

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

“Hit By Pitch” Procedure Revised in High School Softball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Theresia Wynns

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 3, 2012) — Batters in high school softball no longer will have to make an attempt to avoid being hit by a pitch in order to be awarded first base.

This revision to Rule 8-1-2 was one of four rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules Committee at its June 11-13 meeting in Indianapolis. All rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

A batter will be awarded first base if “a pitched ball is entirely within the batter’s box and it strikes the batter or her clothing. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required; however, the batter may not obviously try to get hit by the pitch.”

Theresia Wynns, NFHS director of sports and officials education and staff liaison for softball, said this rules change clears up the gray area of whether the batter made an attempt to get out of the way of the pitch.

“Since a batter is penalized for prohibiting a pitch from entering the strike zone, the committee thought there should be a penalty when the pitcher hits a batter when the pitch is completely inside the batter’s box,” Wynns said.

In Rule 6-1, the committee approved the following exceptions to the penalty for an illegal pitch:

1) If the batter reaches first base safely and each other runner advances at least one base, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action stands and the illegal pitch is canceled.

2) If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any base runner fails to advance at least one base, the coach of the team at bat shall have the option of the result of the play or the penalty of the illegal pitch.

3) If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and each base runner is awarded one base.

4) If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base and each base runner is awarded one base.

A change was approved by the Softball Rules Committee regarding the color of gloves/mitts. As a follow-up to the change last year that required the color of all softballs to be optic yellow, the committee revised language in Rule 1-4-1 to state that gloves/mitts must not be entirely optic yellow or have that color of marking on the inside or outside of gloves/mitts that would give the appearance of the ball.

The final rules change was Rule 3-6-10, which will allow stopwatches to be used in the coach's box.

A complete listing of all rules changes approved by the committee is available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Athletics & Fine Arts Activities" on the home page, and select "Softball."

Fast-pitch softball is the fourth-most popular sport for girls at the high school level, according to the 2011-12 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey, with 373,535 participants nationwide. The sport ranks fourth in school sponsorship with 15,338 schools sponsoring the sport.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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