

## 2007 PROPOSED SOFTBALL *RULE* REVISIONS

| PROP #  | RULE         | PG. | PROPOSED REVISION WITH RATIONALE  | STATE/PERSON SUBMITTING  | OTHER RULES AFFECTED |
|---|--------------|-----|---|--|----------------------|
| <b>⚡ Rule 1-Field and Equipment ⚡</b>           |              |     |   |  |                      |
| 1A  | 1-1-2b       | 9   | Moving the pitching distance to 43 feet (from 40 feet).   | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #14</b>  |                      |
| 1B  | 1-1-2b       | 9   | (F.P.) The rear tip of home plate and the front edge of the pitcher's plate shall be <del>40</del> <u>43</u> feet for female fast pitch softball and 46 feet for male fast pitch softball. <b>Rationale:</b> The MSHSAA Softball Coaches Advisory Committee recommended that the MSHSAA Office submit a rule change proposal to the NFHS Softball Rules Committee to move the high school pitching distance from 40 feet to 43 feet to allow more offense in the high school game and potentially follow other rule making bodies that have or are discussing moving the pitching distance back to 43 feet. The high school game of girls fast pitch softball is totally a pitcher's game with often very little offense from the hitters. Based upon many factors including the current quality of the game, the growing number of outstanding elite pitchers, and low team batting averages, the Advisory Committee felt it was time to consider moving the pitcher's distance back to 43 feet at the national high school level. | <b>Missouri<br/>George Blasé<br/>State Office</b>                          |                      |
| 2   | 1-2-1 Note   | 13  | Requiring the double first base for all interscholastic contests.   | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #15</b>  |                      |
| 3   | 1-3-3        | 14  | Add to ball specifications: <u>Effective January 1, 2008, the ball must not exceed 7,500 lb/in when measured according to the current ASTM test standard draft for dynamic compression.</u><br><b>Rationale:</b> ASA and NCAA will be voting to add this standard to their softball specifications.   | <b>NFHS<br/>Struckhoff<br/>Rules Editor</b>                                |                      |
| 4   | 1-6          | 16  | Requiring all batting helmets to be secured with a properly fastened "molded" chin strap (similar to those worn in football).   | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #16</b>  |                      |
| <b>⚡ Rule 2-Playing Terms and Definitions ⚡</b> |              |     |   |  |                      |
| 5   | 2-32<br>2-36 | 25  | <b>1.</b> If a runner makes contact with a fielder who has just misplayed a batted ball, with the ball remaining in front of the fielder having an opportunity to make a play, the outcome should be:<br>a. Interference<br>b. Obstruction<br>c. No call<br><b>2.</b> If a runner makes contact with a fielder who has just misplayed a batted ball, with the ball bounding past/away from the fielder, the outcome should be:<br>a. Interference   | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #21</b><br><br><b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #22</b> | 8-6-10a<br>8-4-3b    |

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|                            |                |    | <p>b. Obstruction<br/>c. No call</p> <p><b>3.</b> If a runner is slowed down or her path is altered by a fielder who has just misplayed a batted ball, with the ball bounding past/away from the fielder, the outcome should be:</p> <p>a. Interference<br/>b. Obstruction<br/>c. No call</p>  | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #23</b>                    |                               |
| 6                          | 2-32           | 25 | Interference is any act (physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who interferes with, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a <u>the initial play on a batted ball or catch a thrown ball</u> ; or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline. <b>Rationale:</b> After a batted ball has been misplayed by the fielder, the runner should not be held to the same level of accountability for avoiding contact with that fielder.   | <b>Georgia</b><br>Ralph Swearngin<br>Rules Committee | 2-36, 2-47-2, 8-4-3b, 8-6-10a |
| 7                          | 2-36           | 26 | Obstruction is the act of the defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or is <del>fielding</del> <u>making the initial play on a batted ball</u> . The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal. <b>Rationale:</b> Even when a runner is running the bases legally, she has full responsibility to avoid contact with a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball. After the ball has been misplayed, the level of responsibility should change.  | <b>Georgia</b><br>Ralph Swearngin<br>Rules Committee | 2-32, 2-47, 8-4-3b, 8-6-10a   |
| 8                          | 2-47-1,2,3 New | 27 | Art. 1 – remains the same. Art. 2 – keep existing text and assign it as “a”<br>B New - <u>Any action by a fielder who is attempting to catch or gain control of a batted or thrown ball.</u><br>C New – <u>Initial Play – a fielder is considered to be making an initial play on a fair batted ball when she has a reasonable chance to catch or gain control of the ball that no other fielder (except the pitcher) has touched. The fielder is considered to still be making an initial play if she misplays the batted ball and is still within a “step and a reach” of the ball.</u> <b>Rationale:</b> In order to modify existing rules for obstruction and interference, it is necessary to establish a definition for “making a play” in a different context than the look-back rule, and a definition for “making an initial play.” | <b>Georgia</b><br>Ralph Swearngin<br>Rules Committee | 2-32, 2-36, 8-4-3b, 8-6-10a   |
| 9                          | 2-52-2         | 28 | Prohibiting head-first slides.   | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #17</b>                    |                               |
| <b>⚡ Rule 6-Pitching ⚡</b> |                |    |  |  |                               |
| 10                         | 6-1-1          | 48 | Requiring the pitcher to start with two feet on the pitcher’s plate. (6-1-1)   | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #18</b>                    |                               |
| 11                         | 6-2-3          | 51 | Reducing the amount of time between pitches for the pitcher from 20 to 10  | <b>NFHS</b>  |                               |

