



March 25, 2026

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

It should be noted that due to some restructuring of the rule book performed between the 2025 and 2026 NFHS Softball Rules Book that some of the rule references have been updated. Please note the rule references provided will utilize the 2026 Rules Book.

SITUATION 1: B1, a right-handed batter, hits a ground ball down the first base line that F3 charges to field. F3 misplays the ball, touching it in fair territory and it deflects off their glove more than a step and a reach into foul territory. As B1 is running to first base about 20 feet from home plate there is contact with F3 as they begin moving to retrieve the ball they misplayed. The contact is not malicious. In a) the umpire rules B1 is guilty of interference since F3 was making the initial play on the batted ball. In b) the umpire rules obstruction on F3. In c) the umpire rules this incidental contact as both players had a right to be where they were and neither intentionally contacted the other. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling in a) and c). Correct ruling in b). In a) the ball is not within a step and reach of the spot of initial contact so F3 is no longer considered to be making the initial play on a fair batted ball. Therefore, B1 is not guilty of interference with F3 making the initial play on a batted ball. In b) as mentioned in a) once the ball is no longer within a step and a reach of the spot of initial contact, F3 is no longer making the initial play on a fair batted ball. They also do not have possession of the ball, at this point if they impede B1's progress, who is legally running the bases, they are guilty of obstruction. In c) by NFHS Softball Rules there could not be incidental contact on this play. If F3 were still making the initial play on a fair batted ball and B1 illegally impedes, hinders or confuses them B1 would be guilty of interference. If F3 is no longer making the initial play on a fair batted ball and they do not have possession of the ball when they impede a runner or batter-runners progress who is legally running the bases, they are guilty of obstruction. (2-31, 2-35, 2-46-3c, 8-2-7a, 8-5-2)

SITUATION 2: In the second inning it is observed that the pitcher performed the following actions then contacted the ball without wiping their hand:

- a) Touched a towel with a comparable drying agent listed on USA Softball's certified equipment webpage.
- b) Squeezed a powdered rosin bag.
- c) Picked up and shifted a handful of dirt before dropping it.
- d) Squeezed a bag containing rock rosin.
- e) Licked their fingers.

In f) when inspecting the ball, the umpire notices that a foreign substance has been transferred to the ball.

RULING: Legal in a), b) and c). Powdered rosin and approved comparable drying agents, as well as dirt, can be utilized without any requirement that the pitcher wipes their hand prior to touching the ball. In d) rock rosin is not allowed to be used, if the pitcher is observed using a bag with rock rosin an illegal pitch is called and the bag containing the illegal material is no longer allowed to be used for the remainder of the game. In e) this is an illegal pitch, the pitcher is required to wipe their fingers prior to contacting the ball if they have licked their fingers. In f) if the umpire notices that material has been

transferred to the ball during an inning (if it is noticed in between innings this would not apply) an illegal pitch will be called. In addition to the illegal pitch if it is determined the material was transferred from the towel or rosin bag that the pitcher is utilizing to dry their hand, that towel or rosin bag would be removed for the remainder of the game. During a game it is nearly impossible for an umpire to verify exactly what material a pitcher is utilizing to dry their hands. Also, it is very difficult to verify with complete certainty that the towel or rosin bag was not manipulated, rock rosin added, or different material applied to an approved drying agent towel. Once the material being used is found to be transferring to the ball the specific item being used by the pitcher will no longer be allowed for the remainder of the game. A different towel or rosin bag could be utilized provided there is no material transferred to the ball when doing so. In addition, if the material that was transferred to the ball cannot be removed the damaged ball will no longer be allowed in the game. (6-2-2)

SITUATION 3: With bases loaded, B4 hits a pop up in front of home plate that hits the ground in fair territory but has a lot of back spin and rolls back toward the foul line. F2 dives for the ball but does not touch the ball. When the ball is in foul territory rolling away from the foul line F2 tosses their helmet contacting the ball in foul territory. The umpire rules this contacting a batted ball with detached equipment and awards all runners including the batter-runner three bases from the time of the pitch. This scores three runs and places B4 on third base. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. The batted ball was first touched by the catcher's helmet in foul territory, making the ball's status foul in this situation. Awards for contacting a batted ball with detached equipment only apply to a fair batted ball. Since the status of the ball in this situation was foul once it touched an object foreign to the natural ground there would be no awards on this play. The proper ruling is a foul ball, B4 continues their at bat with bases loaded and a strike added to their count if they had less than two strikes. (2-24-1d, 7-2-1c, 8-5-4)