



April 17, 2023

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: With no outs, B1 is at bat in the right hand batter's box and hits a ball that goes directly off home plate and settles in front of home plate between the batter's boxes. As B1 is starting to run to first base their right foot contacts the ball. The plate umpire rules this a foul ball as B1's left foot is still within the batter's box when contact was made with the batted ball. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. Once the ball is contacted by B1 in fair territory outside of their batter's box it is a fair ball. Since B1 has now hit a fair ball they become a batter-runner and are ruled out for making contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base. (2-20-1a, 2-20-1d, 8-1-1a, 8-2-7e)

Situation 2: With no outs and a 0 ball, 1 strike count, B1 is at bat in the right hand batter's box and hits a ball that drops off the bat and settles within the right handed batter's box. The ball is in the front right corner, nearest home plate, of the batter's box. As B1 begins to run there is contact between B1 and the batted ball. The plate umpire rules B1 out since the ball was in a portion of the batter's box that is in fair territory when contact was made. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. Although this would normally be a fair ball as it was first touched on or over fair territory between home and third base, rule 7-2-1f specifies that when contact between a batter and a batted ball occurs within the batter's box it is a foul ball. In this case, the correct ruling is a foul ball and B1 remains at bat with a 0 ball, 2 strike count. (2-25-1d, 2-25-1f, 7-2-1f)

Situation 3: With no outs B1, a left-handed slapper, is up to bat. As B1 finishes their swing making contact with the ball, their front foot is in the air in front of the batter's box over fair territory. The batted ball bounces up and makes contact with the batters foot that has not yet contacted the ground. The plate umpire rules a dead ball and B1 out for making contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base. **RULING:** Correct ruling. When contact occurs, the umpire must judge if that contact between the batted ball and the batter happened inside the batter's box or in fair territory completely outside of the batter's box. Typically, ball status on a batted ball between home and first base or home and third base is determined by where the ball settles or is first touched, in fair or foul territory. This situation is very similar, with one slight difference, as the umpire must determine if the contact with the batter was within the batter's box (Foul Ball) or completely outside of the batter's box in fair territory (Fair Ball). If the umpire judges contact was made in fair territory completely outside of their batter's box then it is a fair ball and the batter becomes a batter-runner and should be called out for making contact with a fair batted ball prior to reaching first base. However, if the umpire judges the contact was within the batter's box then it is simply a foul ball and the batter continues their at bat. Again, other than the need to consider the batter's box in this ruling, this is no different than any other fair/foul call as the umpire must judge the location of the batted ball when it is first touched to determine fair/foul status. (2-20-1a, 2-20-1d, 2-25-1d, 2-25-1f, 7-2-1f, 8-1-1a, 8-2-7e)