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|     |                   |    | seconds.   | <b>Questionnaire #19</b>                              |                             |
|     |                   |    | <b>⚡ Rule 7-Position and Batting Order ⚡</b>   |   |                             |
| 12A | 7-3-1             | 57 | Reducing the amount of time between pitches for the batter from 20 to 10 seconds.  | <b>NFHS<br/>Questionnaire #20</b>                     |                             |
| 12B | 7-3-1             | 57 | Art. 1...A batter shall not delay the game by failing to promptly take her position in the batter's box within <del>20</del> <u>10</u> seconds, or by stepping out of the box when the pitcher is on the pitcher's plate.<br>PENALTY: (Art. 1) If a pitcher is committed to delivering the pitch, the batter leaves the box at the risk of having a strike called while being out of position. For Failure of the batter to be ready within <del>20</del> <u>10</u> seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the umpire shall call a strike. If it is the third strike, the umpire shall call time and declare the batter out.<br>EFFECTS: 1. After entering the batter's box, the batter leaves it at the risk of being charged with delay. The batter may request time-out if she desires to step out for a valid reason and, if granted, the <del>20</del> <u>10</u> second count will begin anew when the ball is declared live. The umpire is authorized to refuse to grant time-out if the batter repeated causes delay or if her leaving the batter's box appears to be an attempt to worry the pitcher or to gain some other advantage. <b>Rationale:</b> Ten seconds between pitches is plenty of time for a batter to get a signal from a coach and step back in the box. Both the NCAA and the ASA have a 10 second time limit for the batter to take their position in the box and this rule has been successful in both in keeping the game moving. | <b>Indiana</b><br>Julie Johnson<br>State Interpreter  | Case play, 7.3.1            |
|     |                   |    | <b>⚡ Rule 8-Baserunning ⚡</b>  |   |                             |
| 13  | 8-4-3b            | 64 | b. a fielder not in possession of the ball or <del>not in the act of fielding a batted ball, not making an initial play on a batted ball</del> impedes the progress of a runner or a batter-runner who is legally running bases. (remainder of article is unchanged) <b>Rationale:</b> Once a field (except the pitcher) misplays a batted ball, that fielder should not be allowed to obstruct the advancement of the runner who is running the bases legally.  | <b>Georgia</b><br>Ralph Swearngin<br>Rules Committee  | 2-32, 2-36, 2-47-2, 8-6-10a |
| 14  | 8-6-10a           | 67 | Art. 10 . . . The runner interferes:<br>a. with a fielder attempting to <del>field a batted fair</del> <u>make the initial play on a fair batted ball</u> . <b>Rationale:</b> This is the final piece in seeking a balance between the obstruction rule and the interference rule. This balance is attained by clearly defining the parameters of responsibility for the fielder and the runner.   | <b>Georgia</b><br>Ralph Swearngin<br>Rules Committee  | 2-32, 2-36, 2-47-2, 8-4-3b  |
| 15  | 8-6-10 e&f<br>new | 67 | ART. 10 . . . The runner interferes:<br>a. with a fielder attempting to field a batted fair ball.<br>b. with a fielder attempting to field a fly ball over foul territory.<br>c. with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.<br>d. intentionally with a thrown ball.<br>e. <u>intentionally with a fielder attempting to field a deflected batted ball</u>  | <b>Arizona</b><br>Emily Alexander,<br>Rules Committee |                             |

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|    |               |    | <p><u>and the fielder has an opportunity to make an out.</u><br/> <u>with a fielder who has misplayed a batted fair ball and the ball</u><br/> <u>remains close to and in front of the fielder and the fielder still has an</u><br/> <u>opportunity to make an out.</u></p> <p>NOTE: Jumping, hurdling..... <b>Rationale:</b><br/> e. clarify the difference between being hit by a deflected ball (covered in the rules) and interfering with someone trying to field a deflected ball (not previously covered in the rules).<br/> f. to clarify that fielders are protected on a subsequent attempt to field a batted ball on a minor misplay in front of them.</p>  |  |  |
| 16 | 8-8-New Art 2 | 70 | <p>Section 8 Runner is Not Out<br/> Art. 2...A runner and fielder make contact on the fielder's subsequent attempt to field a batted fair ball that the fielder has misplayed and the ball is behind or some distance from, where the fielder initially tried to field the ball.<br/> <b>Rationale:</b> to try to strike a fair balance between offense and defense – the fielder is no longer protected as she had her chance so the runner is not penalized but neither is she protected because the fielder still has the right to go after the ball<br/> Might consider adding verbiage to the effect of: so long as neither fielder or runner do anything to intentionally interfere with the other - ?</p> | <p><b>Arizona</b><br/> Emily Alexander,<br/> Rules Committee</p> |  |