-1e                  |
| 7. ANS:  | T | REF: | 7-1-2 penalty 2         |
| 8. ANS:  | T | REF: | 8-2-5                   |
| 9. ANS:  | T | REF: | 9-6-3 note              |
| 10. ANS: | F | REF: | 10-1-4                  |

**Softball - Sacramento**

2019 Training Options

Updated 12/1/18

**Training Options (18 hours Required by CIF/SJS)**

|                                       | #<br><u>Required</u> | Hours<br><u>Credit</u> | Total<br><u>Req. Hours</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b><u>All Umpires</u></b>             |                      |                        |                            |
| Study Groups 4 of 6                   | 4                    | 2 each                 | 8                          |
| Webinar sessions 4 of 6               | 4                    | 1 each                 | 4                          |
| Scrimmage (2 games)                   | 1                    | 2                      | 2                          |
| Classification Exam (required by CIF) | 1                    | 1                      | 1                          |

**Recommended**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Basic Skills Boot Camp (newer officials) | 3 each |
| On-Field Clinic (all officials)          | 5      |

**Optional Training Hours**

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| General Meeting                      | 2 |
| On-field Clinic (if space available) | 5 |
| Boot Camp (if space available)       | 3 |
| Study Guide (80% +)                  | 2 |
| Extra Study Group                    | 2 |
| GSSA Clinic                          | 2 |
| ASA/USAS National School             | 4 |
| ASA/USAS National Fast Pitch School  | 8 |
| NCAA Clinic (verified) (non paid)    | 2 |

NOTE:

- Required sessions can be made up with approval of the Group Leaders on a case-by-case basis with an agreed upon training plan.
- **It is the responsibility of the umpire to submit an email request to the Group Leader for an alternate training plan.**

Updated 1/22/19

### 2019 TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE

| <u>Date</u>        | <u>Day Time</u>         | <u>Session</u>                  | <u>Location</u>                      |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Dec 1              | Saturday                | Registration Opens              |                                      |
| <del>Dec 27</del>  | <del>Thursday 6pm</del> | <del>Boot Camp Session #1</del> | <del>Rusch Park Gym</del>            |
| <del>Jan 10</del>  | <del>Thursday 6pm</del> | <del>Boot Camp Session #2</del> | <del>Rusch Park Gym</del>            |
| Jan 14 -<br>Feb 21 | Mon-Thurs 6:30pm        | Regional Study Groups           | Various Locations                    |
| <del>Jan 15</del>  | <del>Tuesday 6pm</del>  | <del>General Meeting**</del>    | <del>Jesuit HS (Harris Center)</del> |
| February           |                         | Webinars                        | On-line                              |
| February           |                         | Scrimmages                      | Various                              |
| Feb 7              | Thursday 6pm            | Boot Camp Session #3            | Rusch Park Gym                       |
| Feb 9              | Saturday 9am            | On-Field Clinic Session #1      | Rocklin HS                           |
| Feb 16             | Saturday 9am            | On-Field Clinic Session #2      | Antelope HS                          |
| Feb 18             | Monday 9am              | On-Field Clinic Session #3      | Antelope HS                          |
| Mar 31             | Wednesday               | Classification Exam Due         |                                      |

**\*\*Rescheduled date**

Antelope High School  
7801 Titan Drive  
Antelope, CA 95843

Jesuit High School  
1200 Jacob Lane  
Carmichael, CA 95608

Rusch Park Gym  
7801 Auburn Blvd.  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610

Vanden High School  
2951 Markley Lane  
Fairfield, CA 94533

Rocklin High School  
6301 Victory Lane  
Rocklin, CA 95765

Updated 12/09/18

2019 Study Group

| Day       |  | Location            | Dates                                | Facilitators                  |
|-----------|--|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Monday    | Round Table Pizza<br>5110 Laguna Blvd., #119<br>Elk Grove                | Elk Grove           | 1/14, 1/21, 1/28,<br>2/4, 2/11, 2/18 | Kevin Okino<br>Jack Wendell   |
| Monday    | Mel's Diner<br>1730 Grass Valley Hwy<br>Auburn                           | Auburn              | 1/14, 1/21, 1/28,<br>2/4, 2/11, 2/18 | Pete Dufour<br>Greg Walker    |
| Tuesday   | Round Table Pizza<br>2345 Sunset Blvd<br>Rocklin                         | Roseville/Rocklin   | 1/15, 1/22, 1/29,<br>2/5, 2/12, 2/19 | Phil Perkins<br>Gary Butler   |
| Tuesday   | Round Table Pizza<br>2234 Sunrise Blvd<br>Rancho Cordova                 | Folsom/Cordova      | 1/15, 1/22, 1/29,<br>2/5, 2/12, 2/19 | Jim Halstead<br>Robert Morris |
| Wednesday | Round Table Pizza<br>2105 Town Center Plaza<br>#F-180<br>West Sacramento | West Sacramento     | 1/16, 1/23, 1/30,<br>2/6, 2/13, 2/20 | Frank Moreno                  |
| Wednesday | Round Table Pizza<br>4949-C Marconi Avenue<br>Sacramento                 | Carmichael          | 1/16, 1/23, 1/30,<br>2/6, 2/13, 2/20 | Rick Post<br>Dennis O'Leary   |
| Thursday  | Round Table Pizza<br>7700 Sunrise Blvd<br>Ste 1100<br>Citrus Heights     | Citrus Heights      | 1/17, 1/24, 1/31,<br>2/7, 2/14, 2/21 | Rudy Aguilio                  |
| Thursday  | Round Table Pizza<br>888 Alamo Drive<br>Vacaville                        | Fairfield/Vacaville | 1/17, 1/24, 1/31,<br>2/7, 2/14, 2/21 | Al Weihe<br>Mike Goble        |

*\* All meeting times are 6:30pm to 8:30pm \**

*\* You are required to attend 4 of 6 sessions, 1 a week \**